MANAGING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNED CHANGE INITIATIVES IN THE MALAYSIAN PUBLIC SECTOR: AN ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

By:

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business and Management

Declaration of Original Authorship

I hereby declare that the content of this thesis has not been previously submitted for any degree or diploma at the University of Nottingham or any other institution of higher education in Malaysia or elsewhere. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis does not contain any material that has been previously published or written by another scholar except where due reference is made.

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Abstract

Research in the field of change management has primarily focused on the private sector, resulting in a gap in the literature on the public sector context. Existing research has mainly focused on understanding the content and reasons for change, with less attention given to how change is implemented and managed in the sector. Consequently, the challenges of implementing and managing change in the public sector have not been thoroughly investigated, prompting calls for further research in this area. Similarly, there is limited literature on change leadership in the public sector, and it lacks a theoretical foundation. This study aims to bridge these gaps by examining the implementation of planned change initiatives (PCIs) in the public sector, specifically in Malaysia and the Malaysian Public Sector (MPS). The objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how PCIs are implemented by analysing key themes, processes, factors, and challenges that influence the change process and its leaders. Additionally, it seeks to provide insights into the roles of administrative change leaders (ACLs) and identify the necessary attributes to effectively undertake such roles. This study employed a qualitative cross-sectional methodology and was conducted from the viewpoint of ACLs. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with 28 ACLs at middle and senior levels from the Administrative and Diplomatic Service of the MPS. The data were then analysed thematically using the template analysis method, guided by a priori themes and a theoretical framework. Five central themes emerged from the analysis: envisioning change, communicating change, managing people for change, strategising change implementation, and leading change effectively. The findings indicate that PCIs are implemented in a linear and top-down manner, facilitated by top-down decision-making, communication, and leadership. They also reveal that the implementation process is significantly influenced by the sector's contextual factors. These factors include: the prevalence of a hierarchical compliance culture, leading to passive communication and resistance manifested through non-verbal actions; the involvement of political leaders in decision-making and other aspects of change, resulting in both positive and negative impacts on the change process and ACLs; the need to manage and bridge the competing interests of various stakeholders in the change environment; and the cross-boundary nature of PCIs, requiring strategic alignment and continuous engagement for effective implementation. Consequently, the findings suggest that these factors increase the complexity of implementing and managing change in the sector, emphasising the need for thorough planning, a clear vision, and effective engagement in the change process. The findings also underscore the importance of a more participatory approach, particularly in decision-making, communication, and leadership, to address implementation gaps. Overall, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on change management by enhancing our understanding of how planned change is applied and managed in the public sector context. It also develops a theoretical framework for planned change implementation, providing a structured foundation for change implementation in the sector.

Acknowledgements

My heartfelt appreciation goes out to my supervisors: Professor Dr. Maniam Kaliannan, Dr. Mathew Abraham, and Dr. Craig Shepherd, whose expertise and unwavering support have been invaluable throughout this doctoral journey. I am also profoundly grateful to my family for their constant support and understanding, especially my wife, Dr. Veronica Charlotte, my son, Marvin Sandhu, and my esteemed parents, Mr. Santokh Singh and Mdm. Charan Kaur. To my brother, Mr. Ajay Singh, and my sister, Ms. Seetal Kaur, thank you for always being there and believing in me. My family's encouragement has kept me motivated throughout this journey, particularly during the challenging times. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all others who have generously contributed in various ways to make this journey possible. While this thesis marks the end of this journey, it also paves the way for new possibilities, as change is an inevitable part of our lives.

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Abbreviations

ACLs	Administrative Change Leaders
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
GST	Goods and Services Tax
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GST	Goods and Services Tax
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
ICU	Implementation Coordination Unit
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MAMPU	Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit
MBS	Modified Budgeting System
MPS	Malaysian Public Sector
MyGPI	Malaysian Government Performance Index
NBOS	National Blue Ocean Strategy
NPM	New Public Management Policy
NTP	National Transformation Policy
NKRA	National Key Result Areas
OECD	Economic Co-operation and Development
OPP	Outline Perspective Plans
PCIs	Planned Change Initiatives
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit
PEMUDAH	A Special Taskforce to Facilitate Business
PPBS	Programme and Performance Budgeting System
PMD	Prime Minister's Department
PSOs	Public Sector Organisations
RMK12	Twelfth Malaysian Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study's context, beginning with the background of the study, followed by the problem statement, research questions, objectives, and the study's contribution. Additionally, it defines key terms used throughout the study and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Research Background

Literature on change management primarily focuses on the private sector, while limited research has been conducted in the context of the public sector (Vann, 2004; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Burke, 2014; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014; Homberg et al., 2019). As such, limited evidence is available on how change can be effectively managed within the public sector context (Fernandez and Pitts, 2007; Kickert, 2010). Existing research mainly examines the content and reasons for change and, to some extent, the relationship between content and context. However, there is a lack of focus on the effectiveness of the implementation of change in the sector (Kuipers et al., 2014). Consequently, scholars argue that the challenges associated with implementing change in this sector have not been thoroughly investigated. This has prompted calls for further investigation in this area, particularly in terms of change implementation within the sector (Kuipers et al., 2014). Similarly, there has been limited attention on change leadership in the public sector, leading to the assertion that the field lacks a theoretical foundation (Kuipers et al., 2014). Existing literature in this context predominantly highlights leadership activities in the change process, with minimal emphasis on defining effective change leadership (Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014).

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring and understanding the phenomenon of change within the context of the public sector, with a focus on the implementation of planned change initiatives (PCIs). This focus aligns with existing literature, as change is typically implemented in a planned and top-down manner in

the public sector. The adoption of this approach is driven by the complexity of the sector's operating environment (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015). As a result, change in the public sector is often referred to as reform to reflect its planned and deliberate nature (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Cunningham and Kempling, 2009). Particular attention to the implementation of PCIs is based on the fact that most change failures result from poor planning and implementation (Davis et al., 1998; Reichard, 2003; Hoag et al., 2002; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the change implementation phenomenon, this study is approached from the perspective of administrative leaders in the public sector. These leaders, comprising both middle and top management, are responsible for managing the implementation of government policies and initiatives in the sector (Askim et al., 2009). Here, they are collectively referred to as administrative change leaders (ACLs). This study also examined the roles and attributes of ACLs. Based on the factors discussed above, the study's focus on the implementation of PCIs in a public sector context is considered fitting and timely.

To understand the dynamics of change implementation in the public sector, this study specifically examines the Malaysian Public Sector (MPS) as its research context. The MPS is recognised as the backbone of the Malaysian government and plays a pivotal role in driving socio-economic reforms as envisioned by the government (PEMANDU, 2010; Economic Planning Unit, 2021). Both Malaysia and the MPS were considered a suitable context for this study due to the country's extensive history of reform since gaining independence in 1957. Over the decades, the Malaysian government has undertaken significant reform initiatives to develop the nation economically and improve government efficiency (Beh, 2011; Siddiquee et al., 2019). Despite achieving relative success in certain areas, the reform initiatives have been inconsistent and have fallen short of their desired goals. The reform challenges were largely attributed to poor implementation and gaps in the implementation process (Common, 2003; Lesley, 2014; World Bank, 2017, 2019; Siddiquee et al., 2019). Given the research objectives and the focus on change implementation in this study, as well as the robust reform agenda and the encountered implementation challenges, both Malaysia and the MPS are deemed suitable research contexts.

The primary focus of this study is on the fields of change management and change leadership, along with an analysis of the reform agenda within the MPS. The literature review in Chapter 2 analyses existing research in both of these fields. It highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of how change is initiated, implemented, and managed within both the contexts of the public sector and MPS, respectively. The review also highlights the gaps in the literature in these fields, emphasising the importance of conducting this study. Additionally, it focuses on the different change approaches and models, as the study aims to develop a theoretical framework based on the research findings. This research also addresses the complexity of the public sector environment and its impact on the change process and change leaders (Hughes, 2011; Kuipers et al., 2014; Anzola-Román et al., 2019; Klein et al., 2021). The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on change management and change leadership by providing a better understanding of the implementation of PCIs in the public sector. It also contributes to the existing knowledge in these fields within the Malaysian context.

1.3 Problem Statement

The implementation of change in the MPS lacks the required pace and has produced inconsistent outcomes, falling short of objectives and resulting in mixed results. This has led to stagnation in the country's growth and service delivery, as well as public dissatisfaction with the MPS (Beh, 2011; Lesley, 2014; Siddiquee et al., 2019; World Bank, 2019). In 2010, the Malaysian government acknowledged the country's slow growth rate and called for "fundamental change" in economic and social development, as well as service delivery, to achieve Vision 2020 (PEMANDU, 2010). However, a decade later, the Twelfth Malaysia Plan recognised that the country is still transitioning to a high-income economy and has yet to achieve the objectives under Vision 2020 despite three decades of implementation (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). Additionally, Malaysia's performance in the World Bank's Government Effectiveness Indicator has remained stagnant (World Bank, 2019).

The primary challenge is attributed to weaknesses in change implementation characterised by poor implementation (Lesley, 2014); inconsistencies resulting in a significant gap between planned and actual implementation (Common, 2003;

Siddiquee, 2019); implementation gaps that have adversely affected the outcome (Siddiquee et al., 2019); and the failure to internalise reforms within the MPS (World Bank, 2019). The Twelfth Malaysia Plan has also acknowledged weaknesses in implementation and monitoring mechanisms within the MPS, directly impacting the efficiency of public service delivery (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). These challenges align with existing literature, which identifies planning and implementation weaknesses as key factors contributing to change failure (Davis et al., 1998; Reichard, 2003; Hoag et al., 2002; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). Scholars suggest that ineffective change implementation can lead to change failure (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Husain et al., 2018). In this regard, the literature also identifies administrative leaders in the public sector as key change implementors due to the sector's split leadership nature (Ingraham and Getha-Taylor, 2004; Askim et al., 2009).

There is limited existing literature on change management and change leadership in the public sector, particularly regarding change implementation (Pettigrew, 1985; Vann, 2004; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014; Rogiest et al., 2015; Homberg et al., 2019). Despite rising interest, there is also a lack of literature and empirical evidence on Malaysian reform and change leadership contexts (Siddiquee et al., 2019). Therefore, further research is needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the change phenomenon from the perspective of administrative leaders, specifically in relation to the implementation of PCIs in both the public sector and MPS contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the overall objectives of this study and the gaps discussed above, four research questions were developed:

(i) What are the key considerations of ACLs in planning for the implementation of PCIs in the context of the MPS?

(ii) How do ACLs manage the implementation of PCIs and their challenges to achieve the desired change outcomes in the context of the MPS?

(iii) What are the key change leadership attributes and roles of ACLs in managing the implementation of PCIs in the context of the MPS?

(iv) What is the appropriate change implementation framework for the MPS?

1.5 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of change in the public sector, specifically focusing on the implementation of PCIs. To accomplish this, the study aimed to identify and thoroughly examine the key themes, processes, factors, and challenges relevant to implementing PCIs in the sector. Additionally, the study sought to investigate how contextual factors impact the change process and its leaders. Furthermore, it aimed to provide valuable insights into the roles of ACLs as change leaders and the key attributes required for effective change leadership in the sector. The accomplishment of these objectives contributes to the development of a theoretical framework for implementing planned change in the public sector. Therefore, the research objectives are as follows:

(i) To identify and examine key considerations of ACLs in planning for the implementation of PCIs in the context of the MPS.

(ii) To investigate how ACLs manage the implementation of PCIs and their challenges to achieve the desired change outcomes within the context of the MPS.

(iii) To explore the change leadership attributes and roles of ACLs in managing the implementation process of PCIs in the context of the MPS.

(iv) To develop the appropriate change implementation framework for the MPS.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on change management and change leadership by addressing gaps in the literature and enhancing our understanding of how planned change is applied and managed in the public sector. This is achieved through the identification and examination of key themes, processes, factors, and challenges that influence the implementation of PCIs in the sector. It also provides valuable insights into how contextual factors in the sector influence the change process and leadership. Key contextual factors were identified and analysed in relation to the change process and factors. These findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the public sector change context, as previous research suggested a lack of focus on context (Pettigrew, 1985; Kuipers et al., 2014). Additionally, the findings contribute to the development of a theoretical framework for the implementation of PCIs in the public sector, making them the primary contribution of this research. Currently, there are limited change implementation frameworks available in the public sector. Existing research provides key factors and principles for implementing change in this sector (e.g., Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Cunningham and Kempling, 2009).

The findings also contribute to the existing literature on change leadership by identifying and examining the key roles and attributes of administrative leaders in the public sector as change leaders. As mentioned earlier, the field of change leadership lacks a theoretical foundation in the context of the public sector, and there is a lack of focus on defining effective change leadership in this sector (Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). The findings of this study deepen our understanding of the roles of administrative leaders in implementing planned change in the public sector and provide insights into the required leadership attributes for change leaders in this field. This, in turn, contributes to the overall understanding of effective change leadership in the public sector.

Furthermore, the findings of this study contribute to the current knowledge in the fields of change management and change leadership within the specific context of Malaysia and the MPS, which is the research context for this study. As previously

highlighted, there is a lack of literature and empirical evidence on the Malaysian reform context (Siddiquee et al., 2019).

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms employed in this study have been precisely defined within the context and purpose of this research. These terms are outlined as follows:

(i) **Administrative Change Leaders**: This term refers to administrative leaders, both middle managers and top management, in the public sector who are involved in planning and implementing change initiatives. Within the study's context, middle managers are defined as officers from the Professional and Management Group of the Malaysian Public Service at grades 48, 52, and 54, and top management are defined as officers from the Top Management Group with grades Premier C to A and TURUS 3 to 1 (Public Service Department, 2022).

(ii) **Change management**: The process of managing the initiation and implementation of organisational change within an organisational or sectoral context. According to Armstrong (2009, p. 424), change management is defined as "the process of achieving the smooth implementation of change by planning and introducing it systematically". This study adopts this definition of change management.

(iii) **Change Implementation:** The process of implementing change. It is part of the broader definition of organisational change, which involves three key stages: the planning stage, the implementation stage, and the institutionalisation stage (Lewin, 1947). The term is specifically used to describe the second stage of organisational change, which is the implementation stage.

(iv) **Change Implementors:** This term is used to describe employees who are directly involved in the implementation of PCIs. It refers to both middle management ACLs and lower-level employees, either collectively or individually.

(v) **Malaysian Public Sector:** This term is used to describe the MPS, which includes the federal ministries, agencies under the federal ministries, the Prime Minister's Department, and the Malaysian Public Service.

(vi) **Organisational change**: The process of moving the organisation from the present state towards a desired future (Jones, 2013, p. 32). Organisational change in the context of this research is also defined as involving three key stages of change: the planning stage, the implementation stage, and the institutionalisation stage (Lewin, 1947). A similar definition is used in the context of this study, emphasising the process of change within organisational and sectoral contexts.

(vii) **Planned Change Initiatives:** Change initiatives developed using the planned change approach with defined objectives and goals. These objectives and goals can be specific or general in nature, such as increasing the efficiency of a particular aspect of the organisation or achieving a specific key performance indicator. In the public sector, PCIs are usually formulated through government policies and change initiatives, which are typically referred to as reforms.

(viii) **Reform**: The process of change within the public sector (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Kuipers et al., 2014). In this study, the terms "organisational change" and "change" are used interchangeably with the same definition when referring to the process of organisational change, both within the literature and in relation to the initiatives implemented in the MPS.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis includes five chapters that are organised and sequenced in the following manner:

(i) **Chapter 1: Introduction:** This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the research, where the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, and the significance of the research are discussed.

(ii) **Chapter 2: Literature Review:** This chapter discusses the theories and literature on the primary areas of the study, which include the literature on change management, change leadership, the contextual perspective of public sector organisations, and the evolution and effectiveness of reform initiatives in Malaysia. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework of the study.

(iii) **Chapter 3: Methodology:** This chapter details the research design that is adopted for the study and defines the population, sample size, data collection method, and analysis method(s) used.

(iv) **Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis:** This chapter presents the findings of the study, the descriptive analysis to answer the research questions and objectives, supplemented with tables, diagrams, interviews, and focus group interview excerpts, as well as other appropriate information gathered for the research and analysis.

(v) **Chapter 5: Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusion:** This chapter discusses the findings of this study, which highlight both the practical and theoretical contributions of this research to the body of knowledge in change management, the limitations of the study, and areas for future research. A conclusion based on the findings of this study is presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical background and critical literature review of change management, change leadership, and the reforms implemented in the Malaysian context. It also introduces the research framework of this study. The initial discussion focuses on the nature and triggers of change, the various approaches to change, and the related change models found in the change management literature. The literature review also examines the context of the public sector, with a specific focus on change implementation and its challenges. Similarly, the discussion on change leadership addresses both theoretical perspectives in the field and the perspective of the public sector. Since both Malaysia and the MPS serve as the research context for this study, an examination of the evolution of reform initiatives in Malaysia is presented in this chapter, along with an analysis of their effectiveness. The final section of this chapter presents the theoretical framework for this study.

2.2 Understanding Organisational Change

Change plays a significant role in our lives and affects the way we lead our lives (Burnes, 2011). Our survival in today's world is dependent on change (Dunphy et al., 2007; Kanter, 2008). Similarly, the continued existence of organisations and their ability to sustain themselves are also dependent on change (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015). Therefore, it is not surprising that the literature on change management is extensive and the debate on defining change is lost within the breadth and depth of competing definitions (Hughes, 2010).

Consequently, there is no consensus as to what change is, and it is believed that change has never been clearly defined as it can include almost anything (Dawson, 1994, 2003; De Caluwe and Vermaak, 2003). Scholars argue that the meaning of change exists in different contexts and cannot be defined through a single theory. Instead, it is characterised by various competing theories and perspectives (Kanter et al., 1992; Maes and Van Hootegem, 2019).

The literature offers various definitions of organisational change. Kanter et al. (1992) defined change as a movement from one point to another. Similarly, Jones (2013, p. 32) defined it as “the process by which organisations move from their present state to some desired future state to increase their effectiveness”. On the other hand, Armstrong (2009, p. 424) defined organisational change as “the process of achieving the smooth implementation of change by planning and introducing it systematically, taking into account the likelihood of it being resisted”. Moran and Brightman (2001, p. 111) defined it as “the process of continually renewing an organisation’s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers”. Change has also been referred to as a pattern of actions, beliefs, and attitudes among a certain section of the organisation (Schein, 2004). From a leadership perspective, change is defined as a process of transformation through leadership and direction to overcome resistance to change (Fincham and Rhodes, 2005). Arguably, the debate as to what change is will continue within the literature based on its strengths and weaknesses. However, what is important is to integrate and apply the multitude of meanings and interpretations sensibly (Patel, 2016).

Change is considered an inevitable and persistent feature in organisational life (Burnes, 2017; Holten et al., 2019). It is perceived as a constant process where organisations continuously change to restructure themselves (Hannan and Freeman, 1977, 1983; March, 1981; Karasvirta and Teerikangas, 2022). This process is triggered by numerous factors (Poole, 1998; Senior et al., 2020). As such, organisations must continuously adapt to changes in their environment to survive, seize new opportunities, and navigate an uncertain future (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002; Karasvirta and Teerikangas, 2022). Consequently, organisations are often conceptualised as fluid entities, accommodating multiple actors and resources that work interchangeably (Kanter et al., 1992). Therefore, the static notion of unfreezing the organisation within Lewin's three-step model is deemed challenging to implement due to the dynamic nature of organisations (Kanter et al., 1992). Furthermore, scholars argue that the continuous nature of change is superseding the stable nature of organisations as the primary characteristic (Wilkins and Dyer, 1988).

On the contrary, change is also perceived as a social construct that is constantly evolving through the subjective interpretation of individuals within the environment

(Astley and Van de Ven, 1983). Mason (2007) argues that while change within the environment can be objective and measurable, the response to these changes depends on the interpretations of people within the organisation. Expanding on this discussion, Senior et al. (2020, p. 12) opined that "the extent to which the environment is real is a social construction of reality". They argued that organisations in similar contexts may interpret and respond to similar changes differently due to different interpretations and constructions of reality. This process is influenced by the characteristics and experiences of individuals within the organisation. Consequently, the question that arises is whether change can be triggered beyond the control of the organisation's management, as the change is not forced upon the organisation but rather shaped by it (Collins, 2000).

Although change is perceived as constant, it does not occur at a steady rate. Instead, its continuous and incremental movement will intermittently be punctuated by rapid changes (Hannan and Freeman, 1983; Nelson, 2003). The nature of change is described through different typologies (Holten et al., 2019). According to Grundy (1993), there exist three varieties of change: firstly, smooth incremental change that evolves constantly, gradually, and systematically in a predictable manner; secondly, bumpy incremental change, where the calm period of the organisation is punctuated by the acceleration in pace triggered by the internal and external environments; and thirdly, discontinuous change involving unpredictable rapid shifts within the organisation's strategy or culture.

The nature of change has also been categorised into three different categories (Senior, 2002; By, 2005). They relate to the (i) rate of occurrence, where change occurrence can be described as incremental, bumpy incremental, continuous, bumpy continuous, or discontinuous; (ii) how the change came about, whether the change was initiated as a planned change or it came about as an emergent change, contingency change, or choice change; and (iii) the scale of the change that defines the magnitude of change, whether it is fine tuning, incremental change, modular transformation, or corporate transformation (Dunphy and Stace, 1993). The three categories of change are illustrated in Figure 1, below. During the period of fine tuning and incremental change, the change process moves gradually while adapting to small changes in structure, processes, and strategy (Senior et al., 2020). This process

brings about stability within the organisation's environment, although it will gradually lead to resistance (Tushman et al., 1988).

Change has also been classified based on its scope, where it is perceived as continuous or episodic, and based on its pace, where it is perceived as radical and convergent (Plowman et al., 2007). Due to the unpredictable nature of change, it can be discontinuous, responsive, and unplanned in nature and brought about due to a crisis within the organisation's environment (Burnes, 2004a). However, despite the elaborate description of the nature of change, the literature is burdened with various terminologies used by different authors to describe a similar nature and characteristic of change, which complicates its understanding (By, 2005).

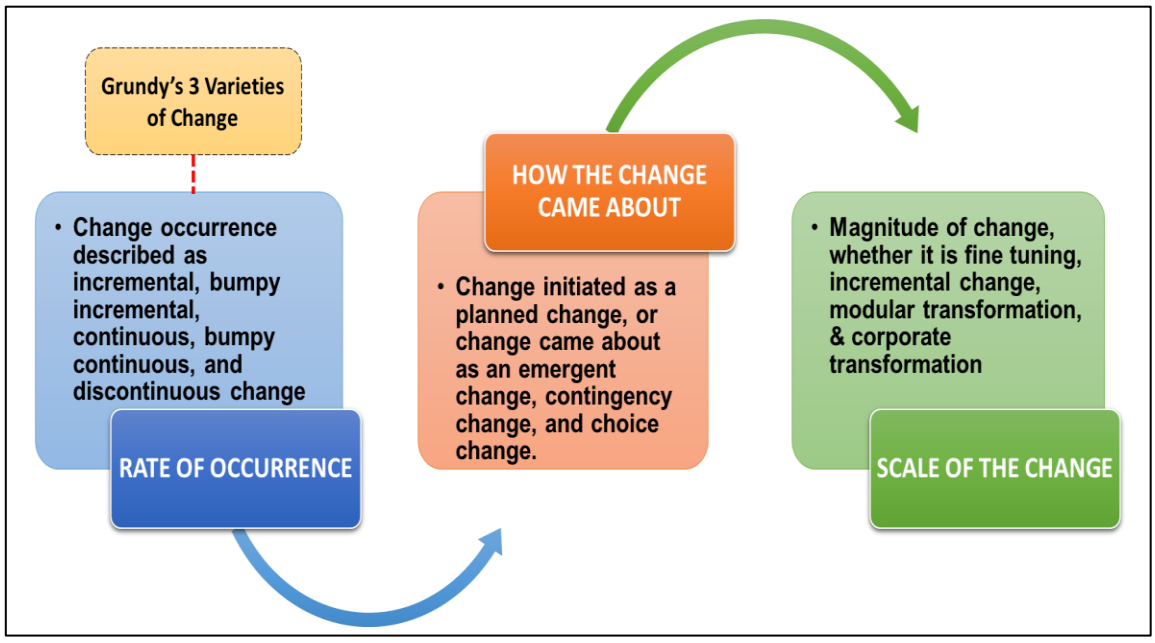

Figure 1: Categories of Change, Illustrated from Senior (2020) and By (2005)

2.3 Triggers of Organisational Change

There is no consensus as to why organisations change (Hughes, 2010). However, it revolves closely around two distinct motivations of the organisation: the need to survive in a volatile environment and to create opportunities to succeed (Romanelli and Tushman, 1994; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). To survive, organisations must have the ability to change constantly (McKinsey and Company, 2008). This entails recognising the need for change to prevent any misalignment in their operating

environment, which could otherwise impact their efficiency and productivity (Kotter, 1996). To stay competitive, organisations need to monitor the shifts within their operating environment, the availability of replacement products or services within the industry, identify the presence of new players, changes embraced by competitors, and the emerging needs of the industry (Kanter et al., 1992). However, it is argued that organisations may have a cognitive bias towards themselves and tend to emphasise past decisions and successes to their own detriment (Egan, 1988).

The literature identifies the internal and external factors of the organisation as triggers of change (Pettigrew, 1985; Rosenbaum et. al., 2018; Senior et al., 2020). Additionally, Senior et al. (2020) suggest that the temporal progression of organisations can also trigger change. Change can be investigated based on four key considerations: the context, content, process, and outcome of change (Pettigrew, 1985; Pettigrew et al., 2001). The context of change relates to the internal and external environments of the organisation. Pettigrew et al. (2001) argue that research in change management has lacked context and that there is a strong need to analyse how context influences the process of change. Similarly, the triggers of change need to be considered and differentiated contextually (Dawson, 2014).

The external environment is identified as the primary source of change, where shifts in the political landscape, fluctuations in the economy, advancements in technology, and changes in society trigger changes that may impact the performance and productivity of the organisation (Huber and Glick, 1993). These shifts in the environment can be a result of turbulence caused by increased competitiveness within the industry, rapid advancement and adoption of new technologies, and intensification in the environment due to diversification and specialisation (Huber and Glick, 1993). Kanter et al. (1992) classified the triggers of change into three distinct categories: macro-evolutionary triggers related to movements in the external environment, micro-evolutionary triggers related to movements within the organisation, and revolutionary triggers related to the political dimension within the organisation. Similarly, Price (2009) proposed three levels of triggers for change: the macro level, the meso level, and the micro level. He suggested that management has less control over the macro environment and has a mutually beneficial relationship with the meso environment involving contractors and customers.

Both Greiner (1972) and Van de Ven and Poole (1995) propose a growth-focused approach to understanding the triggers that drive change by studying the organisational life cycle. In their work, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) presented a growth typology consisting of four process theories:

(i) The Life Cycle Theory conceptualises change as an organic process that moves the organisation towards a clear end, which is evident from the organisation's current state.

(ii) The Teleological Theory views change as driven by organisational goals and purposeful in nature.

(iii) The Dialectical Theory sees change as an outcome of opposing values that challenge the status quo.

(iv) The Evolutionary Theory considers change as a process of adapting to cumulative changes in the environment.

Greiner (1972) proposed five cyclic phases with distinct transitions:

(i) Growth through creativity leading to a crisis of leadership: the founder focuses on developing products and identifying markets. The organisation initially operates in an informal setting but gradually transitions to a more formal management and leadership style.

(ii) Growth through direction leading to a crisis of autonomy: the organisation adopts a more formal organisational structure and systems but gradually moves towards greater autonomy due to inefficiency.

(iii) Growth through delegation leading to a crisis of control: the organisation decentralises to improve efficiency and motivation, gradually leading to a crisis of autonomy and the need for coordination.

(iv) Growth through coordination leading to a crisis of ‘red tape’: the organisation introduces formal systems and procedures to enhance coordination by separating and aligning functions, departments, and work groups towards organisational goals. However, bureaucratisation will eventually creep in.

(v) Growth through collaboration: the organisation builds on its competencies and networks while promoting some form of autonomy and self-control among its members.

According to Senior et al. (2020, p. 13), environmental triggers can be categorised based on four common factors within the PEST analysis: political, economic, sociological, and technological. The political factors relate to government legislation, international laws, and taxation; the economic factors relate to competitors, suppliers, and finance; the technological factors relate to information technology, new technologies, and new processes; and the socio-cultural factors relate to the current demography, changes in lifestyle, and ethics. They also suggested that the PEST categorisation can include legal and ecological factors commonly known as PESTLE. The internal environmental factors include the structure of the organisation, the views of the people within the organisation, and new technology (Dawson, 2003, p. 47). Senior et al. (2020, p. 20) summarised the internal factors identified by different scholars to include a new vision, new managerial appointments, issues brought by the union, employee relations, achievements, and processual changes (see Paton and McCalman, 2000; Huczynski and Buchanan, 2013; Johnson et al., 2014).

2.4 Organisational Change Approaches and Change Models

The complex nature of change, with competing definitions and explanations, indicate that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing change in the literature (Shapiro, 1996). The literature has always been focused on finding the best way to manage change through the development of change management and implementation processes and templates that are suggested to be linear and processual in nature (Blackman et al., 2022). As a result, various approaches and models are proposed within the literature to manage change (Van der Voet, 2014). While organisations have a range of change approaches and models to choose from,

the choice is not solely based on preference but rather on several factors. These factors include the complexity of the operating environment, the organisation's capacity for change, and the alignment of the selected change process with other elements within the organisation (Osborne and Brown, 2005).

The literature is dominated by suggestions that 70 percent of change initiatives fail to achieve their objectives or that two-thirds of change initiatives fail (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2004; Kotter, 1996, 2008; McKinsey and Company, 2008; Kunert and Von der Weth, 2018). However, these suggestions, specifically the figures stated, are argued to lack empirical evidence and are not representative of different change environments (Burnes, 2011; Hughes, 2011). Consequently, scholars have sought to identify the key factors that contribute to change failures (Ronsebaum et al., 2018, p. 287). Some of the key factors identified within the literature are categorised and listed below.

(i) **Factors relating to Change Planning**: planning weaknesses (Hoag et al., 2002; Rogiest et al., 2015; Husain et al., 2018); adoption of too many change initiatives (Beer and Nohria, 2000); conflict between organisational and people focus (Bunker and Wakefield, 2006); lack of attention towards organisational culture (Schein, 2004; Damschroder et al., 2009); and lack of engagement with employees in change planning and implementation (Levasseur, 2001; Luscher et al., 2008; Lewis, 2011).

(ii) **Factors relating to Change Implementation:** implementation weaknesses (Hoag et al., 2002; Rogiest et al., 2015; Husain et al., 2018); lack of leadership competency and commitment to manage the change process (Kotter, 1996; Caldwell, 2006); role of managers and lack of change direction (Bartunek et al., 2011); lack of communication of the rationale and benefits of the content of change (Gill, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Smollan, 2015; Shannon, 2017); change agents lack understanding of change readiness stages (Drzensky et al., 2012; Gondo et al., 2013); employee resistance (Coram and Burnes, 2001; Ford et al., 2008; Lauzier et. al., 2020); employee cynicism (Thundiyil, et al., 2015; Buick et al., 2016); and the modifications made to the change process (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002).

(iii) **Factors Relating to Change Outcome:** competing perceptions and interpretations by the people responsible for evaluating the change (Carnall, 1986; Doyle, 2001; Hay et al., 2020); and the unintended outcome of change initiatives (Balogun, 2006).

On the other hand, the success of change initiatives and the parameters to measure them have not been definitively defined (By, 2005). Some scholars argue that the outcomes of change can be regarded as socially constructed, which allows for different interpretations (Buchanan et al., 2007). Another challenge is determining the exact end point of the change process, making it difficult to identify the right time for evaluating outcomes (Buchanan et al., 2005; Jacobs, 2002; Hagebakken et al., 2020). This has led to suggestions that change outcomes should be studied longitudinally (Hagebakken et al., 2020).

Furthermore, it is argued that the low success rates of change initiatives can be attributed to the lack of a valid framework for implementing and managing change. There is also an underlying assumption that there exists a best way to manage change and the need to adhere to it (Burnes, 1996, 2004a). However, arguments that change is a manageable process persist (Van der Voet, 2014). The literature offers various change models, which provide a sequence of effective actions to manage the process of change. These models consider the complexity of change, the types of actions required, and the interrelationship between change factors (Collins, 1998; By, 2005; Burke, 2008). Change models prescribe the best ways to initiate and implement change, as well as guide the planning of necessary resources and the development of an implementation plan (Senior et al., 2020).

Consequently, this process is heavily dependent on the effectiveness of the change leader's ability to adopt and implement the appropriate change model for their organisation. However, it is argued that no single change model or approach can fully capture the entirety and complexity of the change reality, and one must go beyond theoretical knowledge to be effective (Weisbord, 1976; Hughes, 2011). Change models are also criticised for being overly simplified, as the reality of the operational environment is often more complex, encompassing considerations beyond those offered in change models (Senior et al., 2020).

The planned and emergent change approaches are most prominent in the literature (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; By, 2005; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet, 2014). More recently, Edwards et al. (2020) proposed a blended approach called the cascading mode, which combines the elements of planned and emergent approaches. While both approaches share some similar elements, their main difference is rooted in the way change is approached, either from a top-down (planned) or bottom-up (emergent) perspective (Edwards et al., 2020). Therefore, both approaches should be viewed as complementary to each other, despite their contradictory features (Pettigrew, 2000). However, some scholars argue that both approaches should be considered and viewed distinctively as they address different circumstantial elements of the change process (Burnes, 1996). Figure 2 illustrates the evolution of change approaches since Lewin's planned change approach and model.

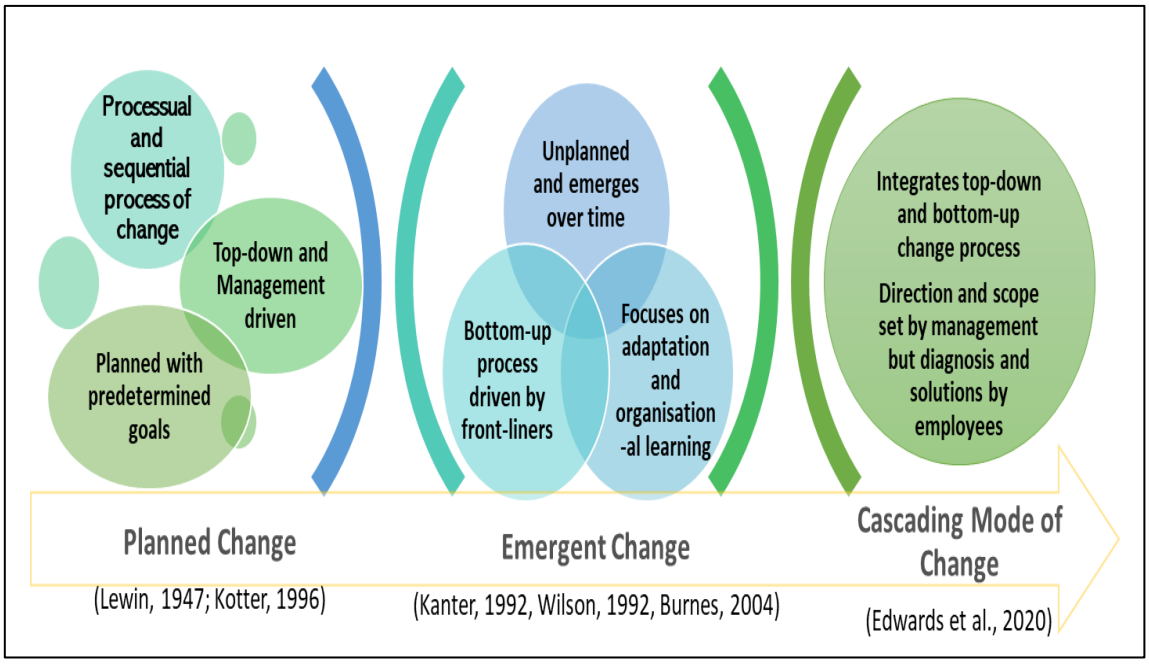

Figure 2: Development of Organisational Change Approaches

2.4.1 Planned Change Approach and Models

The planned change approach is systematic and programmatic in nature and moves the organisation from its present state to a desired future through a series of predetermined processes (Hughes, 2010; Hossan, 2015; Van der Voet et al., 2015). The approach is intentional in nature, goal-oriented, driven by management, and

implemented in a top-down manner (By, 2005; Bamford and Forrester, 2003; Robbins and Judge, 2015; Van der Voet et al., 2015). Edwards et al. (2020) describe the planned change process as linear with pre-determined stages, typically implemented in a stable and predictable environment. They further characterised the process as slow and infrequent.

One of the earliest and well-known planned change models is Lewin's (1947) three-step model, illustrated in Figure 3 below (Maes and Van Hootegem, 2019; Edwards et al., 2020). This model is influenced by the organisational development approach and provides a three-step change process of unfreezing the organisation, moving it in a pre-determined direction, and refreezing the changes (Cameron and Green, 2012; Palmer et al., 2017). The unfreezing stage involves defining the current state of the organisation, identifying the driving and resisting forces for change, and setting change goals; the moving stage mobilises people to achieve the desired future state; and the refreezing process institutionalises the change and establishes a new status quo (Cameron and Green, 2012). Burnes (2017) argues that the planned change model empowers management and leaders to identify specific elements requiring change or the prevailing factors that have led the organisation to its present state, evaluate those factors, and determine if change is required.

Lewin's model is developed based on four key fundamentals: field theory, group dynamics, action research, and the three-step change model (Burnes, 2017). According to Lewin's (1952) field theory, the behaviour of individuals or groups within an organisation is influenced by two types of forces: driving forces that thrust the organisation towards change and resisting forces that thrust the organisation towards the status quo. When these forces remain equal, the organisation is in a state of equilibrium (Arnéguy et al., 2018). In order to achieve successful change, the driving forces must outweigh the resisting forces. To accomplish this, the organisation needs to identify the resisting forces that need to be eliminated or reinforced by understanding the behaviour of individuals and groups within the organisation (Lewin, 1947, 1952; Cameron and Green, 2012; Burnes, 2017). Arguably, change can only be successful if the people involved in the process support the change at their free will (Burnes, 2004a).

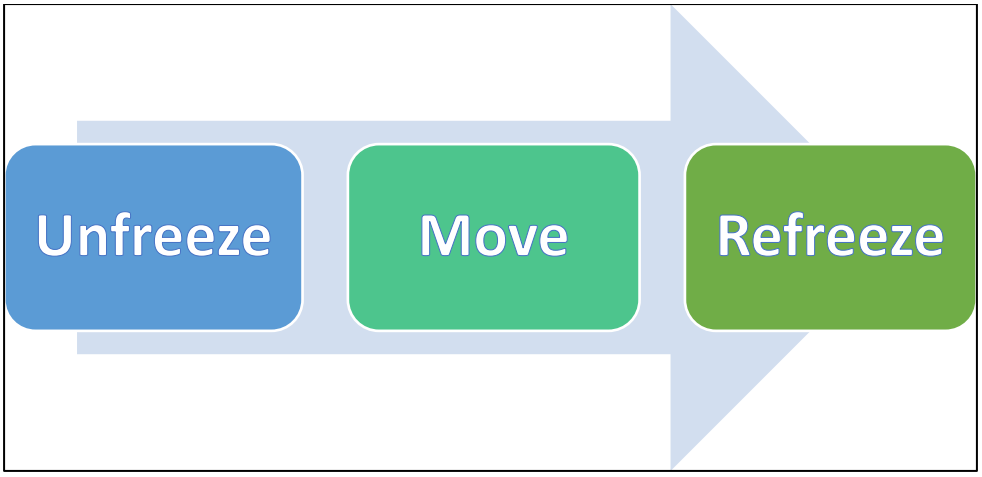

Figure 3: Kurt Lewin's Three-Step Change Model (1947)

Despite the popularity of Lewin's change model, it has been criticised for being too linear and rigid. Critics argue that it fails to consider that both planned and unplanned changes happen simultaneously (Ashburner et al., 1996; Rosenbaum et al., 2018). They contend that the model is too generic and more suitable for incremental change initiatives and organisations with a top-down management style, such as government entities (Hossan, 2015). Furthermore, scholars argue that the model assumes a stable operating environment and is generally unsuitable for all circumstances (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; Burnes, 2017).

On the contrary, some scholars argue that Lewin's model is often narrowly observed and described from a linear perspective without sufficient consideration for other aspects of his model, such as action research, group dynamics, and force field analysis (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). It is also argued that the model is highly effective in sustaining group behavioural changes (Burnes and Cooke, 2012). In fact, the model has been expanded upon and used as the foundation for many other planned change models (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999; Rosenbaum et al., 2018; Maes and Van Hootegem, 2019). Several change models are highlighted below:

(i) The seven-phase change model by Lippitt et al. (1958) expands on the work done by Lewin (1947) and introduces a continuous cyclic change process. The moving stage of Lewin's model is expanded to include the process of diagnosis, identification of available alternatives, and translating the intended objectives into action (Hayes, 2014).

(ii) Bullock and Batten (1985) proposed a four-phase change model involving the processes of exploration, planning, action, and integration. The unfreezing process is expanded to include the processes of exploration and planning (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015).

(iii) Beckhard and Harris (1987) proposed a three-stage model that is categorised into the present state, the transition state, and the future state of the organisation from the change perspective.

(iv) Kotter's Eight-Step Model (1996) outlines eight change steps, as illustrated in Figure 4 below, which also depicts how it relates to Lewin's Three-Step Model. Kotter's model is described as procedural (Rosenbaum et al., 2018), and the steps are complementary in nature (By, 2005). It has been criticised for concentrating the leader's role in the earlier steps, potentially resulting in leaders becoming distant in the later steps through delegation (Cameron and Green, 2012), and for a lack of evidence and references (Hughes, 2016).

(v) The ADKAR Model by Hiatt (2006) introduces five goals centred on the successive change experiences of individuals within the organisation. These goals include (i) awareness, involving the identification of the need to change; (ii) desire, focusing on the motivation and drive of those involved in the change; (iii) knowledge, relating to the knowledge of the change and its impact; (iv) ability, addressing the required capacity and skills; and (v) reinforcement, emphasising the initiative to sustain the change (Galli, 2018).

(vi) The ACMP Standard for Change Management Model proposed by the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) in 2014 suggests that change is a transitional process of moving the organisation towards a future state (Rosenbaum et al., 2018; Karasvirta and Teerikangas, 2022). It involves five processes: (i) evaluate change impact and organisational readiness; (ii) formulate a change management strategy; (iii) develop a change management plan; (iv) execute the change management plan; and (v) complete the change management plan (ACMP, 2014, 2020).

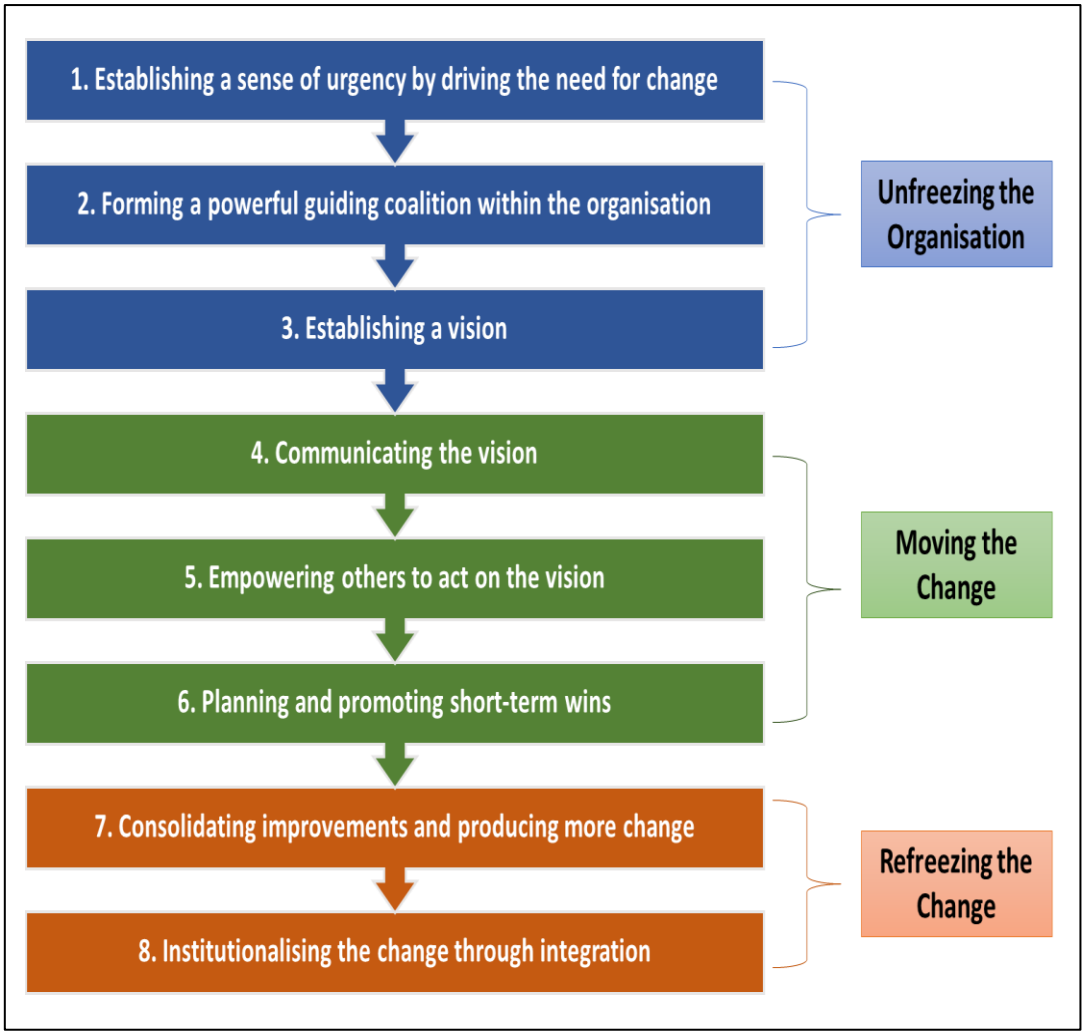

Figure 4: Kotter's (1996) and Lewin's (1947) Change Models Exemplified

2.4.2 Emergent Change Approach and Models

The emergent change approach arose after criticisms of the planned change approach for its slow, group-based process, which ignores the fluidity of the organisation and the need for rapid transformation within an evolving environment (Kanter et al., 1992; Burnes, 2004b; Lawrence, 2015; Blackman et al., 2022). The conceptualisation of the nature of change had also shifted from a planning standpoint to viewing change as a continuous, unpredictable, and political process (Pettigrew and Whipp, 1993; Wilson, 1992; Rosenbaum et al., 2018; Naslund and Norrman, 2022). Some scholars argue that change cannot be effectively planned due to its continuous nature and the complexity of the operating environment (Wilson, 1992; Naslund and Norrman, 2022). Subsequently, this prompted calls for a more flexible organisational

culture that fosters internal innovation, entrepreneurship, collaborations, and adoption of the bottom-up approach, thus giving rise to the emergent approach (Burnes, 2004b). Emergent change is described as an open-ended, bottom-up, continuous change process that promotes continuous learning and adaptation within the changing environment (Burnes, 1996, 2009; By, 2005; Blackman et al., 2022). Organisations that adopt the emergent approach are sometimes identified as learning organisations in the literature (Argyris and Schon, 1996).

Some scholars suggest that the concept of emergent change is attributable to the concept of open systems (Wilson, 1992). This system promotes continuous sensing, scanning, and adaptation to changes in the environment in order to maintain efficiency and productivity (Senior et al., 2020). In this regard, change is considered a process that organisations can cultivate and establish a climate for (Senior et al., 2020). In contrast, Blackman et al. (2022, p. 3) advocate for a constructivist approach to change. They argue that emergent change requires situational adaptation, where information about change is gathered through past experiences and interactions within the context of change. This information forms the basis for interpretation and sense-making by individuals involved in the change process, which influences their decision-making and behaviour. The outcome of emergent change is not predetermined due to the evolving nature of the change process, although the general direction of the change is known by the organisation (Weick, 2000; By, 2005; Van der Voet et al., 2014).

Emergent change is suggested to result from small alterations to daily organisational routines prompted by constraints and opportunities that build up over time (Weick, 2000; Hayes, 2014). It has a positive impact on the long-term adaptability of the organisation (Homberg et al., 2019). However, over time, these cumulative changes can lead to large-scale change (Burnes, 2004a; Plowman et al., 2007). On the contrary, de Vries (2013) argues that gradual and cumulative change either complements or substitutes the need for large-scale change. The emergent change process is relatively faster than planned change as the scope of change is much smaller. The process is less deliberate, informal, and closer to the frontline employees who implement the changes, making it an incremental process (Weick and Quinn, 1999). Homberg et al. (2019) argue that the organisational ability to continuously

adopt, adapt, and improve in response to changes resides within the frontline employees. Change leaders and management in emergent change play a facilitative role in ensuring readiness for change as the responsibility for change is decentralised and delegated across the organisation (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; By, 2005). Change leaders are also responsible for building effective networks and a culture of change within the organisation (Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Battilana et al., 2012).

There are several change models that have incorporated elements of emergent change. One of them is the Big Three Model of Change by Kanter et al. (1992). This model provides two approaches to implementing change: the bold stroke approach, which involves rapid changes within the organisation, and the Long March approach, which focuses on incremental changes that lead to transformation over time. The Long March also emphasises changes in organisational behaviour and culture to accommodate the new structure. Other models include the Theory E and Theory O model proposed by Beer and Nohria (2000). Theory E, known as the hard approach, aims to maximise the value of the organisation's shareholders through rapid changes, similar to Kanter's Bold Stroke. Theory O, on the other hand, takes a soft approach, focusing on improving the organisation through slow incremental growth and organisational learning. It emphasises the human perspective of change. However, critics argue that the hard approach's focus on quick financial gains for shareholders may have a long-term impact on the organisation's survival (Burnes, 2004b). Conversely, adopting the soft approach may ignore the fundamental need to restructure the organisation and increase shareholder value in the long run (Burnes, 2004b). Nevertheless, Beer and Nohria (2000) propose that both theories should be used concurrently to reap their benefits.

2.4.3 Mode of Cascading Change

The literature on planned and emergent change examines the key features and characteristics of both approaches, along with the competing merits of each approach in their respective contexts (Heyden et al., 2017). However, scholars argue that integrating the features of both approaches is necessary for a more holistic understanding of the change process (Heyden et al., 2017). As mentioned earlier, both planned and emergent changes often occur concurrently, indicating their co-existence

and interconnectedness in reality (Ashburner et al., 1996; Orlikowski, 1996). In this regard, Edwards et al. (2020) propose that change can be more successful if initiated in a top-down manner by change leaders and complemented by a bottom-up process where employees contribute. This argument aligns with Beer and Nohria's (2000) suggestion to use their theories concurrently, emphasising the integration of both top-down and bottom-up approaches in change initiatives. Some scholars suggest that both approaches can be integrated through temporal sequencing, despite their distinctive nature (Huy, 2001; Huy and Mintzberg, 2003).

To achieve this, Edwards et al. (2020) propose a cascading change approach that integrates the formal perspective of planned change with the informal perspective of emergent change. This approach involves the participation of both management and employees in the change process. The direction and scope of the change are set by management, and the process of diagnosing the problem and identifying a suitable solution for it is employee driven. In this context, the management broadly outlines the direction and scope of the change without specifying specific goals. The change initiative is then developed by employees through a successive engagement process. According to Edwards et al. (2020), this approach can foster a sense of employee ownership and responsibility towards the change process, thereby reducing resistance. The design of this approach, including successive engagements and commitment escalation, is intentional and planned. It begins with smaller groups, progresses to larger ones, and involves all employees. This reflects a bottom-up process within a planned initiative. The management is expected to accept and endorse solutions developed through this process if they align with the scope of the change. This process establishes a reciprocal understanding between management and employees, where management commits to implementing the suggested changes and employees commit to supporting the change implementation process.

2.5 Contextual Perspective of Public Sector Organisations

Historically, PSOs were seen as stable bureaucracies, focusing on planned incremental growth and development in a slow-changing environment (Osborne and Brown, 2005). However, the calm and controlled nature of PSOs began to unravel in the last few decades due to changes in the global economy. These changes drove the

public sector to prioritise efficiency to accommodate the rising demands and expectations for service delivery from the public and political leaders (Osborne and Brown, 2005; Bracci et al., 2015). The introduction of the New Public Management Policy (NPM) in the 1980s also had an impact on the way PSOs operate. It brought about the adoption of private sector management practices that emphasised a managerial perspective rather than an administrative perspective in the administration of PSOs (McLaughlin et al., 2002; Hijal-Moghrabi et al., 2020). NPM also introduced the use of private sector management tools and performance measurement systems within the public sector (Van Dooren and Hoffmann, 2018). This shift in the management perspective led PSOs to focus more on performance management (Melo and Mota, 2020). There has also been a gradual shift from the government's dominance in determining what is best for the people to a more liberal outlook that involves multiple relationships and collaborations with service providers, other PSOs, the private sector, and non-profit organisations (McLaughlin et al., 2002). This, in turn, has altered the role of the public service from administering PSOs to governing the various relationships within the environment (Kickert et al. 1997).

The nature of change in PSOs is relatively different from that of private sector organisations (Osborne and Brown, 2005). PSOs are established to promote a particular aspect of public wellbeing instead of maximising profits (Ostroff, 2006). Their organisational objective, orientation, structure, processes, values, and relationship with the external environment are contextually different from the private sector (Rainey, 1997; Van der Voet et al., 2015). PSOs are influenced by bureaucratic and formal processes that are in place for checks and balances, the institutionalised culture within the sector, and high standards of accountability (Robertson and Seneviratne, 1995). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) identified five broad forces that affect change in PSOs: (i) socio-economic forces; (ii) political system characteristics; (iii) elite decision-making regarding the desirability and feasibility of change; (iv) the occurrence of change events such as scandals; and (v) administrative system characteristics.

Kuipers et al. (2014) emphasised the political and judicial dimensions of PSOs, including the parliament, politics, politicians, legislation, rules, and bureaucracy. PSOs are also characterised by checks and balances, shared power, divergent interests, and political influences (Boyne, 2002). Additionally, they need to be impartial, deliver

consistent outcomes, demonstrate value for money, meet growing service delivery demand, and be accountable to the public and their political superiors (Doyle et al., 2000; Erakovic and Powell, 2006). They should also have the capacity to react to different incentives, mandates, and policy recommendations (Osborne and Brown, 2005). Andrews et al. (2008, p. 309) identified three key features of the public sector environment: (i) change initiatives mostly result from external pressures; (ii) the need for quick implementation of change initiatives; and (iii) the introduction of multiple change initiatives in succession. This is due to the nature of change initiatives in the public sector, which are usually driven through public policies led by political leaders. These policies can often be controversial in nature and have a short implementation period (Doyle et al., 2000).

As a result, the operational environment of PSOs is argued to be relatively complex, with the presence of various stakeholders that have different objectives and goals (Boyne, 2002; Rainey, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Hagebakken et al., 2020). The environment is also impacted by a high degree of bureaucratic formalisation (Krukowski et al., 2021). The nature of PSOs, their unique characteristics, and the complex operational environment place specific demands on the administrators of these organisations, making the change process comparatively more challenging to manage than in the private sector (Doyle et al., 2000; Karp and Helgø, 2008; Burnes, 2009; Van der Voet et al., 2015). PSOs also face more pressure in the change process compared to private sector organisations (Doyle et al., 2000; Homberg et al., 2019). The environment of PSOs also changes at a slower pace (Meier O'Toole, 2011).

On the other hand, scholars argue that change factors in the private sector, such as the need for change, the drive for maximising profit, and environmental dynamics, provide a stronger push factor and pathway for change (Osborne and Brown, 2005). However, some scholars argue that change in PSOs is not more difficult but rather different in nature compared to the private sector (Cunningham and Kempling, 2009). The successful reforms observed in the public sector over the decades are suggested as proof of PSOs' ability to implement change (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006). However, comparative studies between the two sectors are limited in the literature, prompting calls for more studies on sectoral differences (Holten et al.,

2019). A focus on the differences between public and private sector organisations can be beneficial for the development of organisational change (Rusaw, 2007). It will also deepen our understanding of whether similar actions would lead to different change outcomes between the sectors (Meier and O'Toole, 2011). Furthermore, it is emphasised that gaps in the literature are not confined to sectoral differences alone. Scholars suggest that there are gaps in the literature within the public sector context, and limited systematic research has been conducted in this area compared to the private sector context (Pettigrew, 1985; Vann, 2004; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Van der Voet et al., 2014, 2015; Homberg et al., 2019). The contextual factors of the PSOs discussed in this section are illustrated in Figure 5 below.

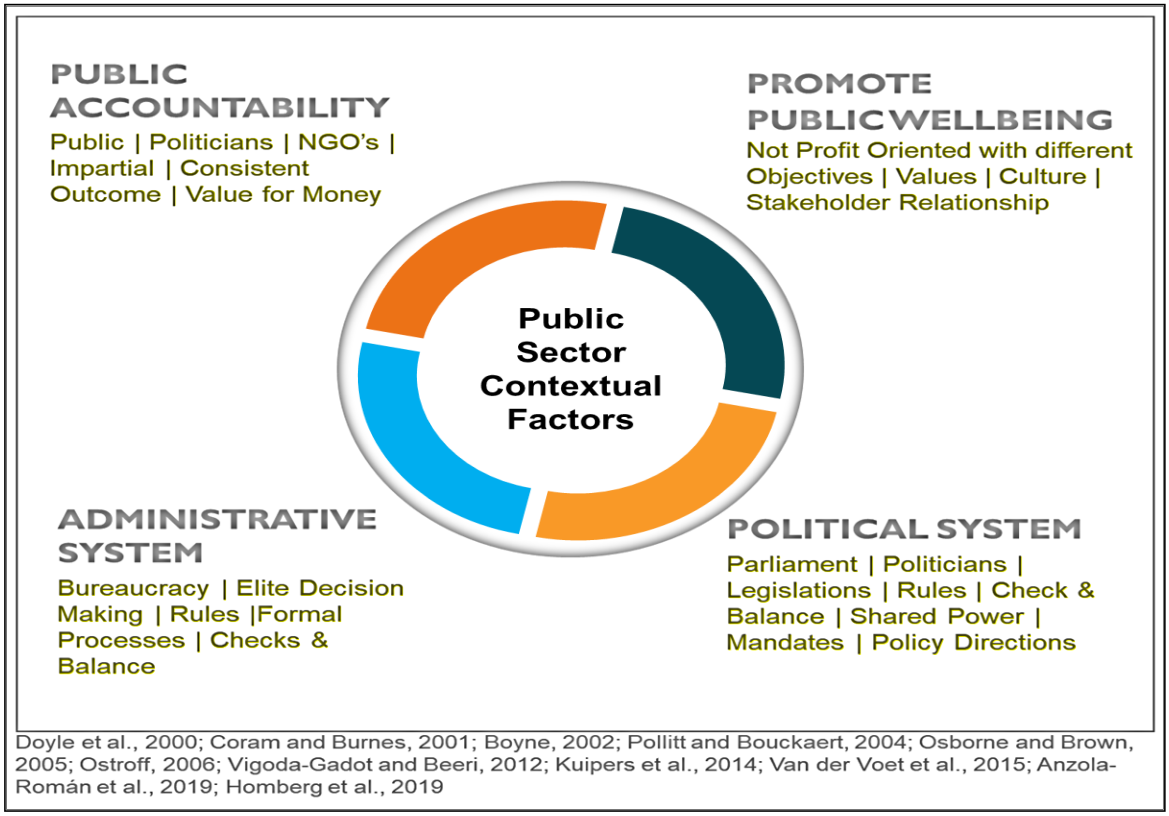

Figure 5: Illustration of the Contextual Factors Impacting PSOs

2.6 Organisational Change in the Public Sector

Change is inherent to the nature and evolution of the public sector (Van der Voet et al., 2014). It involves various aspects of the sector, including the overall design and structure of PSOs, the way they are managed, and the requisite skills needed to navigate these changes (Osborne and Brown, 2005). The change process in the

sector is often driven towards improving the efficiency of PSOs and the quality of service delivery while attempting to reduce costs (Kuipers et al., 2014). This change is typically implemented through policy changes, structural reform of PSOs, and continuous innovation (Vigoda-Gadot and Beeri, 2012). Consequently, PSOs must have the ability to continually adapt and manage these changes, as well as take advantage of any opportunities that arise from the process of change (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). Change within the sector is often referred to as reform because it is considered a narrower process than change, reflecting its deliberate and planned nature (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Cunningham and Kempling, 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014). It is focused on improving organisational efficiency through structural and procedural changes (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). The scope of reform also targets changes at the sectoral and national levels rather than the organisational level (Ackroyd et al., 2007).

Change management literature in the private sector context is relatively extensive, but limited research has been conducted within the public sector context (Vann, 2004; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Burke, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). There is an underlying assumption that private sector literature and change techniques apply to the public sector, but this assumption has been questioned (Boyne, 2006; Karp and Helgø, 2008; Klarner et al., 2008; Kickert, 2014). Despite the common change factors between both sectors, there is a need for them to be considered contextually, taking into account the environmental complexity of the public sector as well as the ambiguities and uncertainties that exist (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999; Hughes, 2011; Osborne and Brown, 2005; Anzola-Román et al., 2019; Klein et al., 2021). According to Kuipers et al. (2014), contextual considerations include the nature of change drivers, specific temporal points of reference, the relationship between the organisation and its environment, as well as the originating nature of change, whether it is voluntary or imposed by the environment. However, scholars argue that despite the strong influence of context on the change process, existing research in the public sector does not focus on the contextual perspective (Pettigrew, 1985; Pettigrew et al., 2001; Kuipers et al., 2014). The literature is suggested to be more focused on the effectiveness of change initiatives than the process of change itself (Kuipers et al., 2014).

Both planned and emergent approaches are used to implement change in PSOs. However, there is a tendency for PSOs to adopt the planned approach, which is implemented in a top-down manner (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015). According to Van der Voet (2014), both approaches are effective in implementing change in a bureaucratic context. The PCIs are typically triggered by environmental shifts, while the emergent change initiatives are driven by crises and political factors that influence the administration of PSOs (Osborne and Brown, 2005). It is argued that the planned approach is a more appropriate choice for PSOs, particularly when dealing with divergent interests and conflicts within the environment, which can be addressed during the planning stages (Burnes, 2009). Furthermore, Van der Voet et al. (2015) found that PSOs tend to adopt a planned and top-down approach towards change when responding to the complexity of the change environment. However, their findings also indicate that the effectiveness of this approach is hindered by diverse interests and dependencies within the change environment, making it difficult to formulate an acceptable change vision that is key to the change process. This affirms the views of Haveri (2006) and Karp and Helgø (2008), who respectively argue that the complexity of the public sector environment poses a limit to the planned approach to change.

The changing nature of the public sector, coupled with the fast-moving environment in which it operates today, hinders the effectiveness of the top-down linear planned change approach. Instead, it aligns with the nature of emergent change, which views change as a continuous process and addresses it through a learning and adaptive process (Osborne and Brown, 2005). As emergent change is more devolved in nature, it is better suited for changing or turbulent environments (Burnes, 2017). Emergent change focuses on building and maintaining relationships within the internal and external environment, operates in a bottom-up approach, and emphasises the participation and competencies of the people within the organisation (Senge, 1990; By, 2005). Emergent change is also effective in dealing with the complexities, ambiguities, and uncertainties of the public sector environment through continuous learning and adaptation (Osborne and Brown, 2005). However, it is argued that incremental change can build up and result in large-scale changes (Plowman et al., 2007). The continuous nature of change, along with the process of continuous adaptation, can lead to change fatigue (Piderit, 2000; Doyle et al., 2000). Emergent

change has also faced criticism for lacking the necessary tools and techniques to address change as an alternative to the planned approach (Burnes, 2017).

Despite the ongoing debate within the change management literature over the best approach for change, no clear consensus has been reached (Burnes, 2017). This debate is amplified in the public sector context due to limited empirical work in this area (Van der Voet et al., 2015), modest development of the literature (Wright et al., 2013; Giauque, 2015), and a lack of sufficient articles on the topic (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006). Furthermore, research on how organisational change comes about and the concept of continuous change in PSOs is also lacking (Kickert, 2010; Kuipers et al., 2014; Homberg et al., 2019). The focus on organisational transformation remains in the public sector, pushing forward large-scale, top-down strategic planned changes in PSOs despite poor support from employees (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; de Vries, 2013). Consequently, the change approaches and models used in the public sector depend on the scope and scale of the desired change, which can vary from incremental to transformational change or from intermittent incrementalism to radical reform waves (Osborne and Brown, 2005; Kuipers et al., 2014).

2.7 Change Implementation in the Public Sector

Change implementation is considered one of the most crucial stages in the change process (Osborne and Brown, 2005). Like private sector organisations, change implementation in PSOs is influenced by constraints from internal and external environments (Blackman et al., 2022). Change in the public sector often involves governance changes, organisational design and structure changes, and improvements in service delivery, which can be challenging and daunting for public sector managers (Van der Voet et al., 2016). As a result, they tend to seek effective approaches to successfully implement change, often adopting change management approaches and techniques from the private sector (Kuipers et al., 2014). However, it is necessary to evaluate the appropriateness of private sector change approaches and techniques in the public sector context (Piercy et al., 2013). While there are common change factors in both sectors, it is important to consider these factors within the specific context of PSOs (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999; Osborne and Brown, 2005; Hughes, 2011; Anzola-Román et al., 2019). For example, change implementation in

the public sector is influenced by the split leadership approach, where political leaders are responsible for policymaking and administrative leaders are responsible for policy implementation (Askim et al., 2009). This necessitates different considerations in the change process, which may differ from those in the private sector context.

Despite the limited literature and research available in the public sector context, the literature highlights several key challenges in change implementation (Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). Challenges stemming from the internal environment include a lack of consensus on change objectives, a lack of commitment, limited resources and time for implementation, inadequate coordination and communication, and the involvement of multiple PSOs (Davis et al., 1988, p. 126–7). Previous research also indicates that implementation challenges can also arise from weaknesses in project management, insufficient employee involvement and participation in the change, and a lack of political participation (Reichard, 2003). Conversely, some scholars argue that change in the public sector is more likely to succeed with less intervention from higher levels of government, including politicians (Wollmann, 2000). The implementation approach employed by PSOs, whether top-down or bottom-up, also affects employees' acceptance and resistance to change (Thornhill et al., 2000).

Based on a review of change management literature in the context of the public sector, Kuipers et al. (2014) concluded that the sector primarily focuses on the effectiveness of change policies rather than the effectiveness of the change implementation process itself. They noted that previous research has primarily focused on the content of change and the relationship between content and context. However, there has been a lack of focus on change implementation, prompting them to call for further research in this area. They also concluded that while existing literature prescribes key factors for managing change in a sectoral context, most of the research has been conducted within an organisational context, creating a gap in the literature. Consequently, they argue that despite the importance of organisational change in the public sector, the challenges of implementing change have not been thoroughly studied. This has prompted calls for more research to address the knowledge gap and enhance understanding of change within the context of the public sector (Kuipers et al., 2014).

2.8 Change Leadership

Leadership, as defined by Northouse (2016, p. 3), is “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. This definition is based on four key perspectives: leadership as a process, an influencing agent, group-based, and directed towards a specific goal (Northouse, 2016). There are multiple definitions of leadership, and it is argued that it cannot be precisely defined due to its complexity (Antonakis and Day, 2018). The concept of leadership is still actively debated in the literature (Holten et al., 2019). The evolution of leadership as summarised by Northouse (2016, p. 3-5) suggests that it has evolved from a focus on power and control to a focus on leaders’ traits and characteristics, group approaches, shared goals, organisational behaviour that is group-based and goal-oriented, and transformational leadership that brings people together and raises their motivation to achieve common goals and beyond.

Leadership is also conceptualised in different contexts, such as spiritual leadership focusing on religious values, authentic leadership focusing on the leader’s authenticity, servant leadership that reverses leader-follower dynamics, and adaptive leadership where leaders guide their followers to adapt to challenges (Northouse, 2016). Leadership can be assigned through formal positions such as factory managers and directors, or it can emerge based on the influence and support received from others when they perceive someone as influential and supportive of their behaviour, principles, and visions (Northouse, 2016).

The primary objective of leadership is to achieve goals. To do so, leaders need to bring people together, coordinate them, and utilise other resources (Antonakis and Day, 2018). Leadership ensures that the organisation is moving in the right direction and plays a vital role in organisational effectiveness (Ingraham and Getha-Taylor, 2004; Winston, 2004). Functionally, leadership can be viewed from two perspectives. Firstly, at the supervisory level, leadership is considered part of the organisation’s resources and works with other resources to complete tasks and solve problems (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Morgeson et al., 2010). Secondly, at the strategic level, leadership guides and directs resources, including human resources, towards strategic objectives while balancing them with the environment (Zaccaro, 2001). Leadership is entrenched

in the context of the organisation, which determines the required type of leadership and its effectiveness (Liden and Antonakis, 2009). Leaders are responsible for developing effective organisational strategies, promoting and communicating them through a vision, providing a supportive environment with rewards and sanctions, and monitoring the development and outcomes of the strategic goals to ensure their achievement (Antonakis and House, 2014).

Leadership is not only integral to organisational change but also the primary driver of change (Kotter, 1996; Higgs and Rowland, 2005; Kuipers et al., 2014). According to Charlesworth et al. (2003), effective leadership can lead to effective organisational change. The literature on change leadership focuses on the roles of leaders in initiating and implementing change (Van der Voet et al., 2014). Change leaders play a crucial role in initiating and implementing change (Borins, 2002; Burke, 2002). They are suggested to be visionaries who can anticipate a new future for the organisation, establish foundations, mobilise, and motivate employees towards it (Gioia et al., 2013; Van et al., 2013). They accomplish this by developing a future vision and implementation plan for the organisation, communicating the vision throughout the organisation, acting as role models, and motivating employees to participate in the change process (Van der Voet et al., 2015).

They also play an important role in aligning employees and their skills with the change vision and ensuring that the process takes place in an environment where employees are encouraged to collaborate, take risks, and assume responsibility for the changes taking place (Moran and Brightman, 2000). Their role also requires them to effectively manage resistance to change, as the change process is vulnerable to resistance (Jaskyte, 2004; Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Al-Ali et al., 2017). Therefore, motivation plays an important role in ensuring continuous acceptance and support and in reducing resistance within the organisational setting and culture (Griffith-Cooper and King, 2007; Gilley et al., 2009). The competence and orientation of leaders are also crucial aspects of leadership, as they determine the extent of the collaborative relationship between leaders and employees (Al-Ali et al., 2017). The beliefs of leaders are also suggested to be vital in the change process (Miller, 2010). The key change leadership roles are illustrated in Figure 6 below, as described in the literature.

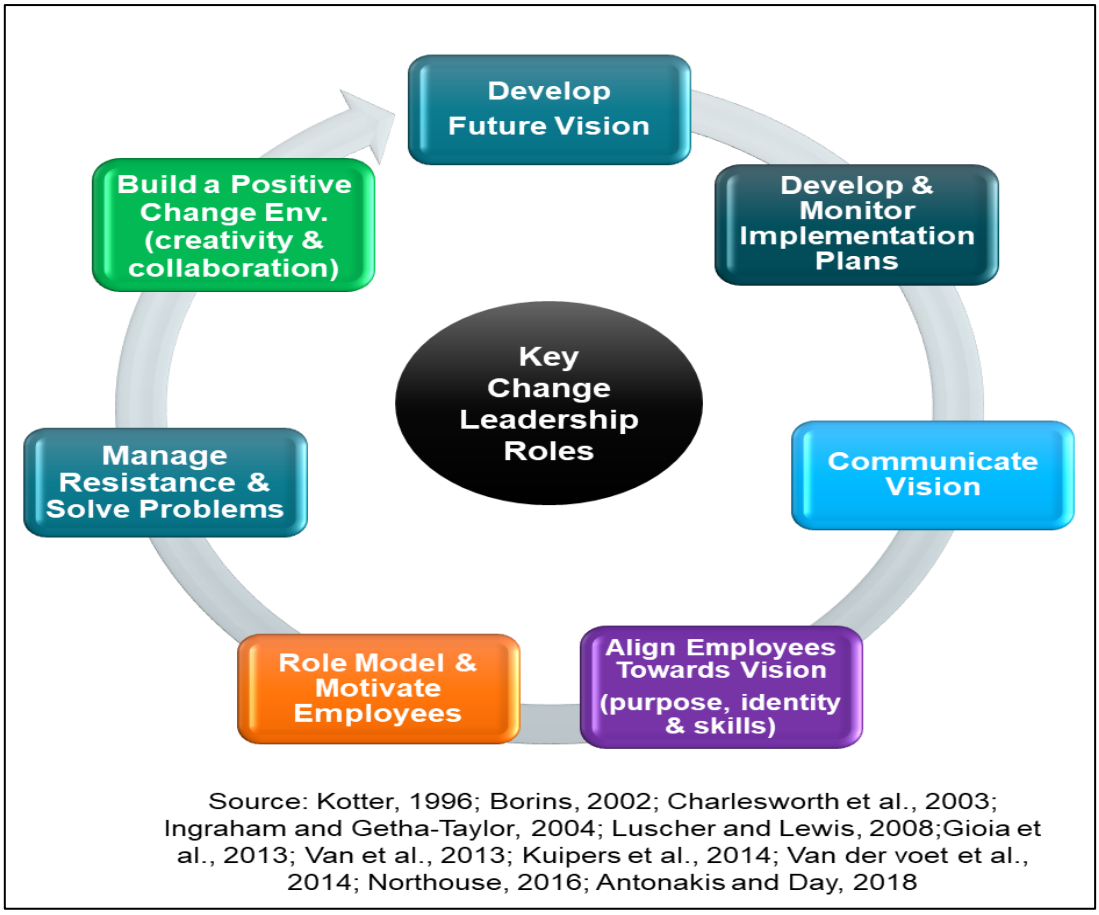

Figure 6: Key Change Leadership Roles Illustrated from the Literature

The effectiveness of the change process and the institutionalisation of change are dependent on effective leadership (Gill, 2010). Effective change leadership requires specific skills, behaviours, and competencies (Luscher and Lewis, 2008). In a broad sense, leadership involves human, technical, and conceptual skills (Northouse, 2013). More specifically, change leaders are expected to possess the skills and ability to establish a clear vision for the organisation, communicate effectively and accurately, negotiate, mediate, solve problems, and take action (Luscher and Lewis, 2008; Nazim et al., 2014). Kanter (2000, p. 34) identified seven key skills of change leaders, including the ability to embrace the environment, challenge the organisation's status, communicate, motivate towards the vision, build a strong alliance, delegate ownership to teams, learn how to sustain and preserve change, and turn everyone into a hero.

Additionally, Northouse (2013) suggested two key change leadership behaviours: task behaviour, which focuses on goals, and adaptive behaviour, which

demonstrates the leader's ability to comfort and support employees. Arguably, change leaders have a dual role, as they need to be both a supporter of the change and a change agent to drive the change forward (Nazim et al., 2014). This can positively impact employee behaviour (Li et al., 2017). Nevertheless, some scholars argue that the culture and behaviour of the organisation cannot be easily changed and internalised, as it contains cultural layers that would require extensive assessment (Farkas, 2013). Consequently, due consideration must be given to leadership behaviours and the organisational culture before embarking on change (Herold et al., 2007; Choi, 2011).

Change can arise as a planned or emergent process, and the actions of the leader will depend on the type of change (By, 2005; Higgs and Rowland, 2005; Kuipers et al., 2014). It is important to approach change effectively because planned and emergent change can co-exist and compete with each other if they are not adequately addressed (Burnes, 2004a). The literature on change leadership primarily focuses on the planned change approach (Van der Voet et al., 2014). Leadership plays a vital role in a planned change process, as it is initiated and directed by leaders (Van der Voet, 2014). In this context, leadership roles are limited to a select group of individuals from management (Van der Voet et al., 2014).

Leadership is also necessary in the emergent change process, despite its devolved nature (Higgs and Rowland, 2010). Unlike the planned approach, leadership in the emergent change process is devolved and distributed among a large group of people through the concept of distributed leadership (Van der Voet et al., 2014). In this context, leadership activities are not centralised within a few individuals from management but performed by a larger group, which can potentially yield positive results (Woods et al., 2004). Distributed leadership requires a strong relationship between managers, who must yield their authority, and employees, who must accept leadership roles (Van der Voet et al., 2014). Arguably, the role of leadership in the emergent change process is to establish a change climate within the organisation (Senior et al., 2020). In terms of leadership style, transformational leadership is commonly associated with the private sector in the literature (Stewart and Kringas, 2003; Thomas, 1996). However, it is suggested that change leaders normally exhibit

both transactional and transformational leadership styles in successful change initiatives (Hamstra et al., 2011).

2.9 Change Leadership in the Public Sector

Leadership plays a vital role in organisational change in the public sector (Kuipers et al., 2014). However, change leadership in PSOs is comparatively different from that in private sector organisations due to the complexity of the public sector environment and the split leadership between political leaders and administrative leaders (Ingraham and Getha-Taylor, 2004; Kickert, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is argued that the contextual factors of PSOs can have a negative influence on the implementation process and the success of change (Coram and Burnes, 2001; McNulty and Ferlie, 2004).

Previous research also indicates that change in PSOs is driven by external pressure, occurs with high frequency, and requires relatively rapid implementation (Andrews et al., 2008). This is due to the nature of change initiatives, which typically take the form of public policies driven by political leaders. These initiatives, which may be controversial in nature, often come with short implementation timeframes, leaving change leaders with inadequate time to plan and address the logistical, implementation challenges, and political ramifications that need to be considered (Doyle et al., 2000). Change in the public sector is also argued to be a slower process with stronger change resistance and a higher long-term impact (Meier and O'Toole, 2011). Nevertheless, these arguments are suggested to lack empirical evidence, and further studies are required on sectoral differences (Coram and Burnes, 2001; Kickert, 2010; Holten et al., 2019).

Conversely, Holten et al. (2019) concluded that positive change outcomes require the same leadership and management actions in both sectors. However, Brosnahan (2000) argues that although leadership in both sectors reflects the same characteristics and abilities in executing their duties as change leaders, there are distinctions in how these leadership traits are operationalised in the public sector. The contextual differences in the public sector have also led to the articulation of different leadership approaches for the sector (Van der Voet et al., 2015). Towards this, Denis

et al. (2005) argued that the elements of power, interest, and coalitions would be the basis for leadership in the public sector as opposed to motivation and inspiration. Consequently, scholars argue that more research on leading change in the context of the public sector is needed, as well as an investigation of the sectoral differences in relation to change leadership (Kuipers et al., 2014; Homberg et al., 2019).

The existing literature on leadership in PSOs primarily focuses on the roles and activities of high-level administrative and political leaders (Trottier et al., 2008; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). Change leadership in PSOs is closely linked to traditional hierarchical leadership models (Fernandez, 2005; Boin and Christensen, 2008). Most leadership activities in PSOs revolve around the heads of agencies (Van Wart, 2003; Chustz and Larson, 2006). Political leaders lead the decision-making process in PSOs, while administrative leaders drive and influence the implementation process (Askim et al., 2009). The relationship between political and administrative leaders is suggested to be mediated by trust (Borins, 2002).

The complex public sector environment in which administrative leaders operate drives them to adopt a planned change approach (Van der Voet et al., 2014). However, scholars argue that different change processes require different types of leadership (Borins, 2002). Managing crises and organisational transformation necessitate traditional top-down leadership, while incremental change in PSOs requires a bottom-up approach with decentralised and distributed leadership (Rusaw, 2007). Nevertheless, scholars point out a lack of focus within the literature on different types of change leadership in the public sector and what constitutes effective leadership in this sector (Jackson and Parry, 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014). As a result, Kuipers et al. (2013) concluded that change leadership in the public sector is driven by pragmatism rather than theory.

Transformational leadership is proposed as a suitable approach for PSOs, as the leadership behaviours associated with it are aligned with the objectives and motivations of the public sector (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010; Wright et al., 2012; Campbell, 2018). Transformational leadership has the capability to drive and motivate employees intrinsically to perform meaningful work for their own fulfilment rather than pursuing material incentives that are often linked with performance-based approaches

(Tummers and Knies, 2013; Campbell et al., 2016). It instils a sense of purpose, vision, and motivation to reach the ascribed goals (Bass, 1990; Hoffman et al., 2011). This is accomplished through the charismatic behaviour of the leader, which inspires motivation and intellectual stimulation among employees who are treated as individuals rather than a group of people (Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1990). Judge and Piccolo (2004) advocated four key elements of transformational leadership: influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualism.

The concept of transformational leadership is frequently differentiated from the concept of transactional leadership, which emphasises the exchange between what the employee and leader want from each other through an implicit or explicit agreement (Bass, 1997; Judge and Piccolo, 2004). On the contrary, both leaders and employees work collectively in transformational leadership towards a higher goal that is beyond the agreed-upon transaction (Bass, 1997). Previous research indicates that transformational leaders are able to motivate employees and gain their commitment to work towards the change vision (Lo et al., 2010). However, the literature suggests that transactional leadership is more commonly used in organisations, even though employees prefer the transformational leadership approach (Bass, 1997; Liu et al., 2011). According to Homberg et al. (2019), there exists a gap in the leadership literature on the cultural and follower's perspectives, which can provide a better understanding of the required leadership style (Homberg et al., 2019).

2.10 Evolution of Reform Initiatives in Malaysia

Malaysia's sustained economic growth and political stability since independence in 1957 have been driven by the government's continued commitment to national development, reforms, and improving public sector delivery (Beh, 2011; Siddiquee et al., 2019; Kamaruddin and Rogers, 2020). This commitment is reflected in initiatives introduced and implemented by successive prime ministers (Beh, 2011; Siddiquee et al., 2019). Malaysia has successfully transformed its economy, transitioning from a low-income country to an upper-middle-income country with an average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of 6.9% between 1960 and 2017. Malaysia has also significantly reduced poverty rates, with less than one percent of the population living below the international extreme poverty line (World Bank, 2021).

The progressive achievements of Malaysia's national development initiatives and reforms can be attributed, in part, to effective planning and implementation of government policies, the effectiveness of the MPS, and competent leadership at both the political and administrative levels (Ali, 2016; Siddiquee et al., 2019). These reforms were largely implemented through policy changes and developmental plans based on existing policies and a sound institutional framework that has been in place since independence (Beh, 2011; McCourt, 2018). However, scholars argue that Malaysia's developmental process was dominated by the federal government and its executives, leading to a strong, hierarchical top-down administration. This can be attributed to the nature of the governing coalition and past performance (McCourt, 2018). The reform process has also been criticised in the past for being overly centralised, with participation limited to government entities only. However, the consultation process has gradually been expanded to include views from external organisations and the public (Beh, 2011). The hierarchical and top-down approach within the Malaysian context aligns with existing literature, which indicates that PSOs are more inclined to adopt the planned approach (see Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015).

As part of its development agenda, Malaysia has implemented long-term, medium-term, and short-term development plans. These plans are spearheaded by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and overseen by the Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU), both operating under the Prime Minister's Department (Prime Minister's Department, 2020). The long-term development plans are defined in the Outline Perspective Plans (OPP), such as OPP1 (1971–1990) and OPP2 (1991–2000). These plans set the broad thrust, strategies, and long-term targets. They are supported by the medium-term development plans, which are implemented through consecutive 5-year Malaysian plans. For example, the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996–2000) establishes the country's economic growth targets and the overall budgetary considerations for the period (Prime Minister's Department, 2020). Malaysia is presently implementing the Twelfth Malaysian Plan (2021–2025) (Economic Planning Unit, 2021).

On the other hand, short-term planning involves the annual budgets prepared by the Ministry of Finance. These budgets are designed to align with the strategies

and programmes outlined in the long-term and medium-term plans (Prime Minister's Department, 2020). Additionally, several national policies have also been introduced to support Malaysia's development agenda, such as Vision 2020 (1991–2020), the New Economic Model (2011–2020), and more recently, the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (2021–2030) (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019; Prime Minister's Department, 2020). Figure 7 below illustrates the evolution of national policies in Malaysia since its independence (Prime Minister's Department, 2020).

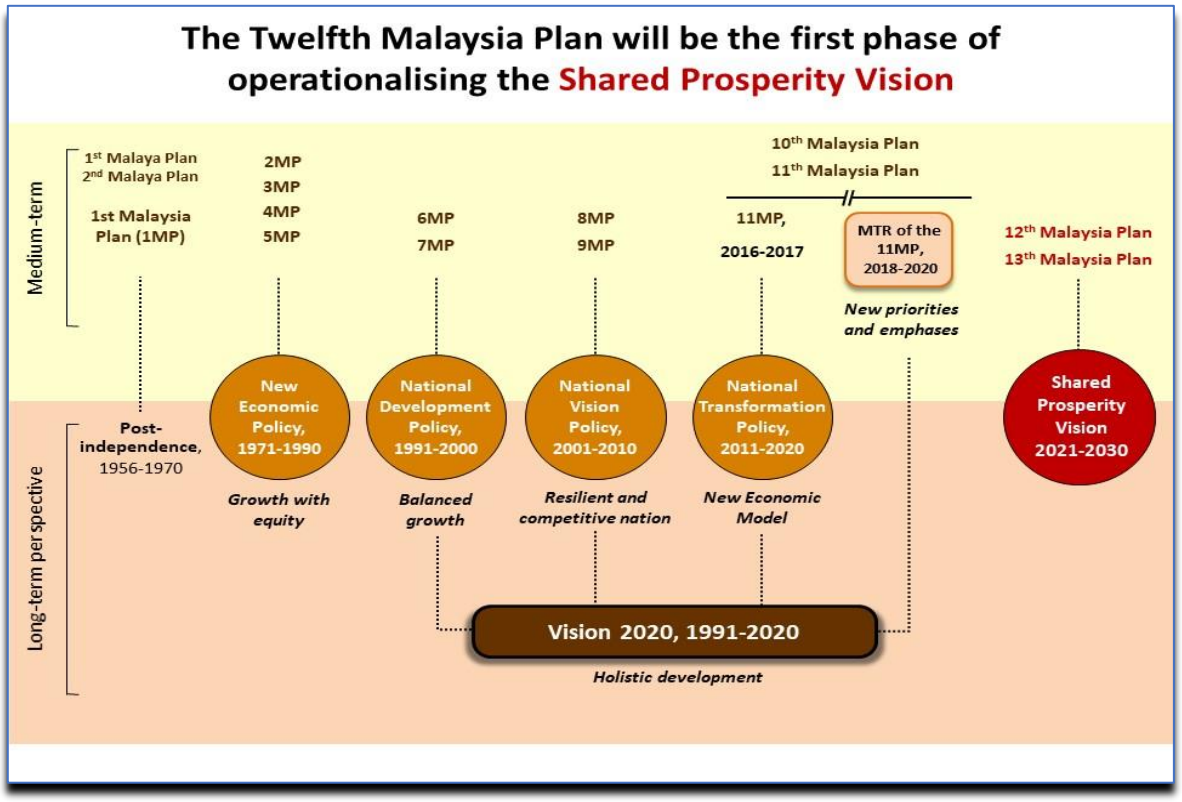

Figure 7: Policy Development Phases in Malaysia (Source: PMD, 2020)

2.10.1 Reforms in Malaysia and the Malaysian Public Sector (1957–2018)

The post-independence period from 1957 to 1981 witnessed reform initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty and bridging the socio-economic gap among Malaysia's multi-racial society through economic development (Wylde, 2017). In line with the expanding role of the public sector in managing the evolving economy and to enhance the delivery of public sector services, the government implemented initiatives to strengthen the sector and the capacity of the civil service. These initiatives were

introduced through the 1966 Montgomery-Esman report on “Development Administration in Malaysia” and the 1968 Programme and Performance Budgeting System (Xavier et al., 2021).

The leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad as the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003 marked another significant shift in Malaysia’s developmental policies. During this period, Malaysia moved towards industrialisation and the privatisation of government entities, with a greater reliance on market forces. This shift was motivated, in part, by the adoption of the New Public Management Policy (NPM). Through the privatisation exercise, the role of the MPS also shifted towards supporting and facilitating the privatised entities (Beh, 2011; Siddiquee et al., 2019; Xavier et al., 2021). The government machinery was also overhauled to enhance efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness on the global stage (Siddique et al., 2019; Xavier et al., 2021). A range of reform-oriented initiatives were introduced in the MPS, which include: the simplification of counter-service procedures; the introduction of the Clients' Charter in 1993; the adoption of information and technology; the implementation of the Total Quality Management (TQM) process in 1992, which emphasised improving public service delivery through quality control, results, and customer service; the adoption of ISO Standards in 1996 to ensure consistency in service delivery; and the introduction of electronic government to digitise government services (Common, 2003; Beh, 2011; Siddiquee, 2010, 2019).

The reforms implemented by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad during his 22-year premiership provided a foundation for Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia from 2003 to 2009 (Siddiquee et al., 2019). During this time, there was a strong focus on improving the efficiency and performance of the MPS. This focus included a strong emphasis on performance management and measurement, which resulted in the introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the setting of clear targets for government initiatives, and a ranking system within the MPS (Siddiquee et al., 2019). The first KPI system was introduced in 2005 by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), which required all government ministries and agencies to develop their own KPIs with relevant benchmarking to measure the level and quality of their services (Beh, 2011; Siddiquee, 2019). Subsequently, KPIs were utilised to evaluate the performance of

senior officials in the MPS (Siddiquee, 2019). To further enhance the performance agenda, the Auditor General's Ratings were introduced in 2006, rating ministries on a scale of 1 to 5 stars (Xavier, 2014). Additionally, MAMPU introduced its own star rating system to assess the overall performance of ministries in 2007 (Xavier, 2014). A Special Taskforce to Facilitate Business (PEMUDAH) was also established in 2007, involving both the public and private sectors, to review and monitor the government's service delivery system (Xavier, 2014; Lee and Chew-Ging, 2017).

The introduction of the KPI system under the premiership of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi aimed to elevate the service delivery performance of the MPS (Siddiquee et al., 2019). However, concerns arose regarding the effectiveness of the KPI system, as ministries had the freedom to set their own KPIs with limited external monitoring and evaluation, potentially leading to manipulation and gaming of the system (Siddiquee, 2019). Gaming, which involves setting suboptimal targets and manipulating performance data for organisational gain, is suggested to be a common issue in performance management (McCourt, 2012). The design of the KPI system was also criticised for focusing on measuring outputs, such as service delivery time, instead of more crucial aspects related to objectives, outcomes, and cost-effectiveness (Siti Nabiha, 2008).

Najib Razak became the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2009 following the ruling government's poor performance in the 12th General Elections in 2008, which indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the government (Lesley, 2014; Lee and Chew-Ging, 2017; Siddiquee et al., 2019). In response to the growing demand for improvements in the MPS and public service, the government introduced the National Transformation Policy (NTP) in 2009. This policy included two key transformational programmes: the Government Transformation Programme (GTP), which aimed to enhance government efficiency, and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), which addressed economic challenges faced by the country (PEMANDU, 2011; Ramadass et al., 2017; Siddiquee, 2019). Unlike previous reform initiatives, the GTP, with its slogan "People First, Performance Now", focused on transforming performance and service delivery in specific key areas rather than implementing sector-wide reforms.

The GTP employed a diagnostic and collaborative approach centred on implementation and monitoring (Siddiquee, 2019; Siddiquee et al., 2019). The design of the GTP was considered a new approach to public sector reform, particularly in terms of performance management and measurement in the MPS. It involved goal setting and the use of continuously monitored and measured KPIs (PEMANDU, 2011; Siddiquee, 2019). The GTP initially targeted six National Key Result Areas (NKRA) identified through opinion polls in 2009: (i) Reducing Crime; (ii) Fighting Corruption; (iii) Assuring Quality Education; (iv) Raising Living Standards of Low-Income Households; (v) Improving Rural Infrastructure; and (vi) Enhancing Urban Public Transport. An additional NKRA, Tackling Rising Cost of Living, was included in 2011 (PEMANDU, 2010; Xavier et al., 2016; Siddiquee et al., 2019).

Clear targets and action plans were established for each NKRA through bottom-up interactive lab sessions involving stakeholders from the public and private sectors, civil society, and academia. These labs developed specific deliverables, timelines, indicators, and required resources for each NKRA (Siddiquee, 2019). Lead ministers were assigned to each NKRA and were directly accountable to the Prime Minister for achieving the KPIs and performance targets. In 2009, the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) was established under the Prime Minister's Department to facilitate and support the implementation of the GTP by relevant ministries and provide an independent assessment of its performance (PEMANDU, 2011). The achievement, strengths, and weaknesses of the GTP are discussed in Paragraph 2.11.

As part of the government's continuous transformational agenda, the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS) was introduced in 2009. It aimed to improve the value of public service delivery through rapid, low-cost, and high-impact innovation and collaboration (Zakaria et al., 2017; Xavier et al., 2021). NBOS sought to eliminate the silo mentality prevalent in the MPS by encouraging collaboration between government agencies, the private sector, and civil society (Xavier et al., 2021). Despite the successful completion of 118 projects, NBOS encountered implementation challenges. These included the initial top-down implementation process, difficulties faced by frontliners in identifying public needs, and the bureaucratic processes that often filtered bottom-up information. Additionally, there was a lack of collaboration and

data sharing between government agencies. Despite its success, NBOS was dismantled after a change in government in 2018 (Xavier et al., 2021).

2.10.2 Change of Government and a New Beginning (2018–Present)

Malaysia was ruled by the same political coalition, Barisan Nasional (National Front), for over 61 years since gaining independence in 1957 (Lee, 2020; Tapsell, 2020). However, Barisan Nasional was removed from power in May 2018 after the 14th General Election, and the political coalition Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) took over as the government (World Bank, 2019; Lee, 2020). The change of government in Malaysia was partially attributed to the election promises and proposed economic reforms outlined in the Pakatan Harapan coalition's election manifesto (Lee, 2020).

The Merdeka Centre Survey conducted between April and May 2018 revealed that 43% of the respondents identified "economic concerns" as the primary factor for voters during the 14th General Election, followed by 21% for corruption and 8% for leadership and governance (Merdeka Center, 2018). One-third of the Pakatan Harapan coalition's election manifesto focused on governance concerns related to public institutions, parliament, and the judiciary (World Bank, 2019). The new government also attributed Barisan Nasional's failure as the ruling government to weaknesses in governance and institutions, which led to corruption and scandals (Lee, 2018, 2020). Consequently, the new government swiftly established a reform framework, made changes to the policy formulation processes, and developed a monitoring mechanism to promote good governance and integrity across the government (World Bank, 2019).

The government transition after the 14th General Election was relatively smooth, and the MPS, which has been in place under the Barisan National government for the past 61 years, remained mostly unchanged, except for some key changes at the top (Lee, 2020). The MPS is considered the backbone of the government, and Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who became the 7th Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2018, emphasised the importance of civil service performance. He was quoted by The Star newspaper on April 30, 2019, saying, "It's important that we do this to the best of our

ability because the nation's progress depends on how the civil service performs." (Anis, 2019b). However, it was suggested that civil servants within the MPS faced new administrative and governance challenges due to the change of government, particularly in the early stages when the MPS operated in an uncertain environment (Kaur, 2018; Wong, 2018). Arguably, the change of government may have left MPS civil servants feeling uneasy and lost, as they had served the previous government that has been in power for the past 61 years. Now they will have to work, support, and pledge their loyalty to the new administration (Anis, 2019a). This highlights the significance placed on the MPS as a crucial machinery of the government, particularly in driving change.

In October 2019, the government introduced the "Shared Prosperity Vision 2030", a new developmental blueprint that aims to provide a decent standard of living for all Malaysians by 2030 through sustainable growth that includes equitable distribution, political stability, national prosperity, and unity (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019; Lee, 2020). The policy outlines three key objectives: development for all; addressing wealth and income disparities; and creating a United, Prosperous and Dignified Nation. These objectives are supported by 15 guiding principles, seven strategic thrusts, and eight enablers to achieve their goals. The policy, aimed at effective resource management and high-value investments, will be implemented through the Twelfth Malaysian Plan and the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan. It builds upon previous policies, such as the NTP, implemented from 2011 to 2020 (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019).

The policy identifies effective institutional delivery as one of its enablers and acknowledges that previous measurement indicators used to assess the outcome of socio-economic development initiatives were output-based. Furthermore, it suggests that previous initiatives prioritised participation and publicity over actual outcomes, which led to an emphasis on outputs rather than outcomes. Consequently, the policy proposes adopting an outcome-based approach in formulating and implementing government policies and strategies, along with specific key result indicators (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019). It also identifies effective policy implementation and communication as key enablers for the successful planning and implementation of government initiatives. Additionally, it highlights the need to address inefficiencies in

public service delivery, streamline work systems and procedures to reduce bureaucracy, and optimise the roles and functions of ministries and agencies to prevent overlapping and conserve resources (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019).

One of the main challenges faced by the Pakatan Harapan government in implementing its goals was related to budgetary constraints. The coalition argued that the government's fiscal capacity was in a dire state (Lee, 2020). Despite the country's relatively fair economic performance, with growth rates ranging between 4.5% and 5.0% and inflation rates below one percent, the government struggled to implement new growth strategies to address structural weaknesses in the Malaysian economy (Lee, 2020). However, specific details about these challenges are lacking in the literature. Additionally, it is argued that the government failed to fulfil various promises outlined in their manifesto, and the pace of reforms was slow, leading to public dissatisfaction (Tapsell, 2020).

Conversely, it is suggested that the promises made in the Pakatan Harapan election manifesto were intended to be fulfilled within the full five-year term. However, the rule of Pakatan Harapan came to an end after 22 months in February 2020 due to political party realignment (Zaidi and Redzuan, 2020). In March 2020, a new political coalition called Perikatan Nasional (National Alliance), led by Muhyiddin Yassin, who was subsequently appointed as the 8th Prime Minister, took over the government from Pakatan Harapan (Yaakop et al., 2020; Raman Govindasamy, 2021). Due to the political manoeuvring in the country, Muhyiddin Yassin resigned as Prime Minister in August 2021, and Ismail Sabri Yaakob assumed office as the 9th Prime Minister of Malaysia under the same coalition (Hin, 2021). The 15th General Election saw the return of the Pakatan Harapan coalition as the government of the day in November 2022 (Moten, 2023).

Despite the political upheavals in the country, the government introduced the Twelfth Malaysian Plan (RMK12) in September 2021, aligning it with the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030. The plan is being implemented from 2021 to 2025 (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). It acknowledges that the Vision 2020 policy introduced in 1991 to propel the nation towards developed nation status has not achieved its desired objectives due to structural economic issues and global challenges. The plan also

recognises that Malaysia is still in the process of transitioning to a high-income economy, despite the progress made. The gap between the current income level and the threshold for a high-income economy of US $12,696 has been reduced from 62.6% in 1991 to 20.4% in 2020 (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). The World Bank (2021) also reported that Malaysia is transitioning from an upper-middle-income economy to a high-income economy and estimates that this status can be achieved between 2024 and 2028. They further emphasised that Malaysia's growth rate is comparatively slower than other countries that have recently achieved high-income economy status. Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may pose challenges to Malaysia's goal of achieving this status by 2028.

The main objective of RMK12 is to transform the country's economy. To accomplish this, the plan incorporates several key factors, including the adoption of transformational leadership at all levels of the government, monitoring progress at the national level and intervening to solve problems, securing political support to ensure successful change, and promoting collaboration between the government, private sector, academia, civil society organisations, and the public (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). The MPS has been identified as one of the key enablers for RMK12, and the plan recognises the need to transform the MPS to address talent gaps, improve the governance system, enhance project implementation to improve efficiency and service delivery, and optimise existing resources.

Additionally, the plan proposes streamlining ministries and agencies and clearly defining the roles of political leaders and civil servants within the government. It also acknowledges that the efficiency of the public service delivery system has been hindered by implementation and monitoring weaknesses. This was attributed to internal and external factors such as complacency, lack of commitment, political interference, corruption, and overlapping structures and functions of government ministries and agencies. Furthermore, the plan aims to enhance the use of KPIs and evaluate them through the Malaysian Government Performance Index (MyGPI). The government is also committed to developing a high-performing civil service and nurturing civil servants and future leaders who are equipped with effective leadership skills and innovative thinking (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). As the plan is set to be

implemented from 2021 onwards, the reform agenda and initiatives will be introduced in stages.

2.11 Effectiveness of Reform Initiatives in the Malaysian Public Sector

The public sector's performance primarily depends on its ability to deliver government policies designed to benefit the people (Malaysia Productivity Corporation, 2019). However, the performance of the MPS is suggested to be relatively stagnant and falls short of the high-income nations it aspires to join. Malaysia's growth rate has also been slower compared to its peers that recently transitioned to a high-income economy status (World Bank, 2021). Despite positive economic progress since independence, the pace of the country's development and reform agenda has been inconsistent and lags behind in its vision to become a developed nation (World Bank, 2019).

The World Bank's Government Effectiveness indicator, which measures the quality of public service, policy implementation, and implementation process, illustrates Malaysia's relatively stagnant performance over the past few decades. In 2020, Malaysia's percentile rank was 82.2, as shown in Figure 8, for the period from 1996 to 2020 (World Bank, 2022b). In comparison, Singapore's percentile rank was 100, the United Kingdom's was 89.4, Brunei Darussalam's was 90.4, and Canada's was 94.2 in the same year.

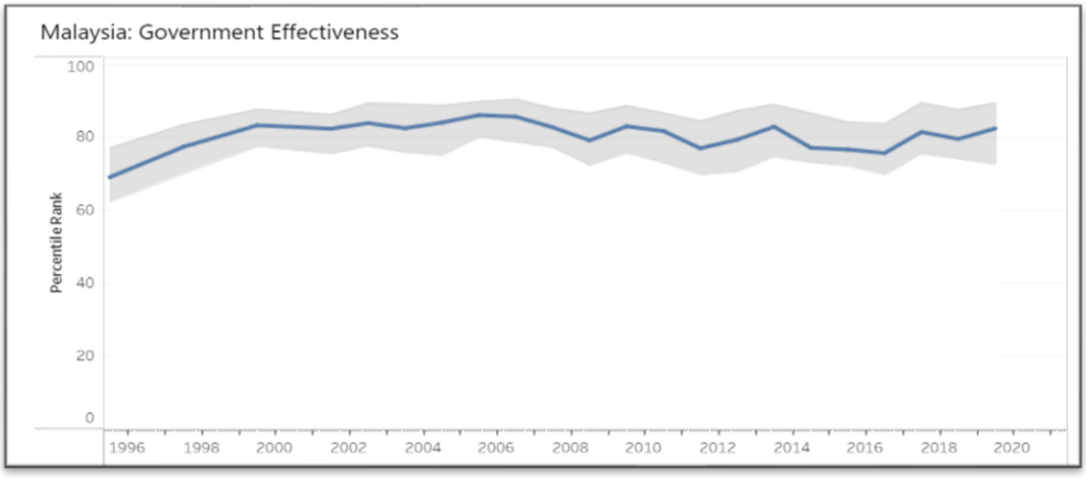

Figure 8: World Bank's Government Effectiveness Indicator: Malaysia 1996–2020 (Source: World Bank, 2022b)

The Malaysian Government called for a "fundamental change" in 2010 to improve economic performance, social performance, delivery of public services, and delivery of public goods, as the country was lagging in achieving its Vision 2020 aspirations (PEMANDU, 2010). The government was concerned about the slow growth rate, which averaged 6.2% per annum over the last 20 years, falling short of the target of at least 8% per annum for achieving developed nation status (PEMANDU, 2010). In 2019, the GDP growth rate was 4.4% and dropped to -5.6% in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Figure 9 below illustrates the annual percentage change of the Malaysian GDP from 1991 to 2020, adapted from the Malaysian Economic Statistics Review Report, Volume 4, 2022 (Department of Statistics, 2022).

Additionally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggested in its 2019 Economic Survey that Malaysia needs to focus on productivity growth and structural reforms to achieve a high-income status by 2024 (OECD, 2019). However, Malaysia's productivity growth rate has been declining since 2016, reaching 3.7% in that year, 2.2% in 2019, and -5.5% in 2020, the lowest in the past 10 years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Malaysian Productivity Corporation, 2021). In comparison, both Singapore (-3.4%) and Indonesia (-1.8%) recorded higher productivity growth rates than Malaysia in 2020.

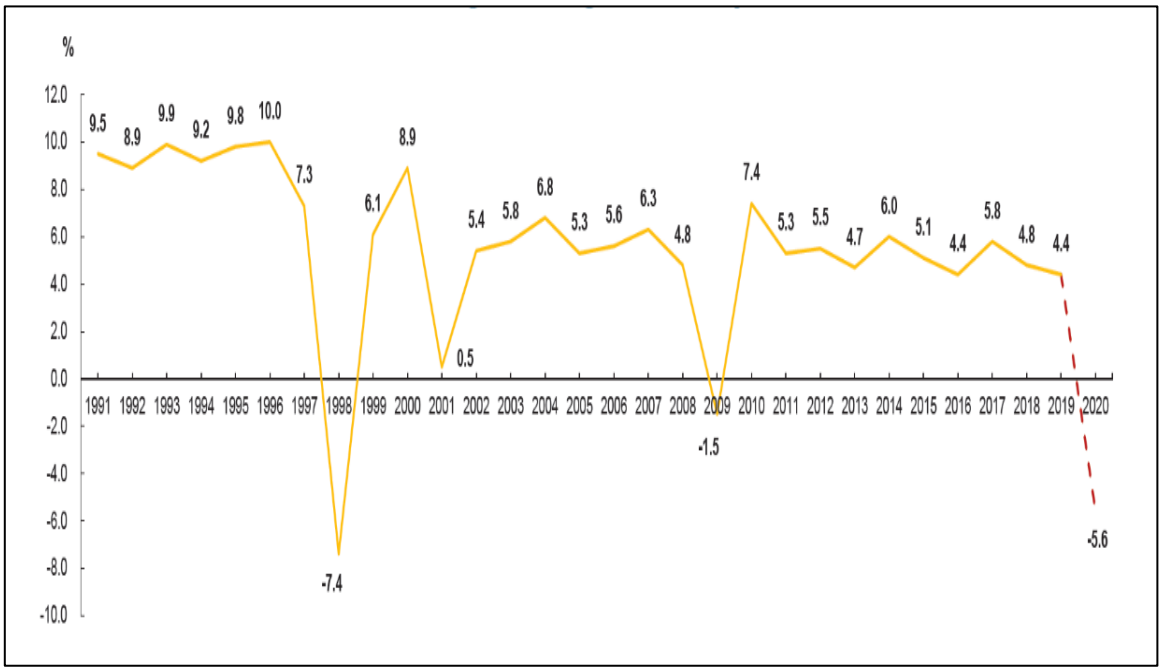

Figure 9: Annual Percentage of Malaysia's GDP, 1991–2020 (Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022)

The preceding sections discussed how Malaysia's reform initiatives shifted under successive prime ministers and aligned with the country's socio-economic progression (Siddiquee et al., 2019; Economic Planning Unit, 2021). Importantly, the reforms also responded to increasing demands from the public for an efficient public sector and quality of public service delivery (Siddiquee et al., 2019). According to the World Bank (2019), improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector is crucial for transitioning to a higher level of economic development. Despite various reform initiatives introduced to enhance the quality-of-service delivery of the MPS, it was reported that there were implementation gaps that affected the outcomes of these reforms. These reforms were also not fully internalised within the MPS, leading to a stagnation in terms of service delivery (Lesley, 2014; Siddiquee et al., 2019; World Bank, 2019). Consequently, it is argued that the actual implementation of the development plans and strategies did not meet the aspired outcomes (World Bank, 2019). Lesley (2014) also found that reform initiatives prior to the GTP were poorly implemented and produced mixed results. Her findings indicated a high level of dissatisfaction among the public with the public service. Despite efforts to address these weaknesses, recent government policies such as the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 and the RMK12 continue to highlight concerns about policy implementation as key areas to improve public service delivery (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019; Economic Planning Unit, 2021).

Earlier reforms, particularly during Dr. Mahathir's tenure as the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, were criticised for being broad in nature and their application across the public sector (Xavier et al. 2016). These reforms mainly adopted best practices from successful reform initiatives in other countries, especially OECD countries, which offered generic solutions but lacked the necessary localised contextual diagnosis and targets (Siddiquee, 2019; Siddiquee et al., 2019). The best practice approach has been criticised for adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, ignoring the contextual perspective of change, and overly focusing on the content of change (Xavier et al., 2016). Context plays a critical role in change, and scholars argue that change in the public sector is context dependent (Pettigrew, 1985; Van der Voet et al., 2014; Siddiquee et al., 2019). It is also suggested that earlier reforms in Malaysia were primarily process driven rather than result based and lacked proper diagnosis and measurable indicators (Iyer, 2011; Xavier et al., 2016). These initiatives were

formulated through a centralised, hierarchical, top-down decision-making process, with implementation delegated to the respective ministries. This resulted in a mismatch between the planning and implementation processes (Beh, 2011; Xavier et al., 2016).

The implementation of these reforms was also carried out in a top-down manner and lacked a proper monitoring and evaluation process (Beh, 2011; Xavier et al., 2016). Moreover, the reform initiatives were implemented inconsistently, resulting in a wide gap between what was planned and what was actually implemented (Common, 2003; Siddiquee, 2019). Consequently, the outcome of these reforms fell short of the expected objectives (Tan, 2010; Lesley, 2014). The adoption of the Modified Budgeting System (MBS) in 1990 exemplifies the weaknesses of the earlier reform agenda. MBS was adopted from Australia to replace the Programme and Performance Budgeting System (PPBS) and it promoted a performance-based budgeting system (Siddiquee et al., 2019). The implementation of the MBS yielded mixed results as it faced various implementation challenges, such as government agencies struggling to eliminate the line budgeting system previously used under the PPBS, time constraints faced by officers, and a lack of competency in collecting performance data. This experience highlights the need for systematic planning of the change process and the identification and removal of existing obstacles to achieve the desired vision (Kotter, 1996).

GTP was developed based on the premise that past reform initiatives were poorly implemented and the need for a fundamental change to achieve government aspirations. It represented a new approach to public sector reforms in Malaysia that emphasised the implementation and monitoring processes to improve service delivery (PEMANDU, 2010, 2011; Siddiquee, 2019). Like the best fit approach, GTP emphasised a diagnostic, problem-solving, and collaborative approach to reform (Siddiquee et al., 2019). However, the problem-driven approach, despite its growing popularity, has been questioned. Developing reform initiatives based solely on the identification of key problems faced by the public service can be a challenging process, particularly in terms of ownership (McCourt, 2018). Despite the government's claim that GTP was a successful initiative, there was scepticism regarding its overall effectiveness, impact, and value. However, there is limited analysis on the effectiveness of GTP within the change management literature both globally and in

Malaysia (Xavier et al., 2016). According to the data published in the GTP annual reports, the programme can be considered relatively successful, and it even surpassed its targets in some reform areas despite challenges in others, such as education, cost of living, and corruption. Nevertheless, based on the data presented in Table 1, the success of GTP from 2010 to 2015 showed a declining trend, suggesting that the initial targets were much easier to achieve (Siddiquee, 2019).

GTP—Achievement (%) of NKRA targets, 2010–2015.

NKRAs	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Crime	168	130	102	110	160	114
Corruption	121	134	91	78	82	93
Education	156	188	118	99	94	94
Poverty alleviation	79	103	112	111	102	97
Rural development	91	123	116	120	102	107
Urban public transport	107	108	109	116	99	72
Cost of Living	—	—	110	94	99	98
Composite score	121%	131%	109%	104%	105%	96.4%

Table 1: Achievements of GTP Targets, 2010–2015 (Source: Siddiquee et al., 2019, p. 21)

Scholars argue that the performance indicators used in GTP were not outcome-based but instead output-driven and measured processes, actions, and activities such as the amount of money disbursed and the number of schools built (World Bank, 2017; Siddiquee et al., 2019). As a result, the actual outcome of GTP reforms is unknown since the targets were skewed towards a particular indicator, and other aspects of performance, such as whether the initiatives provided value for money, were not measured (Siddiquee et al., 2019). There were also questions about whether the targets set in GTP were challenging enough, as the achievements of some of the NKRAs exceeded their targets by a significant margin. For example, the Crime NKRA overachieved all its targets, as reflected in Table 1 above (World Bank, 2017). McCourt (2012) argued that the practice of setting suboptimal targets and manipulating reported data was common in performance management. The credibility of the data used in GTP was also questioned, although it is mediated by the annual auditing done on GTP by third parties (World Bank, 2017). Furthermore, the limited areas focused on under GTP created a small area of success within a wider public service setting, and the

success of GTP may have been influenced by other ongoing initiatives (World Bank, 2017; Siddiquee et al., 2019).

Despite the challenges, the experience of GTP provides a number of lessons and guidance for public sector reform initiatives (Xavier et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017). The relative success of GTP is partly due to the direct involvement and strong support of the top leadership, which came from the prime minister himself (World Bank, 2017). The prioritisation of areas for reform and the articulation of these areas towards clear targets, ownership, and timelines contributed to the effectiveness of the programme (Xavier et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017). Another contributing factor to its relative success is the adoption of both top-down and bottom-up processes in the design of GTP, where it was driven from the top but actively engaged and collaborated across the board to create a sense of ownership and reduce resistance towards GTP (Xavier et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017). However, despite the potential of GTP, the programme was discontinued when the Pakatan Harapan Government took over in 2018 (Siddiquee, 2019; Xavier et al., 2021).

The change of government that brought Pakatan Harapan into power in May 2018 promised significant institutional, parliamentary, and judicial reforms (Lee, 2020). However, these reforms were halted when the Pakatan Harapan government lost its majority in February 2020, only 22 months after assuming power (Wong, 2020; Ufen, 2021). While the Pakatan Harapan government did implement some reforms, such as abolishing the Goods and Services Tax (GST), adjusting petrol subsidies, and increasing the minimum wage, most of the other reforms outlined in the coalition's manifesto were not implemented due to the short duration of their governance (Ufen, 2021). Subsequently, the Perikatan Nasional Government, which came to power in March 2020 just as the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in the country in January 2020, focused on containing the spread of the virus and addressing its economic and social impacts (Mark et al., 2021). Despite the challenges, the country continues to implement the RMK12 from 2021 to 2025, which lays out new prospects for the country's growth based on previous initiatives and policies as well as new aspirations (Economic Planning Unit, 2021).

The literature on managing public sector reform initiatives in Malaysia is significantly limited and does not provide the necessary insights on the reform processes and how they can be effectively implemented (Siddiquee et al., 2019). Existing literature is primarily descriptive and chronological in nature (Taib and Mat, 1992; Painter, 2004). The available literature largely focuses on broad reform drives rather than providing detailed investigations of specific reform initiatives and their effectiveness (Siddiquee, 2019). However, recent studies on the implementation of GTP and NBOS have shed some light on the effectiveness of these reform initiatives, as discussed earlier. Consequently, there have been calls for further research on the blended approach, top-down and bottom-up, inherent in the design of GTP and whether the initiative was value for money given its significant government funding (Siddiquee, 2019).

Appendix 1 includes a non-exhaustive list of articles available on public sector reforms in Malaysia. These articles primarily offer descriptive reviews and analyses based on secondary data on reform initiatives within the MPS (see Siddiquee, 2006, 2010; Xavier et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017, 2019). Most recent articles tend to compare previous reform initiatives with current initiatives such as the GTP and NBOS, addressing gaps, weaknesses, failures, strengths, and achievements (see Iyer, 2011; McCourt, 2018; Siddiquee, 2019; Siddiquee et al., 2019; Xavier et al., 2021). There is also a lack of discussion on the role of leadership in the implementation of change initiatives, especially in the context of administrative leadership. However, more recent articles have recognised the importance of political leadership in driving the change agenda within the MPS, although empirical studies and analyses are still lacking (see World Bank, 2017; Siddiquee, 2019; Xavier et al., 2021). Additionally, there are limited discussions and detailed analyses within the literature on reform initiatives undertaken by both the Pakatan Harapan government and the Perikatan Nasional government, which aim to increase efficiency and improve the quality of service delivery in the MPS.

2.12 Theoretical Framework of the Research

The aim of this research is to understand the phenomenon of change, specifically the implementation of PCIs in the public sector. Therefore, the proposed theoretical framework illustrated in Figure 10 below is based on three key areas:

change management with a focus on change implementation; change leadership with a focus on administrative leadership; and the contextual factors of the public sector. In terms of change management, the literature highlights three main processes: the planning process of change (Lewin, 1947; Burnes, 2004a; Hossan, 2015; Homberg et al., 2019); the implementation process of change (Lewin, 1947; Kotter, 1996; Burnes, 2017; Edwards et al., 2020); and the institutionalisation of change within the organisation, which is closely related to the overall outcome of the change (Lewin, 1947; Beer and Nohria, 2000; Homberg et al., 2019).

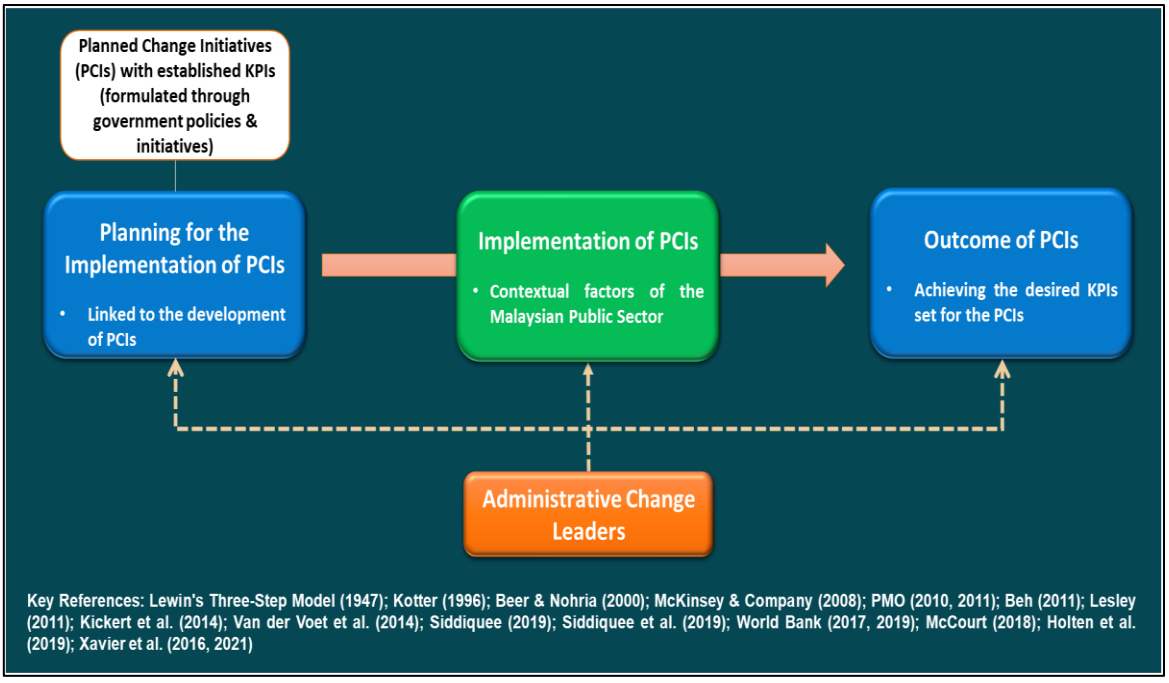

Figure 10: Theoretical Framework Based on Literature and Research Objectives

Given that this study focuses on the implementation of PCIs, the initial theoretical framework is based on the change implementation process. Aligned with the research objectives and questions, the key processes examined in understanding the change implementation phenomenon in the public sector include the planning process for implementing PCIs, which is closely connected to the change formulation process. Further, the study investigates the process of implementing PCIs, including the key implementation factors considered and the challenges faced by ACLs due to sector-specific contextual factors. Lastly, it aims to identify the key roles and leadership attributes of ACLs responsible for implementing the PCIs and achieving the desired outcomes of the change.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology and design of the study. It explains the steps taken by the researcher to design the study with a qualitative approach. It also explores the relevant considerations and justifications for the chosen methods, including the underlying theoretical foundation and philosophical dimension. It further details the procedures of the study, beginning with the broad philosophical stance of the researcher, moving to the procedure of inquiry that shapes the design of the study, and the adopted research methods for data collection and analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The adoption of a qualitative approach is in line with the objective of this study, which seeks to explore and understand the phenomenon of change implementation in the public sector (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders and Lewis, 2018). The researcher's philosophical stance and personal appeal towards words rather than numbers further support this approach. This chapter first discusses the nature and paradigm of the research, including ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. It then delves into the methodological design, data collection methods, and techniques used for this study. Finally, it examines the chosen data analysis and validation methods.

3.2 Nature of Research

Research is a systematic, multi-stage process used to find information or answers to specific problems (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Systematic research involves conducting the research process, collecting data, and interpreting it in a logical manner without relying on unjustified beliefs or assumptions (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010). Research can be conducted as basic research, aimed at contributing to knowledge, or as applied research, aimed at solving organisational problems (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The nature and purpose of business and management research have been the subject of debate as to whether it contributes to knowledge, solves practical organisational problems, or both (Saunders et al., 2019). This is a relevant question in the context of this study, as

the primary objective is to contribute to knowledge in the field of change management within the context of the public sector while also assessing key factors and challenges in implementing change in the sector.

Therefore, this study is conducted as basic research, but it may offer potential organisational solutions or insights into the challenges faced based on the new knowledge acquired through this systematic research process. Despite the ongoing debate on basic and applied research in the literature, it is suggested that findings from basic research are often applied to solve organisational problems later, and this study aligns with this view (Saunders et al., 2019).

The purpose of research is reflected in the questions it seeks to ask and answer, which can be exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or evaluative in nature (Saunders et al., 2019). Exploratory research aims to understand a phenomenon by discovering and gaining insights into a specific area or problem. Descriptive research focuses on gathering detailed and accurate information about past events, individuals or groups, and situations that have occurred. Both exploratory and descriptive research are closely associated with the qualitative approach and are often carried out through interviews with variations in techniques (Saunders et al., 2019). On the other hand, explanatory research focuses on studying a problem with the objective of identifying and explaining causal relationships between variables, closely linked to the quantitative approach (Saunders et al., 2019). If the objective of the research is to assess the effectiveness of a specific initiative, it is called evaluative research. Depending on the nature and design of the research, the purpose of the research may also include a combination of exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative purposes (Saunders et al., 2019).

The purpose and nature of this study are exploratory, as the primary objective is to understand the phenomenon of change implementation from the perspective of ACLs within the public sector context. Accordingly, this study aims to gain an insider's perspective from research participants on how they perceive, assign meanings, and interpret their reality as ACLs in the change implementation process within their respective organisations.

3.3 Research Paradigm

Research paradigms serve as a guide for researchers in addressing and solving the problems their research aims to explore, as well as in selecting the most suitable research methods (Brown and Duenas, 2020). They are commonly understood as a set of shared beliefs and agreements among researchers on how to approach and address research problems (Kuhn TS, 1962; Brown and Duenas, 2020). These paradigms encompass three key assumptions made by the researcher: (i) ontological assumptions regarding the nature of reality; (ii) epistemological assumptions regarding the nature of human knowledge; and (iii) methodological assumptions concerning the research methodology. More recently, it has been suggested that axiological assumptions, which pertain to the values and role of the research in influencing the research process, should also be included (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019; Brown and Duenas, 2020). The key aspects of the research paradigm are illustrated in Figure 11 below.

These considerations shape researchers' perspectives on the world and the reality that surrounds them (Schwandt, 2001). Both basic and applied research aim to uncover the truth, contribute to the existing body of knowledge, or address organisational problems (Saunders et al., 2019). This quest for truth is guided by the philosophical assumptions made by researchers, which are influenced by their beliefs and perspectives on the world, society, and themselves (Burell and Morgan, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019; Brown and Duenas, 2020). Although these assumptions often remain in the background of the research, they significantly impact the research outcomes by influencing the research design and data collection methods (Slife and Williams, 1995; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019; Brown and Duenas, 2020). They also shape the formulation of research questions, the selection of research methods, and the interpretation of findings (Crotty, 1998; Johnson and Clark, 2006). In this section, the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions are discussed, while the subsequent sections will focus on the methodological procedures of inquiry.

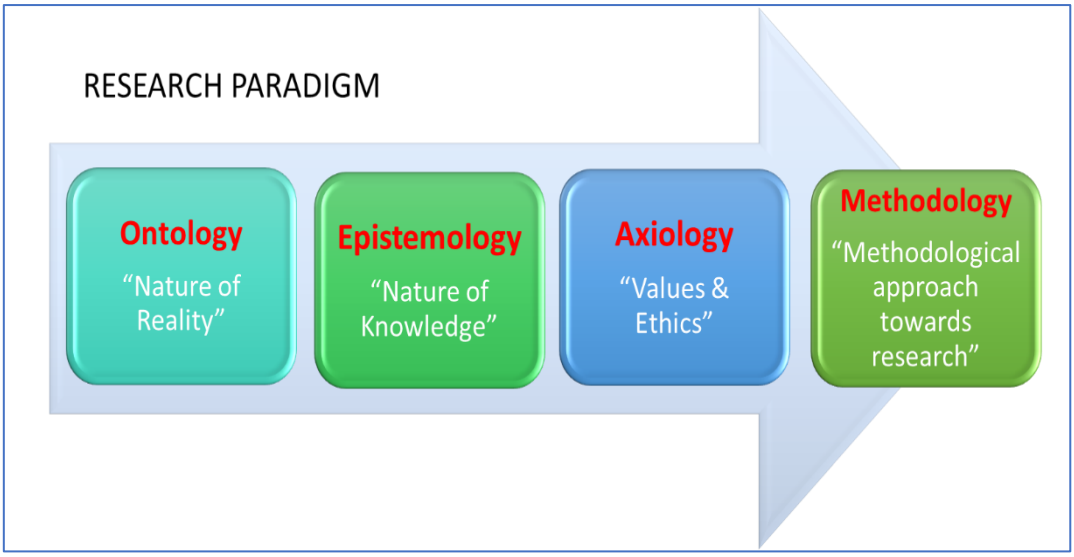

Figure 11: Key Aspects of the Research Paradigm

3.3.1 Ontological Assumptions

Ontological assumptions refer to the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality and their view of the world around them (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). These assumptions shape how researchers view their own research and the objects of their research (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, the nature of reality includes the nature of organisations in the realm of the public sector, the nature of change management and change leadership as subjects of interest, the nature of individuals working in PSOs, and other relevant events and characteristics within the scope of this study. There are various ontological assumptions or worldviews regarding how the nature of reality is observed. Some worldviews, such as positivism and critical realism, are commonly associated with the quantitative approach, while interpretivism and constructivism are linked to the qualitative approach, although not exclusively (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). The following four key ontological worldviews are discussed below:

(i) **Positivism:** Positivism is traditionally associated with pure science research. It assumes that an objective truth exists that can be observed and measured independently of the researcher's values (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Positivism produces law-like generalisations based on the laws of cause and effect and

provides explanations and predictions of events and behaviours in organisations (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Positivist research is conducted objectively in a value-free manner, independent of the researcher's beliefs and assumptions about reality (Saunders et al., 2019).

(ii) **Critical Realism:** Like positivism, critical realism views the nature of reality as an objective truth that is external and independent. However, it argues that reality cannot be measured objectively but can only be experienced subjectively through our senses (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). While positivism seeks to uncover the absolute truth objectively and independently, critical realism takes a more pragmatic approach, recognising the impossibility of doing so (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Arguably, the subjective nature of critical realism may introduce bias, thus requiring further triangulation of observations and experiences (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

(iii) **Interpretivism:** Interpretivism, often discussed alongside constructivism, posits that reality is socially constructed through subjective meanings and rejects the idea of a single observable reality (Merriam and Tisdell; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). These subjective meanings arise from individuals' experiences and their desire to understand the world around them (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Interpretivism focuses on the construction of knowledge by humans through their interactions with other people or things within a specific context. This contrasts with studying objects to generate universal laws that apply to everyone, which is prevalent in science-based research (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). It is further argued that the reality experienced by any one person or a group of people is subjective in nature, and the subsequent meaning constructed by them might differ from that of other individuals or groups of people (Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, interpretivism is commonly employed in qualitative studies to understand people’s perspectives on a specific phenomenon or subject and how they arrive at those viewpoints or understandings (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019).

(iv) **Pragmatism:** Instead of being concerned with the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity, a pragmatist focuses on the research problem and research questions. They do so through their actions and practical approaches to understand and solve the problem within their given context (Patton, 1990; Kelemen and Rumens, 2008; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). It adopts a pragmatic approach to assessing and understanding the research by considering existing viewpoints, ideas, theories, and explanations on the research subject and research problems that need to be addressed. This has led to the argument that pragmatism considers multiple realities. Pragmatism also recognises that the truth can evolve over time and that existing knowledge is tentative until new understandings emerge (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

This study adopts an interpretivist viewpoint, as the researcher believes in the existence of multiple social realities within our complex world. These realities are shaped by individuals or groups and reflect their subjective perceptions and interpretations of reality (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, the aim is to gain insights into the nature of organisational change in the public sector by exploring how individuals in leadership positions (ACLs) perceive and make sense of reality when implementing PCIs in their organisations. Since these individuals may have different interpretations of reality, it is important to comprehensively understand their perceptions and the meanings they ascribe to the change phenomenon. Thus, the researcher assumes the role of the primary instrument for data collection, analysis, and interpretation to construct a meaningful understanding of the phenomenon that effectively addresses the research questions and objectives.

3.3.2 Epistemological Assumptions

The previous section discussed the nature of reality and the assumptions related to it. This naturally leads us to the next question: How do we know what we know about the nature of reality? This relates to epistemological assumptions, which determine what is considered valid and acceptable knowledge about reality and how it is communicated (Burrell and Morgan, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). It also relates to the researcher's belief system in conducting the research

and their view of the relationship between the research and the research participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004, 2011). Therefore, researchers may adopt different epistemological positions in their research, depending on what they believe will yield the best outcome (Saunders et al., 2019). For example, some researchers may use questionnaires, while others may conduct face-to-face interviews. In the context of business and management studies, knowledge includes facts, opinions, narratives, and stories shared by research participants through numerical, textual, and visual data (Saunders et al., 2019).

As this study adopts an interpretivist viewpoint, it seeks to understand the views of individuals immersed in the change implementation phenomenon in the public sector (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). The knowledge that forms the basis of understanding change is acquired from ACLs through interviews and focus group interviews, using words and textual data consisting of facts and opinions (Saunders et al., 2019). The researcher is subjectively immersed in the core research process to construct a meaningful understanding of the nature of change. This approach is considered by the researcher to be the most appropriate method to yield optimal outcomes for this study.

3.3.3 Axiological Assumptions

Axiological assumptions pertain to the significance of values and ethics in a research project (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). It considers what holds value in the research and how the research can be conducted ethically within its defined scope (Brown and Dueñas, 2020). These considerations are directly related to the role of the researcher in carrying out the research, as they often bring their own values and beliefs into the study (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). This is particularly true in qualitative studies, where researchers position themselves within the research context and explicitly report their own values, biases, and the information obtained through the data collection process (Heron, 1996; Creswell and Poth, 2018). As mentioned earlier, the researcher plays a crucial role in collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data and in developing an understanding of the phenomenon of change within the scope of this study.

3.3.4 Objectivism and Subjectivism

Based on the discussion of the different ontological worldviews above, it is evident that some of the ontological assumptions embrace an objectivist approach, while others adopt a subjectivist approach. Since this study is grounded in an interpretative viewpoint, it adopts a subjective approach. Subjectivism posits the existence of multiple social realities that are constructed through social interactions and their subsequent meanings (Saunders et al., 2019). According to subjectivism, each individual may perceive and experience social reality differently (Burrell and Morgan, 2016). Subjectivist researchers need to thoroughly study the subject matter of their research, considering the overall context, history, and geographic aspects, to comprehend the experienced reality. Moreover, social reality is believed to be in a constant state of change and revision due to the continuous interaction between humans (Saunders et al., 2019). Subjectivist researchers explore the different opinions and narratives of their participants using language, conceptual categories, perceptions, and subsequent actions, which account for diverse social realities (Saunders et al., 2019). Axiologically, it is argued that the social phenomena being studied are constructed by the researcher, and they cannot detach themselves from their own values (Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, their values and beliefs are often acknowledged and reflected in their research (Cunliffe, 2003).

On the contrary, objectivism is commonly associated with the study of the natural sciences, which views social realities as parallel to physical entities in the natural world. Objectivists believe that social realities exist independently and are external to humans, regardless of our perceptions and interpretations (Saunders et al., 2019). According to objectivism, there exists only one social reality that applies universally, and the subsequent experiences and interpretations of humans do not affect its existence (Burell and Morgan, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, it is argued that social realities cannot be studied in the same manner as the natural sciences (Saunders et al., 2019). In terms of knowledge, objectivism asserts that the truth can be discovered through observable and measurable facts that can be generalised about social reality. Axiologically, objectivism promotes value-free research, where the researcher's values and beliefs do not influence the research process (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.3.5 Approach to Theory Development

A literature review on organisational change and change leadership was conducted as a preliminary step in this study. As part of the review process, several theories were identified as key to understanding the research problem, developing research questions, and formulating the research framework (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). In quantitative studies, these theories are tested to understand the causal relationship between concepts and variables and to make predictions through deduction (Saunders et al., 2019). They are considered theory-driven, where the researcher forms a theoretical position and tests it using the collected data. In contrast, qualitative research commonly adopts an inductive process for theory building, where the research is data driven. In this context, the researcher collects data to formulate a theoretical explanation (Saunders et al., 2019). The theory will be the outcome of the research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Since both deductive and inductive approaches to theory building are on opposing ends of the spectrum, the abductive approach, also known as the retroductive approach, takes the middle ground by combining both (Suddaby, 2006; Saunders et al., 2019). The abductive approach is used to generate or modify existing theories through the exploration of a particular phenomenon, identifying themes and patterns in a conceptual framework that are then tested using the collected data (Saunders et al., 2019). Within the context of this study, the research framework is developed based on established theories primarily derived from the change management literature within the private sector context. However, the aim of this study is to understand the phenomenon of change within the public sector context, where comparatively limited empirical research has been conducted (Kuipers et al., 2014). Taking this and the research objectives into account, this study employed an abductive approach to theory development. Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2019) suggest that the abductive approach is suitable for a subject matter with a robust theoretical foundation in one context but lacks such foundation in another, thereby enabling the researcher to modify existing theories. This proposition aligns with the existing perspective in change management literature, as the wealth of information on the change phenomenon is based on the private sector context rather than the public sector context (Van der Voet et al., 2014; Homberg et al., 2019).

3.4 Research Method

The research method outlines a comprehensive plan for conducting research, which includes research design, selection of research participants using an appropriate sampling method, procedures and techniques employed for data collection, and relevant ethical considerations involved in carrying out the research (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Figure 12 below illustrates the adopted research method for this study.

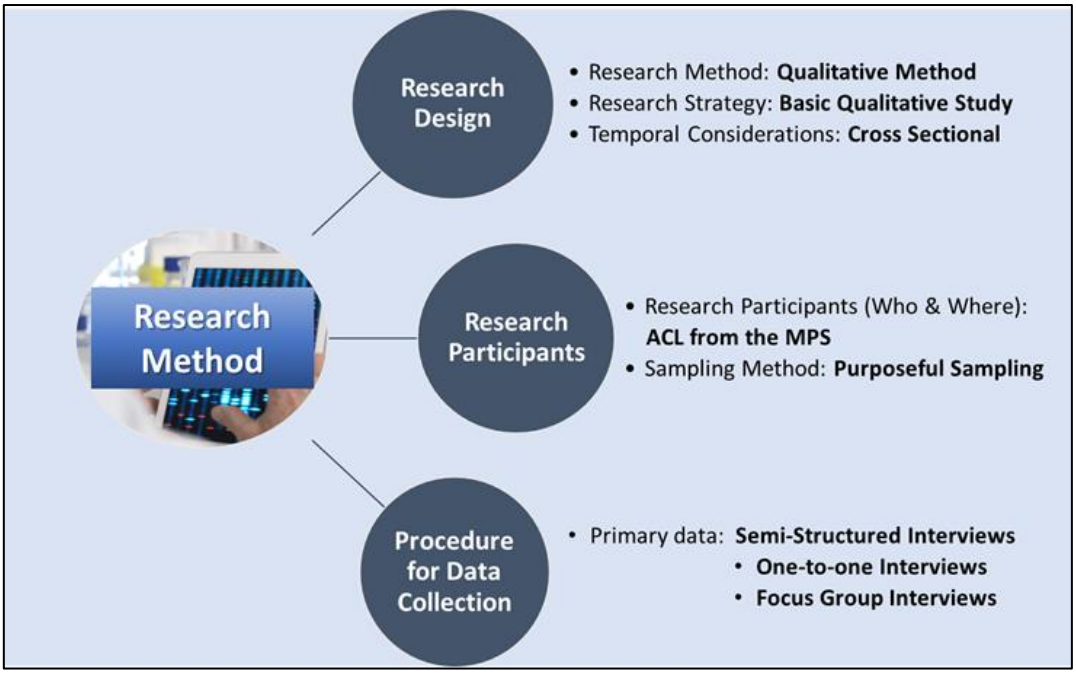

Figure 12: Key Aspects of the Research Method (Source: Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019)

3.4.1 Research Design

The research design outlines the process of moving from the initial research questions to their answers (Yin, 2014). It involves three important design choices: the research method for collecting data, the research strategy utilised, and the time horizon for the data set (Saunders et al., 2019). In this study, a qualitative research method is employed along with a basic qualitative strategy. The data is collected cross-sectionally. The following sections will discuss these methodological choices and their justifications.

3.4.1.1 Research Method for Data Collection

The research method for this study can be based on a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach, or a combination of both through a mixed-methods approach (Saunders et al., 2019). The primary concern of the researcher was to select the most appropriate method to gain knowledge about the social reality studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Both quantitative and qualitative methods collect different types of data using different instruments and techniques (Saunders et al., 2019). The quantitative method collects numeric data, while the qualitative method collects non-numeric data in the form of words (verbal or textual), images, audio, and video recordings, among others (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). The selection of the research method depends on the researcher's philosophical beliefs, the research problem, and the research questions (Saunders et al., 2019). A quantitative method is suitable when the focus is on identifying key factors, establishing interventions, predicting outcomes, and testing theories and hypotheses. However, if the focus is on exploring and understanding a phenomenon, especially those without previous studies, a qualitative method is the most suitable (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). The three different research methods are discussed below:

(i) Quantitative Research Method: The quantitative method is a highly structured research process often associated with, but not exclusively linked to, the positivist philosophical viewpoint (Bryman, 1998; Walsh et al., 2015). It uses a deductive approach to test theories and examine relationships between numerically measured variables, analysing them using relevant statistical techniques (Saunders et al., 2019). To ensure the generalisability of findings, the quantitative method often employs probability sampling techniques. This method is often linked to experimental and survey research strategies. The survey research strategy typically utilises a monomethod approach, using a single data collection technique such as a questionnaire or structured interview. In quantitative studies, the researcher is commonly viewed as independent from the research participants (Sekaran and Boguie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019).

(ii) Qualitative Research Method: The qualitative research method is often associated with an interpretative viewpoint, which seeks to understand the

meaning of a particular phenomenon rather than its frequency (Van Maanen, 1979; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). It aims to understand how research participants make sense of, interpret, and construct meanings about the phenomenon being studied. These meanings are typically derived from verbal, textual, and visual data instead of numerical data (Saunders et al., 2019). While the qualitative research method commonly uses an inductive approach to theory-building, deductive and abductive approaches are also employed to develop new theories or provide a deeper theoretical perspective (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Qualitative research focuses on developing a conceptual framework, establishing hypotheses, or contributing new theories based on collected data rather than testing pre-existing theories such as quantitative research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection, analysis, and interpretation, utilising unstructured or semi-structured interview techniques (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). It is important for researchers to acknowledge and report their subjectivity to address potential bias (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The design of qualitative research is often flexible, evolving to accommodate changing conditions or guided by the progress of the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). In terms of sampling, qualitative studies often employ a non-random and purposive approach with small samples. Researchers spend a significant amount of time in the field with participants to establish rapport and gain an insightful understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Saunders et al., 2019). Research strategies associated with the qualitative research method include basic qualitative studies, case studies, narrative inquiries, and ethnography (Saunders et al., 2019). The outcomes of qualitative research are typically descriptive, using words and pictures rather than numbers to convey the researcher's understanding of the studied phenomenon (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

(iii) Mixed Method: The mixed method involves combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis in the same research project. It is commonly used when research questions cannot be adequately

addressed using only one method (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This approach can also incorporate both deductive and inductive approaches to solve research problems. Techniques from both methods can be used simultaneously or sequentially to validate the study's method, data gathered from the field, or the theory derived from the research (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Additionally, different research designs can be employed concurrently (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

The choice to adopt a qualitative research method for this study depended on various factors. These factors include the nature of the research, the research strategy used, the researcher's philosophical viewpoint, the orientation of the research problem and questions, the researcher's professional experience, and the intended audience of the research (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). The objective of this study is exploratory in nature, focusing on understanding the nature of change rather than quantitatively predicting outcomes by examining relationships between change variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, a constructive approach is employed to gather data from research participants and construct a meaningful understanding of the phenomenon of change in the public sector. The findings of this study were also used to develop a theoretical framework for change implementation in the sector.

It is also suggested that a qualitative research approach is suitable for exploring and understanding a phenomenon in an understudied field or sample group (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). In the context of this study, the literature reveals a gap in research on change management in the public sector, with limited empirical research conducted (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet, 2014; Homberg et al., 2019). This gap is particularly relevant in the Malaysian context, where only a few empirical studies have been undertaken (Siddiquee et al., 2019). As a result, the literature on change management in the private sector is extensive compared to the public sector, and its applicability to the public sector is questionable (Boyne, 2006; Karp and Helgø, 2008; Klarner et al., 2008; Burke, 2014; Kickert, 2014). Therefore, change management in the public sector can be considered an understudied field, and the research participants from the MPS are

an understudied sample group within the scope of this research. This further justifies the use of a qualitative research approach for this study.

3.4.1.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy is described as a plan used by researchers to address the research questions of a research project (Saunders et al., 2019). There are various research strategies that can be adopted, and the choice of strategy is methodologically linked to the researcher's philosophical viewpoint, data collection method, theory-building approach, and data analysis (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). While there is no single best strategy, the focus is on the consistency of the research design in addressing both research questions and its objectives (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). However, certain research strategies are commonly associated with specific research methods. For quantitative research, experiments are a popular strategy for studying causal relationships between variables, while the survey research strategy is used for numeric analysis and generalisation of a sample population (Fowler, 2008; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

For qualitative research, six frequently used strategies are identified: (i) Basic Qualitative Research, which is used in this study and discussed below (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016); (ii) Phenomenology, which focuses on participants' lived experiences (Creswell and Creswell, 2018); (iii) Grounded Theory, which emphasises inductive theory development (Corbin and Strauss, 2015; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016); (iv) Ethnography, which explores shared patterns of behaviour, language, and actions within a cultural group's natural setting (Creswell and Creswell, 2018); (v) Narrative Analysis, which examines personal perspectives on a specific event or sequence of events (Saunders et al., 2019); and (vi) Case Study, which provides an in-depth examination of a phenomenon in its actual setting (Yin, 2018).

The Basic Qualitative Research Strategy is adopted for this study because it aligns with the methodological choices and exploratory nature of the study. The philosophical assumption within the interpretative framework is that people construct knowledge by attributing meaning to their social interactions with other people or

objects (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). The focus here is on understanding the meaning of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those immersed in that social reality, specifically the ACLs in this study. It is suggested that these meanings are not discovered but rather constructed through the process of interpreting social worlds and interactions (Crotty, 1998). Thus, a basic qualitative study aims to investigate how people interpret their experiences, construct their world, and attribute meaning to their experiences (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The key aspects of a basic qualitative study strategy, described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016, pp. 45), were adopted in this study and include (i) focusing on meaning, understanding, and process; (ii) using purposeful sampling; (iii) collecting data through interviews; (iv) employing an inductive data analysis process (in this study, an abductive data analysis process was employed); and (v) presenting findings as richly descriptive themes or categories.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that other qualitative strategies typically share these attributes with the basic qualitative study but may have additional aspects, such as exploring the underlying structure of a phenomenon in phenomenological studies or using stories in narrative analysis. The basic qualitative study is extensively used across disciplines and applied fields. It is often described simply as a qualitative research study without specifying a particular type, such as a case study or grounded theory. Data collection for a qualitative study is typically done through unstructured or semi-structured interviews, field observations, or document analysis. These data are then analysed to identify relevant and recurring patterns that characterise the data (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The recurring patterns or themes derived from the data, along with the researcher's interpretation of what participants have said, form the overall findings of the research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

3.4.1.3 Time Horizon for the Research

There are two distinct methodological designs regarding time horizons that can be employed in research: cross-sectional design and longitudinal design. The cross-sectional design aims to gather data or information on a specific phenomenon at a single point in time, whereas the longitudinal design involves collecting data at multiple points in time, primarily to assess evolving changes over time (Ruel et al., 2016; Leavy,

2017; Saunders et al., 2019). For this study, a cross-sectional methodological design was used, as the data were collected at a single point in time.

3.5 Sampling Method and Research Participants

This section presents the sampling methods employed in this study, including the sample size, the selection of research participants, and an analysis of the participants involved in this research.

3.5.1 Sampling Method

A sample is defined as a subset or subgroup of the intended population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). The sample for this study consisted of individuals from the Administrative and Diplomatic Service of the MPS, discussed further in Paragraph 3.5.3 below. A non-probability sampling design was employed for this study, as it is commonly used in social science studies, especially for those adopting the qualitative research method (Rowley, 2014). Unlike probability sampling, the non-probability sampling used in qualitative studies is not focused on making any statistical inferences or generalisations about its population (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

The purposive sampling technique is the most used technique in non-probability sampling design compared to other techniques such as quota sampling, volunteer sampling, and haphazard sampling techniques (Patton, 2015; Saunders et al., 2019). Purposive sampling focuses on obtaining information from those who can provide the best information on the phenomenon so that the researcher can have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The purposive sampling technique is employed for this study as it seeks to understand the phenomenon of change in the public sector, and key information on the phenomenon can be purposefully obtained from ACLs selected within the target population.

In adopting the purposive sampling design, a selection criterion must be determined to identify and select the most suitable participant for the data collection phase (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This is sometimes referred to as criteria-based

selection (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010). They are based on key attributes identified in the sample that are directly linked to the objective of the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The selection criteria for this study include the following: (i) An officer belonging to the Administrative and Diplomatic Service with the grades of 48 and above; (ii) Currently working either at one of the 26 federal ministries, the agencies under these federal ministries, or the central agencies under the Prime Ministers Department; and (iii) currently involved, wholly or in part, in the implementation of government policies or any change initiatives. The selection criteria for research participants in this study are illustrated in Figure 13 below.

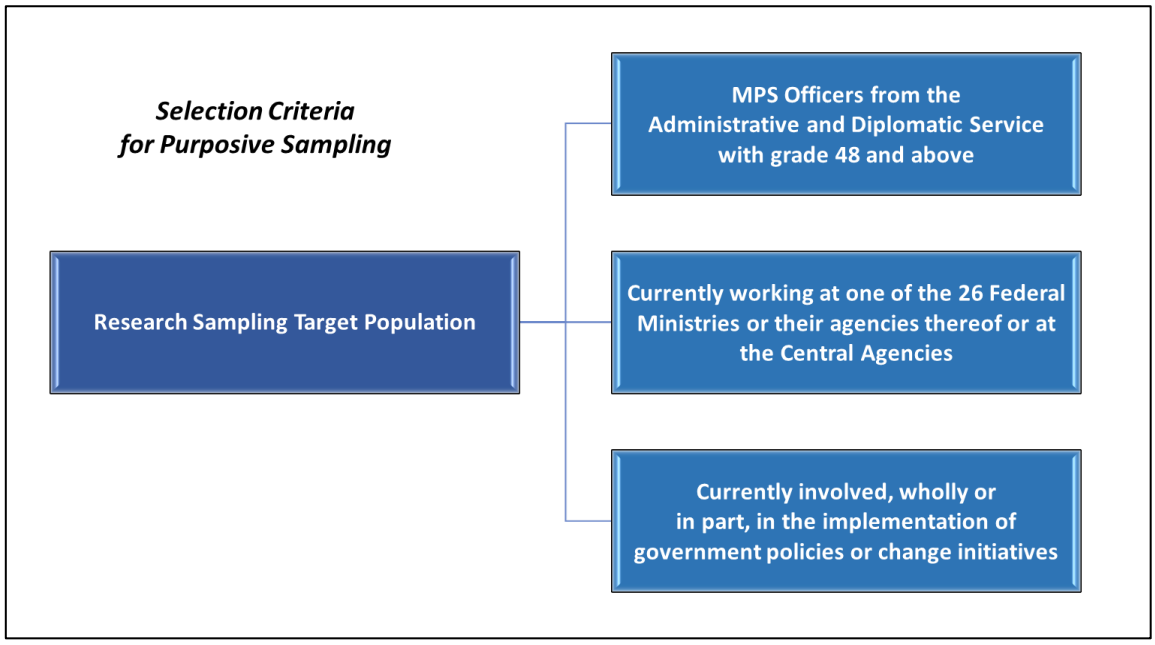

Figure 13: Selection Criteria for Purposive Sampling

3.5.2 Sample Size

The precise sample size for qualitative research cannot be determined until and after the data collection process is completed, as there are no specific rules for determining the sample size for purposive sampling (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Instead, the focus of the data collection process is on answering the research questions and objectives (Patton, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The data collection process continues until a saturation point is reached. This is the point where further data collection does not yield any new information or themes for the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et

al., 2019). However, some authors suggest that a tentative minimum number of sampling units can be set at the beginning of the research based on the nature of the research and revised as the research progresses (Patton, 2015; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). It is suggested that a sample size ranging from 12 to 30 participants can serve as a guideline for heterogeneous groups (Saunders, 2012).

As the sampling unit for this study involved a heterogeneous group and the objective was to gain an in-depth understanding of the change phenomenon within the MPS, data collection continued until the saturation point was reached. Following the template analysis method used in this study and described in Paragraph 3.8, four a priori themes were initially identified. These themes were then reviewed and further developed using smaller data sets collected from the field in a sequential manner. This iterative process involved reviewing new data alongside existing datasets to comprehensively understand the collected data while continuously evaluating for saturation. Data collection stopped after 28 interviews, as the researcher determined that the saturation point had been reached. This conclusion was made because the new data did not contribute to the development of new codes and categories, and no additional information emerged to supplement existing codes and categories.

3.5.3 Research Participants

Participants for this research were purposefully selected from the Administrative and Diplomatic Service of the MPS. This service is one of the 21 classifications of civil service in the MPS that is defined under the New Remuneration Scheme (Public Service Department, 2022). Each classification represents a distinct type of civil service with varying functions within the MPS. Participants were specifically chosen from this service due to their direct involvement in key roles within the MPS, which include policy formulation and implementation, executing government projects and initiatives (including change initiatives), leading the MPS machinery, identifying organisational problems and offering solutions, and making decisions based on authority and regulations (Public Service Department, 2022).

The target population for this research consists of Administrative and Diplomatic officers in leadership positions from federal ministries, agencies under

federal ministries, and central agencies under the Prime Minister's Department (PMD). This includes officers from the Management and Professional Group at grades 48, 52, and 54, holding designations such as Principal Assistant Director, Principal Assistant Secretary, Director, and Under Secretaries, who are considered middle managers responsible for government policy implementation (Public Service Department, 2022). These officers typically lead units, sections, departments, and divisions under the ministries and agencies. For the purposes of this research, these officers are referred to as functional leaders, and they are part of the ACLs definition provided in Chapter 1. The second group of officers is from the Top Management Group, holding grades Premier C and above, from federal ministries, agencies under federal ministries, and central agencies (Public Service Department, 2022). These officers typically head departments, divisions, agencies, and ministries within the MPS, with designations such as Head of Department, Director, Director General, Deputy Secretary General, and Secretary General. These officers are considered strategic leaders and are also part of the ACLs definition provided in Chapter 1.

Based on the data provided by the Public Service Department as of July 30, 2023, a total of 9,524 Administrative and Diplomatic Officers were employed within the MPS. Among them, 4,934 officers hold executive positions (grades 41 and 44), 4,123 officers hold middle management positions (grades 48, 52, and 54), and 467 officers hold Top Management positions (grades Premier C and above) within the MPS. Figure 14 illustrates the breakdown of the population for purposive sampling in this study.

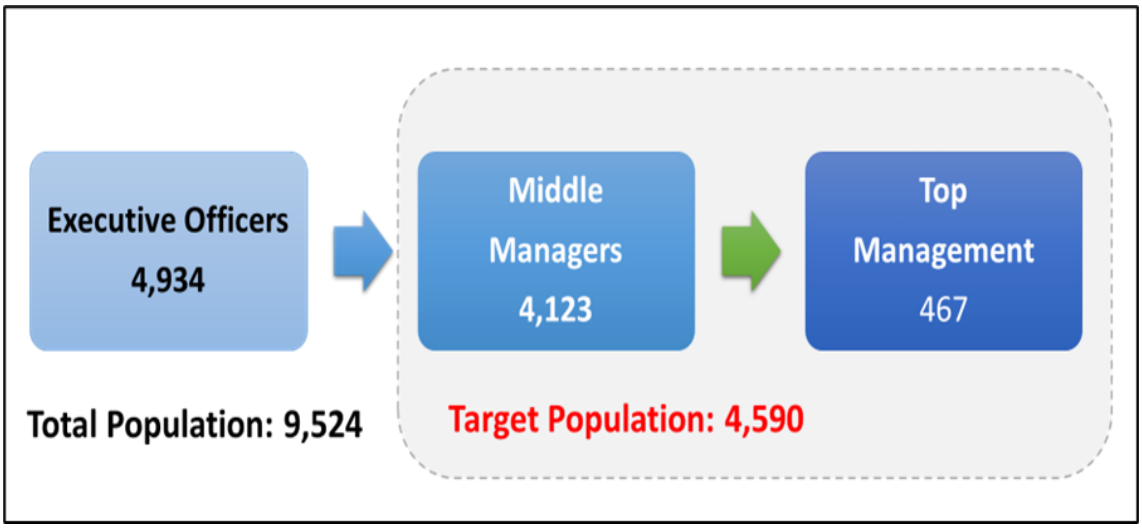

Figure 14: Population Breakdown for Research Sampling

When data collection commenced in February 2022, there were 26 federal ministries within the MPS and five central agencies under the PMD (Public Service Department, 2022). The list of federal ministries can be found in Appendix 2. For this study, these ministries were grouped and categorised based on their scopes and functions to ensure the practicality of the sampling design. Five categories were identified to represent the 26 federal ministries: (i) Trade and Industry, (ii) Development, (iii) Social Wellbeing, (iv) Science and Natural Resources, and (v) Other Ministries. The “Other Ministries” category includes federal ministries with varying scopes and functions, which were not grouped separately because there were fewer than two ministries with similar functions. Additionally, all five central agencies were grouped and categorised as "Central Agencies" forming the sixth group in this study.

The breakdown of the categories is shown in Figure 15 below, and the list of categories and how they were derived is explained in Appendix 3. Following a change in government in November 2022 and subsequent changes in government portfolios, the number of categories within the MPS was reduced from six to five. However, these changes do not impact the data collection process, or the quality of the data collected for this study, as they only involved adjustments in the categorisation of the ministries. The revised categories can be found in Appendix 4. Research participants for this study were selected from these categories.

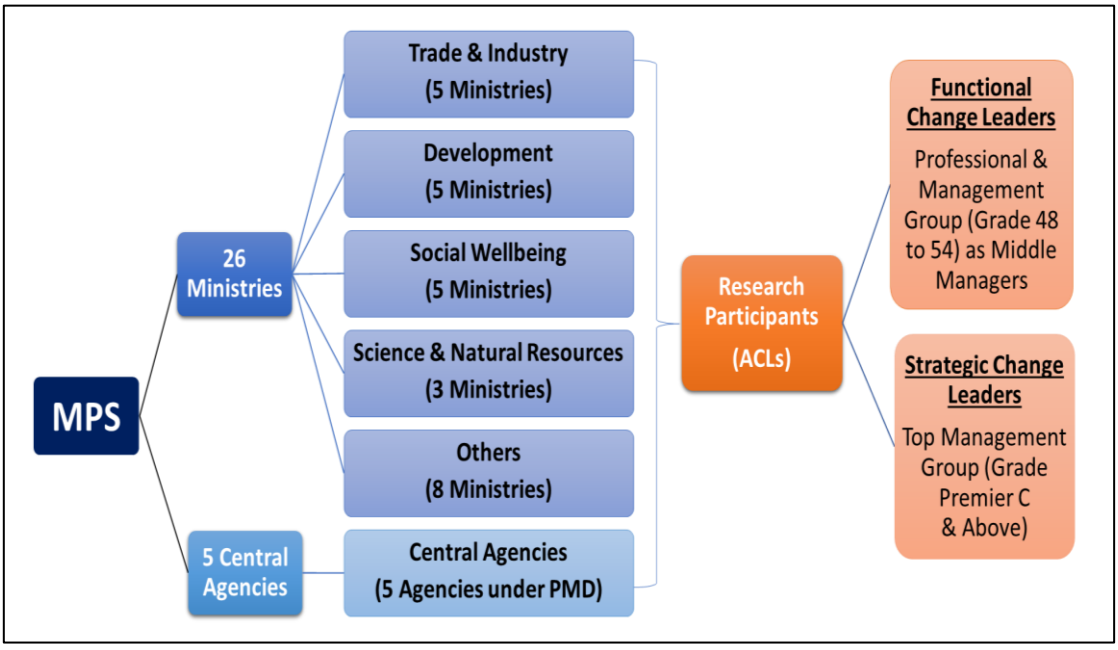

Figure 15: Categorisation of Federal Ministries and Central Agencies (as of February 2022)

3.5.4 Analysis of Research Participants

A total of 28 ACLs were interviewed through both one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews. The statistical information regarding the sample size based on the aforementioned categories is shown in Table 2 below. The table displays the overall number of participants who were interviewed, as well as the percentage of participants from each category in relation to the total number of participants. The trade and industry category had the highest number of participants, accounting for 25% of the total participants in this research. Out of the 28 participants, 15 were interviewed through one-to-one interviews, while 13 were interviewed through focus group interviews conducted across three different groups. All three focus group interviews and two one-to-one interviews were conducted online via the Microsoft Teams platform, and 13 one-to-one interviews were conducted in person.

No.	MPS Categories	Number of Participants	Interview Participants	Focus Groups Participants
1.	**Trade and Industry**	7 *(25%)*	5 *(33.3%)*	2 *(15.4%)*
2.	**Development**	5 *(17.9%)*	1 *(6.7%)*	4 *(30.7%)*
3.	**Social Wellbeing**	4 *(14.3%)*	3 *(20%)*	1 *(7.7%)*
4.	**Others**	6 *(21.4%)*	3 *(20%)*	3 *(23.1%)*
5.	**Central Agencies**	6 *(21.4%)*	3 *(20%)*	3 *(23.1%)*
	Total Participants:	**28**	***15 (53.6%)***	**13 *(46.4%)***

Table 2: Sample Size Statistics

Based on participant feedback, all 28 individuals selected for this study have a minimum of 18 years of work experience in the MPS and have held positions in at least three different organisations throughout their careers. Table 3 presents a list of the research participants, their gender, designation, and the MPS category they belong to.

LIST	GENDER	DESIGNATION	CATEGORY
Participant 1	M	Director	Development
Participant 2	M	Head of Unit	Central Agency
Participant 3	M	Senior Principal Assistant Secretary	Social Wellbeing
Participant 4	M	Director	Others
Participant 5	M	Director	Trade and Industry
Participant 6	M	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Central Agency
Participant 7	M	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Trade and Industry
Participant 8	M	Senior Principal Assistant Secretary	Others
Participant 9	M	Deputy Director	Central Agency
Participant 10	M	Secretary General	Others
Participant 11	M	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Trade and Industry
Participant 12	F	Deputy Director	Others
Participant 13	F	Principal Assistant Secretary	Development
Participant 14	F	Principal Assistant Director	Development
Participant 15	M	Principal Assistant Director	Development
Participant 16	M	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Trade and Industry
Participant 17	M	Deputy Director General	Social Wellbeing
Participant 18	M	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Central Agency
Participant 19	F	Principal Assistant Secretary	Others
Participant 20	F	Deputy Secretary General	Social Wellbeing
Participant 21	F	Secretary General	Trade and Industry
Participant 22	F	Senior Principal Assistant Secretary	Trade and Industry
Participant 23	F	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Central Agency
Participant 24	F	Senior Principal Assistant Secretary	Others
Participant 25	F	Senior Principal Assistant Secretary	Development
Participant 26	M	Senior Principal Assistant Director	Trade and Industry
Participant 27	F	Deputy Director	Central Agency
Participant 28	M	Senior Principal Assistant Secretary	Social Wellbeing

Table 3: Research Participants' Description

The job scope of the participants in this research encompassed several areas, namely strategic management, policy implementation, policy monitoring, and the implementation of strategic initiatives within their respective organisations. There were also instances of overlap between these scopes and other functions performed by the participants. Figure 16 presents the distribution of job scope among all participants. Policy implementation constituted the highest percentage, representing 46.4% of the total participants, while policy monitoring accounted for the lowest percentage at 7.1%.

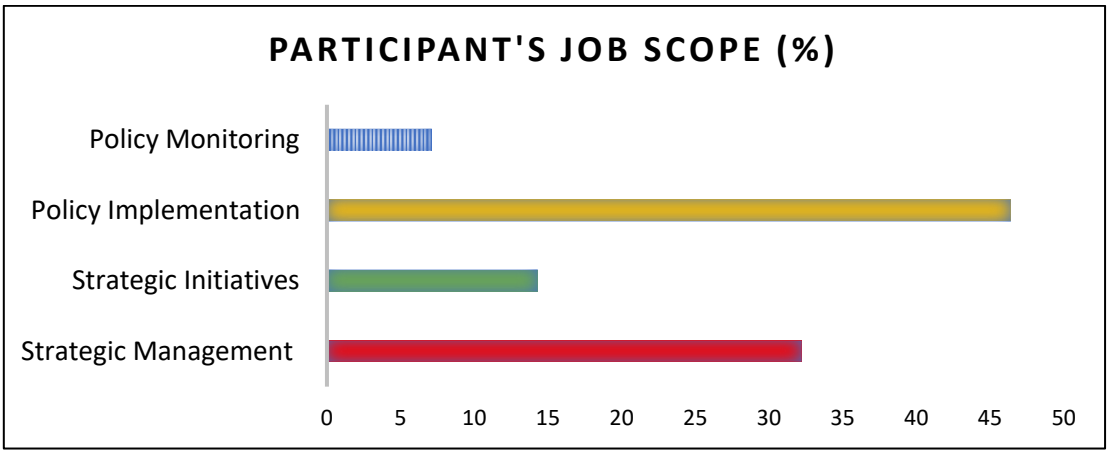

Figure 16: Participant's Job Scope

3.6 Data Collection Method

This study aimed to collect primary data to address research questions and objectives. In qualitative studies, primary data can take the form of words, texts, and audio-visuals. These data can be obtained through interviews, observation, focus group interviews, documents, and audio-visual information (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Typically, these data are collected from the field in its natural setting, directly from the original sources, specifically for the study's purpose (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The choice of primary data type and collection method depends on the selected research methodology. In this study, words were collected through one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews, serving as primary data sources derived from the research participants. A digital audio recorder was used to collect the data, and the researcher also took handwritten notes. Additionally, the audio-visual feature available on Microsoft Teams was utilised to record the focus group interviews. The verbal data were transcribed verbatim into textual data, with some minor

corrections made to the sentence structure to maintain comprehensibility without altering the meaning. Initially, the data were transcribed using a transcription software called "Descript," which was then manually edited and cross-checked with the audio recordings and handwritten notes.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews are defined as purposeful conversations between two or more individuals to gather relevant information that addresses the research questions and objectives (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). DeMarris (2004, p. 55) describes interviews as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study". These conversations are purposeful, structured, and directly related to the research (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Through interviews, researchers gain access to participants' perspectives in relation to the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019).

In this study, the semi-structured interview technique was chosen as the most suitable approach for understanding change in the public sector and addressing the research questions and objectives. Unlike unstructured interviews, the researcher enters a semi-structured interview with a predetermined list of themes and key questions that serve as a guide during the interview process (Saunders et al., 2019). The semi-structured interview technique also allows flexibility, as themes and interview questions can be adapted or modified based on emerging issues during the interview. In contrast, structured interviews strictly follow predetermined questions from a questionnaire without any deviations. The semi-structured interview technique is commonly associated with qualitative research methods, while structured interviews are commonly associated with quantitative research methods that collect numerical data (Saunders et al., 2019). Additionally, probing questions were used during the interviews to further explore participants' responses. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis between the researcher and the participants.

3.6.2 Focus Group Interviews

Interviews involving multiple participants focused on a specific issue are called focus group interviews (Krueger and Casey, 2015; Saunders et al., 2019). These interviews gather data in a group setting facilitated by a moderator, who is typically the researcher (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). The selected participants are usually knowledgeable about the research topic (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The aim is to gather the perspectives, feelings, reactions, and interpretations of the participants regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The data collected through focus groups are based on a constructivist perspective, as the information is socially constructed through participant interaction, aligning with the paradigm of this study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Focus groups generate rich data as participants can share and exchange their views and refine their own perspectives on the topic during the process (Hennink, 2014).

There are no specific rules regarding the size of the focus group, and the number of participants varies depending on the topic of discussion (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Ideally, a focus group interview may consist of 3 to 12 participants (Nixon, 2014), 6 to 8 participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), or 4 to 12 participants, depending on the complexity of the subject matter (Saunders et al., 2019). However, researchers should not solely focus on the size or frequency of these interviews but rather on achieving theoretical saturation, which determines the quality of the research (Krueger, 1998). In this regard, the role of the moderator is crucial in managing the participants and guiding them towards the objectives of the interview (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The interaction among participants is a crucial element in focus groups, as it leads to the development of shared meanings (Belzile and Oberg, 2012). Participants are commonly selected using a non-probability sampling process based on shared characteristics and their ability to provide the most relevant information on the phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2019). All three focus group interviews for this study were conducted using the Microsoft Teams online platform. The decision to use an internet-mediated platform was based on factors such as the cost of hosting physical meetings, the prevailing conditions and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial stages of data collection, and logistical considerations for all research participants.

3.7 Data Collection Process

Data collection for this study was conducted in three stages, which were implemented sequentially to ensure the robustness and validity of the data. In the initial stage, the researcher prepared for data collection by developing a priori themes and interview questions, which were then submitted to the university's ethics committee for approval. The interview questions were also validated, and potential research participants were identified. The second stage involved collecting data from the field, which was divided into two phases. This allowed for ongoing review and peer review by the research supervisors. Data collected from the field was continuously coded, reviewed, and analysed in both phases. The third and final stage consisted of analysing, interpreting, and reporting the data findings. The research activities throughout these three stages are illustrated in Figure 17 below.

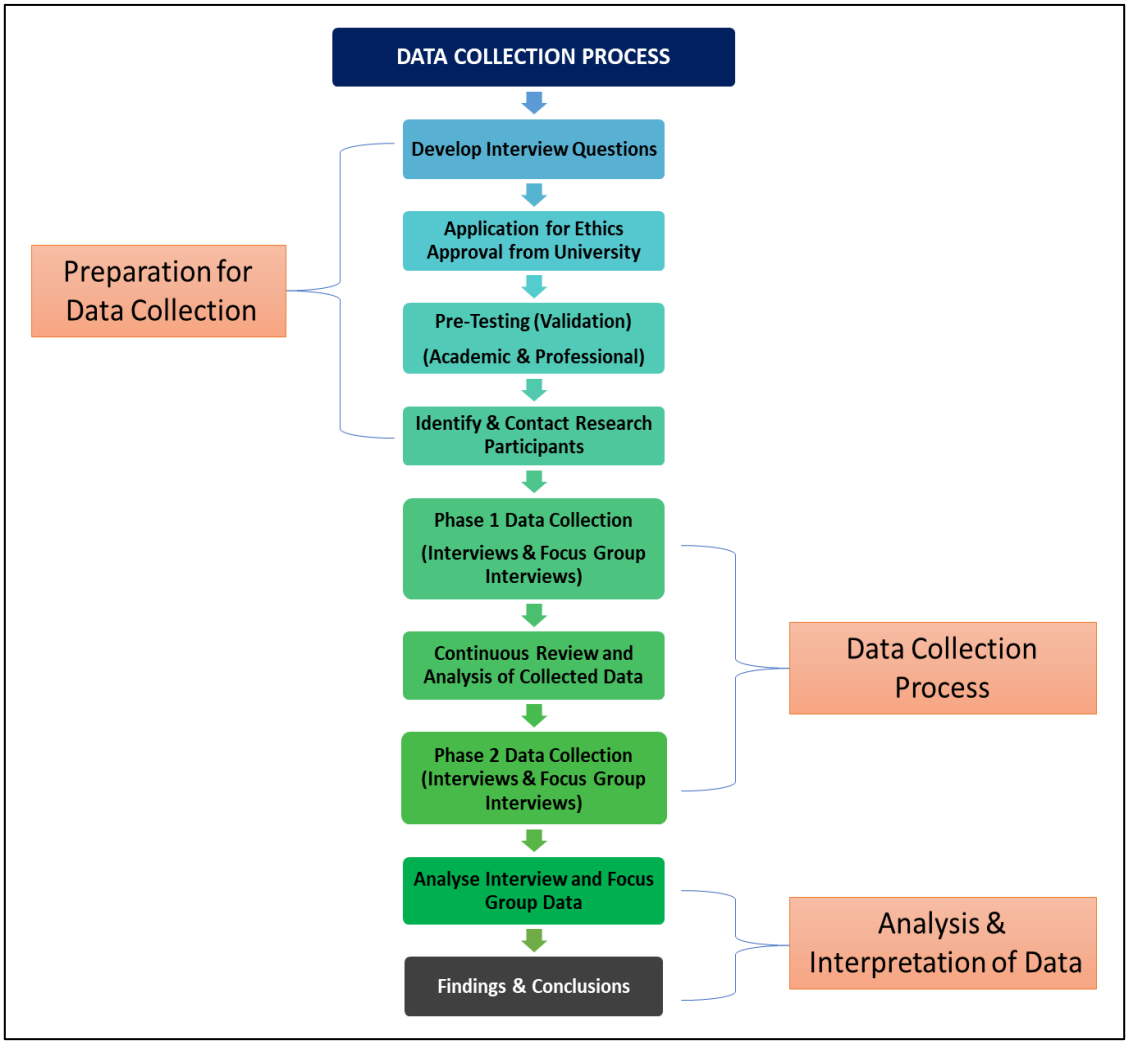

Figure 17: Data Collection Process

3.7.1 Developing Interview Questions

The interview questions were developed based on a priori themes and were aligned with the research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework of this study. Prior to developing the interview questions, four a priori themes were established, which are further discussed in paragraph 3.8. Since the study used a semi-structured interview technique, a priori themes and interview questions were used to guide the interview and data collection process (Saunders et al., 2019). The interview questions were developed using open-ended questions to encourage participants to define and describe the change phenomenon within their specific context. Open-ended interview questions facilitate comprehensive and progressive answers that reveal both factual information about the phenomenon and the participants' attitudes towards it (Saunders and Lewis, 2018).

The interview questions were also developed objectively, avoiding the use of emotional language (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). Probing questions used during the interviews were also designed to be open-ended, except when the researcher sought confirmation on a specific response, in which case specific questions were used (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). The questioning sequence and subsequent probing questions during the interview process were tailored based on the participants' responses (King and Horrocks, 2010; Saunders and Lewis, 2018). An interview protocol was developed to aid in data collection. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked several demographic and basic questions related to their experience in the MPS.

3.7.2 Validation of Interview Questions

The interview questions underwent academic and professional validation prior to data collection. The panel of reviewers consisted of three academic reviewers from Nottingham University Business School and three professional reviewers from the MPS. Reviewers were selected based on their experience and ability to provide valuable input for validating the interview questions. After confirming their participation in the review process, a Research Project Interview Questions Validation Form was

emailed to the panel of reviewers. The review process took place in January 2022. The Research Project Interview Questions Validation Form is appended in Appendix 5.

Out of the six validation requests sent, five replies were received. The feedback was analysed based on the research questions and framework of this study. The initial interview questions were modified to incorporate relevant feedback. Feedback included comments on sentence structure, adequacy of the interview questions, suggested rewording of questions to avoid leading questions, and identification of overlapping questions that might generate similar participant responses. Additionally, two professional reviewers provided answers to the interview questions, allowing the researcher to assess whether the proposed questions could generate relevant responses. The validated interview questions used during data collection are outlined in Appendix 6.

3.7.3 Ethics' Approval for the Research

As part of the research protocol, the researcher submitted an online Research Ethics Review Checklist for Doctoral Students to the Nottingham University Business School Research Ethics Committee under the University of Nottingham, Malaysia, in January 2022. Several documents were submitted for review, including: (i) the Information for Research Participants sheet as outlined in Appendix 7; (ii) the Participants Consent Form as outlined in Appendix 8; (iii) the Privacy Notice; and (iv) interview questions.

Subsequently, the researcher completed the research ethics online form, providing details on various aspects of the research, including consent and confidentiality of participants, potential harm arising from the research, location of the research, information on the Personal Data Protection Act, storage and use of data collected for the research, as well as other relevant ethical concerns. The ethics approval was granted on February 16, 2022, and a copy of the approval letter can be found in Appendix 9.

3.7.4 Data Collection

Research participants were initially contacted via telephone and email to invite and confirm their participation in the study. A confirmatory email was sent, which included the meeting time and location as well as an information sheet explaining the research details. A participant consent form was also provided via email prior to the interview. Participants were required to complete the consent form to acknowledge and confirm their willingness to participate in the research. The researcher also completed the consent form, and copies were provided to the participants as part of the interview protocol.

Data were collected in two phases. In Phase 1, data collection involved a smaller group of participants. This phase began after obtaining ethics approval from the university and completing the validation process for the interview questions. Data were collected between late February and March 2022, with seven participants involved. Four one-to-one interviews were conducted, three physically and one virtually, using the Microsoft Teams platform. Additionally, one focus group interview was conducted with three participants, with the researcher serving as the moderator. Data collection for Phase 2 took place from June 2022 to January 2023 and involved 21 participants. This included 11 one-to-one interviews and two focus group interviews. The second focus group interview included four participants, while the third included six. Both focus group interviews were moderated by the researcher. Ten one-to-one interviews were conducted physically, while one interview and both focus group interviews were conducted virtually using the Microsoft Teams platform.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

One of the distinctive features of qualitative studies is that data are collected, analysed, and interpreted simultaneously, unlike quantitative studies, where data are analysed and interpreted at the end of the data collection process (Saunders et al., 2019). This iterative research process allows for the emergence of themes, patterns, and relationships between factors during the data collection phase. The process is considered organic, flexible, and emerging, where the focus of the study, research questions, and inquiry procedure may be modified in response to changing research

conditions (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). However, qualitative studies often yield extensive amounts of data that must be processed and fragmented for meaningful analysis.

The thematic analysis method is commonly used to analyse qualitative data. It aims to identify themes and patterns within the dataset through the process of coding (Saunders et al., 2019). Thematic analysis has the ability to analyse large data sets, providing in-depth descriptions and explanations of a particular phenomenon. It also has the ability to build theories. It is flexible in nature and can be used with any philosophical viewpoint or research approach, whether objective or subjective, and any form of theoretical building approach, whether deductive, inductive, or abductive (Saunders et al., 2019).

One specific type of thematic analysis used in this study is the template analysis method. Template analysis is seen as an extension of thematic analysis as it is more procedural and structural in nature. The key difference lies in the development of interpretive themes. For thematic analysis, themes are developed after all the data is coded to ensure their representativeness (King and Brooks, 2017). On the other hand, template analysis develops its initial coding structure and interpretive themes based only on a proportion of the initially collected data, using vivo codes, a priori codes, or a combination of both (Saunders et al., 2019).

A priori themes for this study were developed based on existing literature, research questions and objectives, and the change process outlined in the research framework presented in Chapter 2. Since this study specifically examines the implementation of PCIs, four key areas were identified in the development of the a priori themes. This encompasses the planning process for change implementation, managing the change implementation process, the contextual factors that influence the implementation process, and the roles of ACLs as agents of change. Consequently, four a priori themes were developed, supported by their corresponding sub-themes. The relationship between the research framework, sub-themes, and a priori themes is illustrated in Figure 18 below.

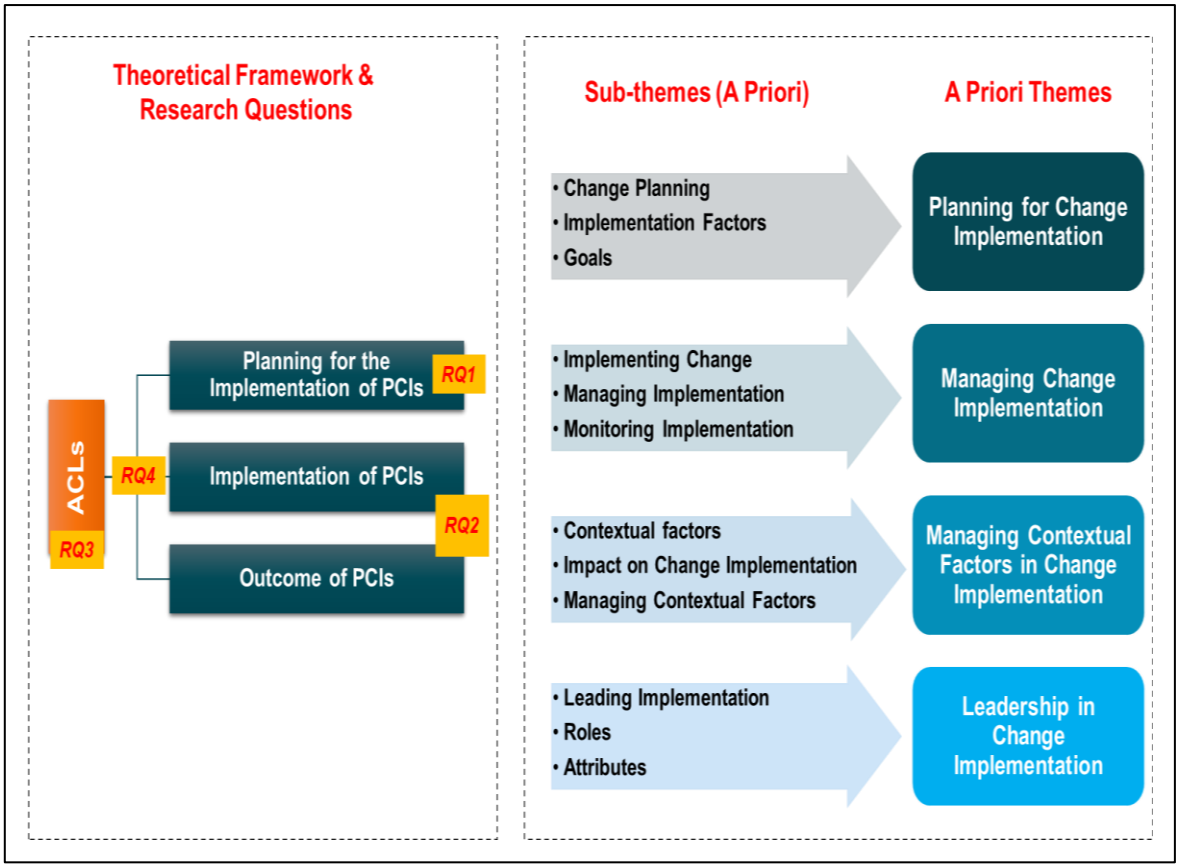

Figure 18: Link between the Research Framework and A Priori Themes

During the process of collecting data, the a priori themes were continuously reviewed and refined using smaller data sets obtained from the field. These data sets were then coded to further develop categories and themes for the study based on the collected data. This iterative process continued until an initial coding template was developed, which consisted of high-order themes, sub-themes, and lower-order themes related to the research scope. Subsequent data were coded based on the codes and clusters from the initial coding template, with modifications, removals, and additions made as the research progressed (Saunders et al., 2019; King and Brooks, 2017).

The iterative process was repeated until a final template representing all the collected data from the field was produced. This final template was then used for analysis and interpretation of the study (King and Brooks, 2017; Saunders et al., 2019). The template analysis method adopted for this study followed the six stages proposed by King and Brooks (2017), as illustrated in Figure 19 below. These steps were employed in developing the final template for this study.

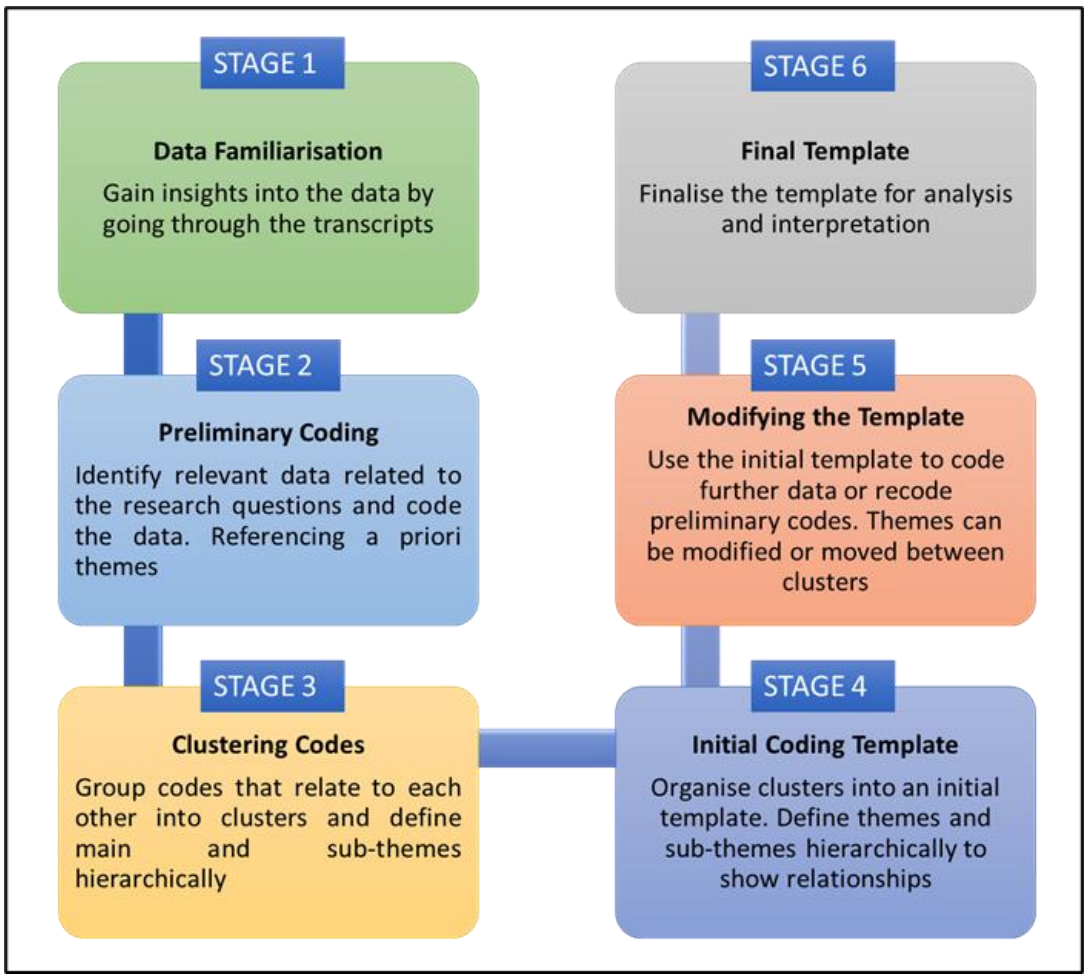

Figure 19: Six Stages of Template Analysis (Source: King and Brooks, 2017)

3.9 Validation and Reliability Method

The purpose of research is to produce valid, reliable, and ethically derived findings. To achieve this, the research must be conducted rigorously, and the findings must be convincing enough to be theoretically or practically applied in the field of study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders and Lewis, 2018). These concerns include the researcher's approach to conceptualising the research, collecting and analysing the data, and presenting the findings (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). While both quantitative and qualitative studies aim to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings, they employ different procedures and approaches to establish trustworthiness (Firestone, 1987; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). As this study utilised a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm, the application of quantitative methods to establish validity, reliability, and generalisability was deemed inappropriate (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders and Lewis, 2019).

Instead, scholars propose different approaches and criteria for assessing the validity of qualitative research. In this regard, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed different terms for internal validity (credibility), external validity (transferability), and reliability (dependability).

Research validation refers to the accuracy of the research findings and how consistently they align with the reality being studied (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Saunders and Lewis, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 340) suggested nine qualitative validation strategies, adapted from Creswell and Miller (2000), which are presented below. They also recommend the adoption of at least two validation strategies for any type of qualitative research. In line with this recommendation, more than two validation strategies were utilised in this study to ensure the validity and consistency of the research findings.

(i) Corroborating evidence through triangulation
(ii) Having a peer review or debriefing of the data and research process
(iii) Generating rich and thick descriptions
(iv) Enabling external audits
(v) Collaborating with participants
(vi) Having prolonged engagements and persistent observations in the field
(vii) Member checking or seeking participant feedback
(viii) Clarifying researcher bias or engaging in reflexivity
(ix) Discovering a negative case analysis or disconfirming evidence

On the other hand, the reliability of qualitative studies determines whether the research approaches used are consistent. This includes the methods used in data collection and the procedures used in data analysis, which should produce consistent findings (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Saunders and Lewis, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 250) argue that reliability in quantitative studies focuses on replication to achieve the same results. However, this is challenging in qualitative studies due to the emphasis on multiple realities and ever-changing human behaviours. They suggest that the focus should be on the consistency of the findings with the collected data. To ensure reliability, it is crucial to document the procedures and steps used, a process that was adhered to in this study (Yin, 2009). Importantly, readers and

interpreters of the research findings should be able to conclude that the findings are a result of the collected data (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). In this study, several measures were implemented to enhance the reliability and consistency of the findings. These measures include a peer review process conducted by the research supervisors, maintaining an audit trail of research activities and processes, regularly checking transcripts for accuracy and clarity, cross-checking codes to ensure precise definitions, and comparing them with similar research.

In the context of generalisability, it is explicit that the intent and purpose of this study, like other qualitative studies, are not to generalise the findings. Instead, it aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the change implementation phenomenon within the public sector context, specifically focusing on the MPS and Malaysian contexts (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Consequently, scholars argue that the actual value of qualitative research lies in the description and themes developed within a specific context (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, scholars suggest that in the case of qualitative generalisations, the responsibility of transferring the findings to another study lies with the researcher, who adopts the findings based on the initial researcher's descriptions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This study aligns with this view and does not employ any specific strategy to ensure the generalisability of the findings. However, the findings of this study may have relevance beyond the specific contexts of the MPS and Malaysia. They may also be applicable to the public sector in developing countries that share similar characteristics and governing structures as Malaysia and the MPS.

To ensure the quality and standards of this study, Tracy's Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for excellent qualitative research were also adopted (Tracy, 2013, p. 230). The criteria, along with the steps taken in this study, are presented in Table 4 below.

No.	Tracy's Big Tent Criteria	Steps Taken in This Study
1.	The research is on a worthy topic	The focus of this study specifically examined the implementation of PCIs within the public sector context, where limited research has been conducted.
2.	The research is carried out in great rigour	This study employed a systematic research methodology and procedure as outlined in this chapter. It is supported by clear research questions, objectives, a research framework, and a literature review.

No.	Tracy's Big Tent Criteria	Steps Taken in This Study
3.	The research is carried out with sincerity towards the transparency of the research method used	The principles of sincerity and transparency were integral to the research process and are reflected throughout this chapter, emphasising the researcher's commitment to transparency. Additionally, the position and role of the researcher in this study are acknowledged.
4.	The research is credible	The research findings are presented in a rich and thick description of the collected data presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5. The findings were also examined in relation to the existing literature. Further, the researcher spent prolonged time in the field to collect data and interact with research participants, resulting in a detailed description of the phenomenon.
5.	The research resonates with its audience	The findings of this study and the research process are presented in a structured and effective manner to ensure clarity and understanding. It resonates with the academic world as well as change practitioners in the public sector.
6.	The research makes a significant contribution towards the field of study	This study contributes to the field of change management, particularly in the context of the public sector, both theoretically and conceptually. The contributions are outlined in Chapter 5. It also provides practical contributions and recommendations for change practitioners in the public sector.
7.	The research is ethically conducted	This study was conducted under the supervision and ethical standards established by the University of Nottingham, which ensured adherence to procedural ethics (such as data collection, anonymity, data processing, and storage) and ethical guidelines commonly observed in qualitative research (such as conducting interviews and sourcing data).
8.	The research has a meaningful coherence	The study demonstrated coherence throughout the research process. The findings offer a comprehensive understanding of how PCIs are implemented in the public sector, thereby achieving the research objectives. It adhered to the planned research methodology, aligned with the research objectives. Additionally, it successfully established connections with existing literature, research questions, findings, and interpretations, further enhancing its coherence and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

Table 4: Tracy's Big Tent Criteria (2013, p. 230)

3.10 Researcher's Reflexivity

Reflexivity requires researchers to routinely evaluate their position as researchers and the research methodologies used in their research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The process of reflexivity involves multiple layers of reflection throughout the research process, including exploring the interactions between knowledge creation (epistemology), the methods used to generate knowledge (methodology), and the involvement and impact of the researcher (ontology) (Haynes, 2012). By using an analytical lens, the researcher can acknowledge their own unique experiences through reflexivity (Mason, 1996, p. 151). As the researcher conducting this study, I bring a wealth of experience as an ACL and expertise in implementing change policies within the MPS. This prior experience provides comprehensive background knowledge about the MPS machinery, the mechanics of change implementation, and the intricacies involved in the process. I have also had professional working relationships at all levels within the MPS, including with ACLs in middle and top management. This gives me a broad understanding of their roles within the MPS.

It is also important to emphasise and acknowledge my role as the researcher, as the study is grounded in an interpretative and constructive approach. Despite my prior experience and background knowledge, I consider the research participants to be a key source of knowledge, allowing them to share their experiences and perspectives on the implementation of change and specifically the implementation of PCIs in their organisations and the MPS, respectively. Research participants were informed about my background, which facilitated the establishment of a close rapport with them, and a foundational understanding of the issues raised and discussed during the data collection process. Throughout this process, I maintained a clear stance of not influencing the perspective shared by research participants or the overall outcome of the interview. However, my background knowledge and experience played a facilitative role as the interviewer, allowing me to explore the issues discussed in great depth. This was done without bias or an attempt to steer the conversation towards my own experience or perspective. The same approach was adopted during the coding and data analysis stages.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which are based on data collected from the field. The first section recapitulates the background, objectives, and data collection process of the study. It also introduces the main themes identified through the analysis conducted. The following sections present findings related to each main theme and their corresponding sub-themes. The concluding section summarises and draws conclusions from these findings.

4.2 Consolidated Findings

The aim of this study is to explore and understand the phenomenon of change, specifically focusing on the implementation of PCIs in the public sector. To achieve this, the study examined how PCIs are implemented in the public sector by identifying and examining key themes, factors, processes, and challenges, as well as the key roles and attributes of ACLs. To gain a clear understanding of the phenomenon, the study was approached from the perspective of ACLs, who are responsible for implementing change in PSOs. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study aims to fill the gap in change management and change leadership literature in the public sector, using MPS as its context.

Figure 20: Word Cloud Based on Dataset

Building upon the research objectives, questions, theoretical framework, and literature review, four a priori themes were developed, as explained in Chapter 3. These themes served as a guide for developing interview questions and shaping the discussions during the interview process. Data were collected through one-to-one and focus group interviews with 28 ACLs using a semi-structured interview technique. The interview data were transcribed, coded, and analysed using the template analysis method. Figure 20 above displays the word cloud generated from the entire dataset collected during the field research, providing a visual representation of the most frequently occurring words used as the basis for coding and categorising the field data.

The analysis of the dataset resulted in the identification of five primary themes in this study. The first theme, “Envisioning Change”, pertains to the clarity of the vision for change. The second theme, “Communicating Change”, focuses on effective change communication and engagement with stakeholders. The third theme, “Managing People for Change”, addresses employees' attitudes towards change and their competency. The fourth theme, “Strategising Change Implementation”, relates to the implementation process and factors that influence these processes. The fifth theme, “Leading Change Effectively”, identifies the key roles and attributes of ACLs in driving change. The themes, along with their respective categories, are illustrated in Figure 21 below. A comprehensive inventory of the themes, categories within each theme, and their supporting codes can be found in Appendix 10.

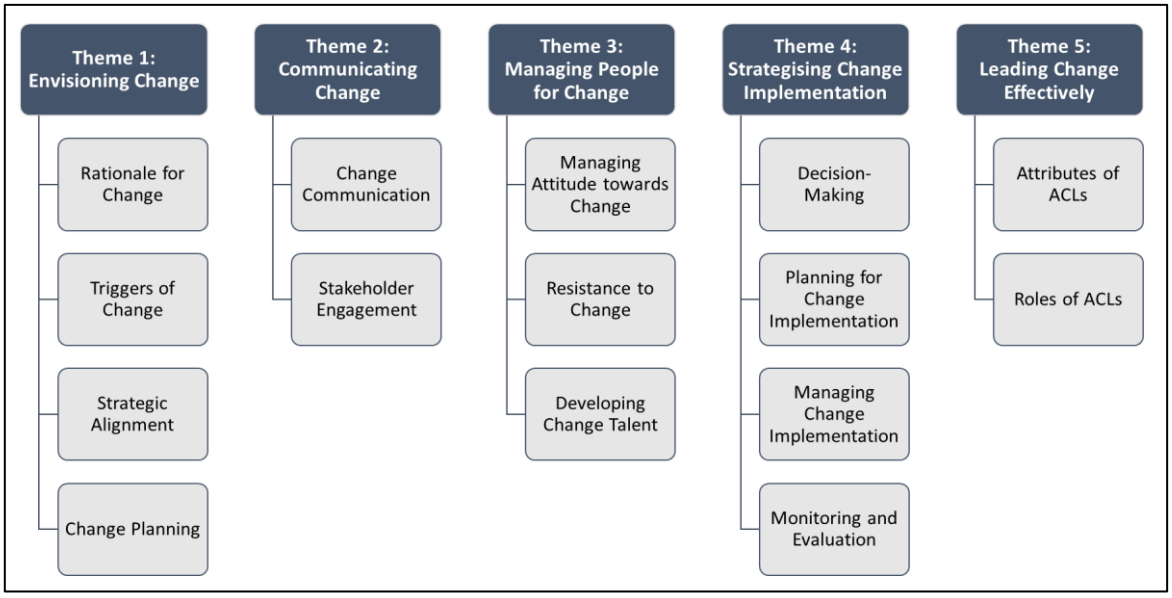

Figure 21: Main Themes and Corresponding Categories of the Study

4.3 Theme 1: Envisioning Change

This section presents the findings for theme one, which are based on the identified categories and sub-themes. The categories included in this theme are rationale for change, triggers for change, strategic alignment, and change planning.

4.3.1 Rationale for Change

One of the main considerations during the implementation process relates to the rationale for change. Participants indicate that they and their subordinates tend to contemplate what triggered the change, the need for the change, and the objectives it aims to accomplish. P21 explains the need to clarify the rationale of the change.

> *"Firstly, we have to make them understand why we want to do that. So, we have to make them clear the vision, mission of the things that we want to do. Transform, why [do] we need transformation? because to address the current issues…" (P21)*

According to P14, the rationale must be evident and have a clear direction. She expressed her disappointment with the organisational structural changes made in her previous organisation, as they were implemented without a clear rationale and direction. This left her and her colleagues uncertain about the future of the organisation and their own prospects.

> *"If you want to close an agency, you have to ensure that you have reasons; [It] might be you want to achieve something…Better than what it is now, then it should be fine. But like now…they are just…closing down only. So, for the next step, we are unable to see it." (P14)*

P15 emphasised the importance of understanding the purpose of change.

> *"We must know what is the purpose of these changes, so we can answer to our stakeholders, to public. Otherwise, the change won't be beneficial; communication is important." (P15)*

On the other hand, P1 expressed firm beliefs that change should not be initiated unless a clear need for it exists.

> *"Do you need the change? You have to ask yourself and ask your organisation. If you don't need the change, you don't plan for the change." (P1)*

P16 echoed similar sentiments as P1, emphasising that implementors may resist change when they perceive it as unnecessary. He further stressed the importance of carefully evaluating the need for change, considering its significant impact on people.

> *"…at the first place, they do not feel that the change is necessary actually. And without change, things progress, it goes on as well." (P16)*

Participants highlighted the importance of linking the need for change with its objectives. P1 suggested that the objectives and outcomes of change must be synchronised. He further stressed that the benefits must outweigh the status quo for change to take place.

> *"So, you list up the objective…tie [it] up with the outcomes…see how [the outcome] affects your organisation. Does it benefit your organisation? If not, why you want to change...let's say the benefit, what is the benefit?, it must be better than the previous structure..." (P1)*

P12 stressed that the intended outcomes of change can only be achieved if there is a clear need for the change.

> *"When change is made without having a clear thought on why you need to do it, you will not have the outcome that you want." (P12)*

4.3.2 Triggers of Change

In discussing the need for change, participants shared various triggers of change within the MPS. P2 suggested that change is usually initiated from the top and by central agencies.

"…for planned organisational change initiative, it all started with ideas from our superiors or from the central government…depending on the background of the introducer…" (P2)

4.3.2.1 Internal Triggers

According to both P1 and P12, change can be triggered by strategic and administrative decisions made by the top management.

"I was told that the reason why we were dissolved is because we were taking up too much of cost, operational cost but the outcome was still not there…" (P12)

These changes originate from directives issued by higher authorities within the PSOs, such as ministers or senior ACLs. They are then implemented through the respective departments. However, P25 stressed that internally driven changes are often directed to the strategic planning division for follow-up actions, which can be burdensome.

"…they will start, usually from the top, minister or whoever, they will give their direction…it begins from the minister then it goes down..." (P25)

Participants also emphasised that some internal changes are politically driven. P11 shared that PCIs are sometimes used as political tools for political mileage, resulting in short implementation periods.

"...we're not given that time to plan because…it is very much a political tool. The intentions…and the programme is good, but the people see it differently…taking into consideration the political situation of the country. So, when the top leader is being jittery, it affects everybody. Without proper planning, it'll be tough." (P11)

Both P14 and P22, on the other hand, expressed their discontent with politically driven changes that lack clarity. P14 further stressed that some of these changes are self-centred and can be burdensome to the organisation.

> *"...we really don't know whether it's what the people want or it's what the local MP's wants...So, this becomes very problematic when it comes to implementation." (P22)*

Change can also arise from the adoption of best practices from other PSOs, sectors, and countries. P2 suggested that PSOs often seek out best practices from other organisations to solve the problems that they face. Expanding on this, P26 shared that his organisation also examines best practices from other countries.

> *"We, as the organisation, we have to start looking on the best practices, which have been done by some other organisation…we copy, then we relearn, and then we re-implement in our office. That is the easiest way, rather than we recreate the wheel and start all over again [through] trial and error." (P2)*

4.3.2.2 External Triggers

External Stakeholders: Change can also be externally driven through feedback received from external stakeholders and the public, as stated by P24. Both P24 and P26 further suggested that these changes are implemented when the need arises.

> *"…it's mostly bottom up, people drive it, or the industry drives the change, industry pushes us to do the change. So, we move because the industry wants it." (P24)*

Additionally, P18 shared that certain initiatives are directly proposed by external stakeholders to PSOs for evaluation and implementation. According to him, this is commonly driven by private companies through interested PSOs.

> *"...sometimes the ministry doesn't have any idea…suddenly they want a company…[to] suggest something for improvement…Then the ministry says okay it is a good project, how do you want to do it...and they come to us, and we negotiate it" (P18)*

Central Agencies: Participants also suggested the critical role of central agencies in introducing and shaping the change agenda for PSOs. P16, who works in a central agency, elaborated that these initiatives are typically introduced through periodic engagements with PSOs as part of the Malaysia Plan planning process.

> *"So, when we do engagement for Malaysia Plan whatsoever, we ask what is your problem then they will tell us that their problems are like this…we see…how we are going that tackle it. It is either policy or…in terms of change…and what not..." (P16)*

P16 further shared his frustration in dealing with PSOs, as they sometimes fail to acknowledge the problems they face, which requires him to develop change solutions for them through continuous engagements. He stressed the importance of effective consultations with numerous stakeholders to ensure that the solution is acceptable to all parties before endorsement.

> *"…let's say the…policy, at the first place we look at it, [the ministry] should do it. But [the ministry] just ignore it, and in the end [the central agency] took up the initiative. So, we will call and do the engagement and so on. Then we do all the write up with the help of [the ministry] but in the end we submit the document to [the ministry] for implementation." (P16)*

Central agencies also independently develop change initiatives for implementation by PSOs, often involving changes in administrative processes and procedures. P20 describes these types of changes as top-down directives that require compliance. However, she expressed her disappointment with the lack of engagement carried out by central agencies in developing these initiatives.

> *"From the central agencies, this is actually very top down. It is just something that cuts across the board, and they pass it to you and say, this is the current new change or the new directive, so you have to follow…So it is very top down because agencies, usually we have no say in that. The central agency involved might call prior to their directive…for a discussion, but more often than not, it's usually not done." (P20)*

Environmental Shifts: Change can also occur within MPS due to shifts in its operating environment. Participants noted that changes in the political landscape, economic conditions of the country, and unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic can bring about changes for the PSOs. More detailed findings on this are presented in Section 4.6.2.2.

4.3.3 Strategic Alignment

Participants emphasised the importance of aligning change with several factors that impact its implementation. These factors include existing laws and policies; strategic direction; inter-agency collaborations; and international commitments.

Existing Laws and Policies: Participants emphasised the importance of aligning change with existing laws and policies to ensure smooth implementation. P10 noted that implementing change often involves amending existing laws. However, P6 lamented that legal considerations are often overlooked during the planning stages, resulting in implementation challenges. Similarly, P10 shared frustration that past changes in his organisation faced obstacles due to legal technicalities, causing delays.

> *"… when there is change, it will surely involve a change in policy including changes in the law…when we want to propose a change, there will be parties that will raise issues with regards to the law…so we have to go through the process of discussion… finally lead towards a change in law, and we have missed out in terms of short-term revenue…" (P10)*

Expanding on these views, P16 emphasised that the lack of alignment with existing legislation can derail the implementation of change initiatives, especially when involving stakeholders who are less supportive of them. Based on his demeanour and the language used, he seems to have accepted these challenges as part of his job.

> *"…during the implementation, the [agency] came up and said that their Act does not cover [the initiative]…Then there was a delay. We have approved the project since 2017, 2018, and it has not been done. It's like that." (P16).*

Participants also highlighted the importance of considering existing government policies when formulating change, as explained by P18. Similarly, P20 emphasised the significance of aligning change with long-term national policies such as the Malaysian Plan to ensure smooth implementation. Additionally, P8 stressed the need for the KPIs of the change to align with national policies.

> *"…among other things is the government's current policy from top-down is very important...We have to take into account these factors as well, otherwise it will be difficult for us to implement." (P18)*

Internal Strategies: Participants emphasised the importance of aligning change with organisational strategies and existing initiatives. P25 stressed that this alignment can prevent duplication. Expanding on this viewpoint in the same focus group, P27 noted instances of redundant initiatives from central agencies that occasionally encroach upon the jurisdiction of other agencies, reflecting their lack of alignment.

> *"…we look at whether that initiative is already there or not, is there anything similar because, what happened in my ministry now, the minister takes advice from his advisor who has not done their thorough study. So, there are things which they suggest, we already have it, just that the name might be different, or the mechanism is a little different." (P25)*

Additionally, P20 proposed that change initiatives originating from central agencies should be aligned with the strategic direction of the PSOs. However, she noted the limitations due to their cross-cutting nature.

> *"It is from their perspective, whoever, from where the change come...But when it flows down to us, we have to align it within our organisation." (P20)*

Inter-Agency Alignment: Participants emphasised the prevalence of cross-cutting policies within the MPS, highlighting the interdependence among PSOs to implement change initiatives, as shared by P21. She further noted that inter-agency collaborations are commonly practiced within the MPS and can address implementation barriers.

> *"…in the civil service because most of the policies…although it is within the ministry but when you want to achieve something good it relates back to other ministries as well. That is beyond our capacity, we can talk to them but sometimes it does not work out." (P21)*

According to P3, these collaborations are typically implemented through inter-agency committees and taskforces, which makes the engagement and implementation process more structured.

> *"To me it's easier to do it that way, you see when you have a committee, you have an appointment letter to the committee. So, you make the person accountable already." (P3)*

However, P3 stressed that PSOs lack control over other agencies, which can pose a challenge during the implementation stage. This sentiment was also echoed by P21, who expressed frustration over delays caused by bureaucratic processes in other PSOs involved in the change that is under her purview.

> *"We are fast because we have improved a lot of bureaucracies here…so payment becomes fast. But when it involves different ministries…the payment uses the allocation that is not within our control…(Sigh)." (P21)*

Additionally, P10 suggested that inter-agency collaboration can be impacted by different views and interpretations of the change initiative.

> *"Sometimes we need collaboration among ministries yeah…Sometimes there are challenges, challenges because every human being, they have different opinions and all sorts of interpretations." (P10)*

International Commitments: Two participants underscored the significance of aligning change with the international commitments of the PSOs. P3 highlighted the need for PSOs to review their international commitments before initiating relevant changes. He emphasised that this should be done from the outset to avoid any obstacles during implementation.

"We have to take into account what is our position in the international part of it." (P3)

4.3.4 Change Planning

Participants emphasised the importance of planning in establishing a clear vision and implementation framework for the change. P1 characterised the structural changes that took place in his organisation as a chaotic process that lacked a clear rationale and goals. He expressed doubt about the necessity of the change and attributed the challenges to poor planning. He suggested that a feasibility study should have been conducted prior to the change. His tone and choice of words indicate his dissatisfaction and frustration with the change process.

"…I'm not sure they're (the change) through a proper study or not, to go into these directions…if you ask me…[if] there is a proper planning? I didn't see any…proper guideline at all…we just receive a sudden announcement from the government what to change…I think that is not really a good planning." (P1)

P1 proceeded to outline his perspective on effective change planning.

"…planned change, that means you have a proper planning yeah. In writing, not verbally, and then you put it in a proper manner, that means you have like a chronology, a metric to define all your changes… and then you explain to [your employees]." (P1)

P20, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of having enough time to plan for change to ensure a smooth implementation.

"…sometimes the formulation part, you do not get enough time there…that's where it all goes wrong. From the very beginning, from the first step. If you do not plan properly, you do not have enough time to plan properly, then it affects the whole process." (P20)

P11 stressed that a lack of proper planning and understanding of the change directly affects the implementation process.

> *"…when you don't have proper planning, you don't understand the guideline, you implement it in such a hurry, perhaps, you missed a certain regulation that actually this cannot be done this way." (P11)*

Several participants emphasised the significance of developing an implementation framework that incorporates engagement and communication plans into their overall planning, as explained by P24. She also noted that the absence of such framework, essential tools, and the practice of blindly following orders all impact the implementation process.

> *"…every policy must come with a framework…communication plan must be part of the framework." (P24)*

4.4 Theme 2: Communicating Change

This section presents the findings of theme two and its categories related to change communication and stakeholder engagement. It highlights the current approaches to communication and stakeholder engagement adopted in the sector.

4.4.1 Change Communication

Effective Communication: All participants emphasised the significance of clear and effective communication during the implementation process. In this regard, P17 highlighted the importance of clearly communicating the direction and anticipated outcomes of the change. Similarly, both P1 and P4 emphasised the necessity of communicating the objectives, need and specifics of the change.

> *"As an organisation, everyone has to know the direction of what we want to change. The important thing is that we know the goals…the benefits or perks …if we can implement the change." (P17)*

P3 emphasised the importance of ensuring that employees have a thorough understanding of the nature of the change and highlighted the need to adopt a holistic perspective when communicating change. He further noted that this is particularly significant considering the challenges of quantifying tangible outcomes and evaluating the impact of change in the public sector.

> *"…we are creating the problem, where we do not educate our people as to why we want to make the change. Make them see the big picture…If a person is able to understand the big picture, they have an appreciation of what they're doing...they realise the impact of what they're doing." (P3)*

Both P13 and P15 emphasised the significance of ACLs having the required knowledge about the change to effectively communicate it. Additionally, P18 stressed the necessity of strong interpersonal skills for ACLs.

> *"…first, we need to have knowledge on the impact of these changes. Then, we can communicate them…If we just undertake the change and implement it and yet we don't know the outcome…impact…benefit…it may be difficult for us to communicate, even with our own staff and maybe more difficult with the external parties." (P15)*

P20 highlighted the importance of ACLs being transparent in their communication.

> *"I'm more to being honest and open because I believe by doing that, it actually smoothens the change process. Because if people are being kept in the dark or not sure why we are doing this, or why is this happening…the change process would be greatly affected." (P20)*

On the other hand, P3 emphasised the importance of communicating change in a positive manner to ensure better acceptance.

> *"If the decision is made up there…the way I present it to my staff has to be either neutral or positive. Try not to go towards the negative, unless if it's*

overwhelmingly, there's something glaring...be neutral or positive, don't let their first acquaintance with the subject be on a negative note." (P3)

Additionally, P9 emphasised the significance of building relationships through communication, especially through face-to-face communication.

"…Sometimes communication between the two parties has to be good…Although we have advanced technology now, but human touch is very important." (P9)

In terms of challenges, P25 highlighted time constraints as a key factor that impacts her ability to communicate change effectively.

"Sometimes we also do not have the time to explain the rationale of why we need to do it this way." (P25)

Top-down Communication: Participants highlighted that a top-down communication approach is used within the MPS, as described by P13.

"It's about how we are receiving it from the top and trickling it down to our subordinates and telling them what needs to be done and why it needs to be done and to work together and not to just pass the buck to them. And always be there to clarify anything not to just leave them in the dark." (P13)

P5 emphasised that the direction originates from the top, and his role is to interpret and communicate the change downward.

"I think we are led by a very good Secretary General; he can explain what he wants very in detail, very clear. So, it's up to us…to interpret that and explain that further down to our staff." (P5)

Reinforcing these views, P9 suggested that middle management ACLs have a moderating role in effectively communicating the change downward between top management and implementors. This viewpoint was also reiterated by P5.

> *"In my opinion, one as a leader…you have to be the link between…the number one officer and the subordinates. Maybe the term "top management" is quite big or heavy, we simplify the delivery to the lower group, in the sense of conveying the wish in a simple language." (P9)*

In communicating the change directives downward, P4 stressed the importance of facilitating two-way communication between the ACLs and subordinates.

> *"…let them ask questions…they want confirmation, clarity. You have to explain, if not, change won't happen." (P4)*

However, P3 indicated the prevalence of passive communication within the MPS and emphasised the need for clear communication from the outset.

> *"…our society is not a very questioning society. we keep quiet and listen, any questions or not, none right, and then behind, they will have a lot of things to say. So, you must be able to communicate it." (P3)*

On the other hand, participants also highlighted the importance of vertical communication in change, especially for reporting purposes, as explained by P18.

> *"At the same time, we must also report to the boss…what we have done. So, there is two-way communication." (P18)*

Adaptive Communication: Adapting communication to different levels of employees in the organisation is crucial for enhancing understanding of the change. P19 shared her experience interacting with both lower-level and middle-level employees in her organisation. She explained that lower-level employees were more receptive and less likely to ask detailed questions compared to middle-level employees. Similarly, P18 also stressed the importance of using different communication techniques with lower-level employees and superiors in the organisation.

> *"For the middle management, they will question is it necessary? The question whether it is necessary has never been asked by the lower*

grades, but the question whether it is necessary was asked by the middle management…we will only be able to tackle them if the top management supports us, otherwise there will indeed be major obstacles." (P19)

P10 highlighted the importance of tactful communication when interacting with subordinates and other stakeholders.

"We need to use language, words that are polite, which will not hurt others or look down on the views of other people." (P10)

Echoing the same sentiments, P18 suggested that tactless communication can impact the implementation of change, especially when dealing with external stakeholders.

"…sometimes the language used…maybe a little rough and it is a misunderstanding, right?...maybe the way we communicate…sometimes government official feels a little arrogant maybe, they think they are in power, they want to impose…they do not go down, to don't dive in…To communicate effectively, the words we use have to be accurate to the situation, maybe on the ground, the jargon we use should not be very complicated…" (P18)

Communication Plan: Participants emphasised the importance of developing communication plans to ensure the effective implementation of change. In this regard, P12 shared that the lack of a communication plan led to a chaotic change implementation in her organisation.

"…I think what failed was we did not have a clear communication plan between ministries, departments and divisions and what not." (P12)

Echoing the same sentiments, P24 emphasised the importance of prior communication to ensure buy in and the need for a communication plan.

"…when you want to start…a new policy, you must do mind conditioning first. You must let the people know slowly that you want to introduce this

new tax, why we need this new tax…because we are the government and we have like many stakeholders…the people affected, and the industry affected. Every policy must come with a framework…communication plan must be part of the framework." (P24)

4.4.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Participants emphasised the importance of effectively engaging stakeholders, both internally and externally, for successful change implementation. P4 particularly emphasised stakeholder engagement as a means for communicating the change, noting that a failure to do so would significantly impact the implementation process.

"You need to properly engage with those that are involved in the change. Number one are our employees, then stakeholders and our customers. If you fail to communicate the change process, this will impact the overall change deployment." (P4)

Internal Stakeholders: P20 stressed that internal engagement would improve the collective understanding of the change.

"With internal stakeholders, the most common way would be engagement and making them see that this is the common goal that we are actually heading to. Make them understand that so that everybody can feel that…if we work in silo, nobody can share the same views and outlook." (P20)

According to P10, engagement can be done through a series of discussions to facilitate better understanding and serve as a forum to discuss the change.

"That is why we need to understand each other, and if there is anything that requires advice and so on, we have discussions…" (P10)

P22 went on to highlight the importance of engaging at all levels of the organisation to ensure that the change is focused on the intended outcomes.

> *"What I'm required to do is make sure that the outcomes that we want are translated through that project, and that means engaging people at many different levels within the ministry…because those are the implementors." (P22)*

External Stakeholders: Participants considered engaging with external stakeholders as a crucial step in the change process. P21 highlighted that it serves as a platform to inform stakeholders about the change.

> *"Engagement is very important…for the policy…we did engagement with all walks of life, from the players and public as well. Because all segments are involved…manufacturers, breeders, the citizens themselves." (P21)*

P21 further suggested that stakeholder engagement also serves as a form of check and balance.

> *"…of course, when we come out with the policy, we feel that it is the best, but we have to hear from the other side, so that there is check and balance. That is a must." (P21)*

P18 explained that engagement with stakeholders is regarded as a formality. He further emphasised the importance of conducting proactive engagements.

> *"But in terms of engagement, it is like a formality, right? If this department wants to implement change…there must be engagement." (P18)*

Additionally, P24 shared that her organisation conducts regular engagement sessions.

> *"…to ensure that the policy goes on and to also get buy-in from stakeholders, what we do is…periodic engagement with our stakeholders…every quarterly…" (P24)*

P26 suggested that some change initiatives are driven from the ground based on the feedback received from external stakeholders. Echoing similar sentiments, P8

explained that inputs from external stakeholders are used to formulate change initiatives.

> *"So, all these inputs…it actually [comes] from the ground [and] comes to the ministry, and then the ministry formulates it." (P8)*

Expanding on this, P9 highlighted that feedback from external stakeholders is usually considered collectively. He added that engagements with external stakeholders are typically more general in nature, despite the importance of considering their views.

> *"In terms of planning, we usually will involve external parties for the engagement, and it does not come from one department only, there will be feedback from everyone and finally we will have a decision to do it, but when moving towards a comprehensive implementation, there will be slight problems." (P9)*

Managing Stakeholders' Interest: PSOs are suggested to have a wide range of stakeholders, including the public.

> *"When we want to implement change right, because we are the government and we have like many stakeholders, the people especially, like I am doing tax, the people affected, and the industry affected." (P24)*

P16 highlighted that stakeholders often have diverse interests in PSO initiatives, noting that the public is more receptive to change than industry players, who prioritise profits.

> *"…different stakeholders will have different needs…people are a little more open, but in terms of industry players, money comes first before anything..." (P16)*

This sentiment was reiterated by P25, who highlighted that external stakeholders are typically driven by their own interests and can at times be very critical.

> *"…sometimes the NGOs (non-profit organisations) and the public that we invite, they seem to have a hidden agenda, sometimes when they speak out, not to say that we cannot accept it, but it is very negative and is not helpful, they simply whack without any suggestions and way forward." (P25)*

P2 emphasised the significance of effectively managing divergent stakeholder interests.

> *"...we will address the best on the public [interest], not on the personal [interests] of the stakeholders…certain stakeholders, they might have their own interests, that is true…we manage to create a win-win situation." (P2)*

In terms of managing stakeholder interest, P10 suggested that if industry inputs are not handled carefully, it may pose challenges to ACLs and their leadership.

> *"…inputs from players, if not threaded carefully, if we do not entertain the players…from outside, industries… they can impair our leadership." (P10)*

Lack of Stakeholder Engagement: Participants identified the lack of prior engagement as a significant challenge in change implementation. P22 emphasised the lack of prior engagement within the MPS domain, suggesting that it should be a common practice for change.

> *"Engage the stakeholders from the inception. Ask them what they need, because right now that's not what's happening." (P22)*

P4 stressed that a lack of engagement can lead to a lack of alignment.

> *"…sometimes there [is a] lack of alignment. You talk among yourselves what to implement…but you never engage…with other agencies or your departments, your sections, for example…You want change to happen, but you never disseminate the information." (P4)*

Reinforcing this sentiment, P24 shared that the implementation of a particular change in her organisation had to be postponed due to a lack of engagement and prior

communication, which led to rejection from the public and industry.

> *"Now, we were supposed to start this tax…but we postponed it, because there were a lot of rejections, people reject, industry reject." (P24)*

On the other hand, P21 stressed that there is a lack of inter-agency engagement within the MPS.

> *"…I think there was not enough engagement. Not only engagement within the ministry, but across the ministries must also be carried out because sometimes the functions are not under our ministry but other ministries. It is okay If it is only the federal ministries, but it also includes the state governments…" (P21)*

P22 also raised concerns about the effectiveness of engagements conducted within the MPS and expressed her disappointment with the current level of engagement within her organisation which lacked proper planning.

> *"…when I asked them…have you done the stakeholder engagement? The feedback I always get is, yes, we have already done it. But when I go into the details… It's not done properly. They didn't have the right stakeholders. They didn't go through the entire process. Like there was no plan, it's just like, okay, we need to tick this off our checklist. It's a checklist…they just do it for the sake of fulfilling that particular criteria." (P22)*

Engagement Skills: Several participants pointed out that ACLs and their subordinates lack the necessary engagement skills, affecting the overall effectiveness of the engagement process, as explained by P22. She went on to add that there is also a lack of structured guidelines to carry out stakeholder engagements within the MPS. She emphasised that the engagement process demands considerable effort and skills, especially in the absence of a well-defined engagement strategy.

> *"First of all, you need to know how to be able to engage with that many stakeholders. It's a skill. We have not really invested in that skill and it's a very long, drawn out process." (P22)*

Participants also highlighted the need for developing strong networking and negotiation skills to ensure effective stakeholder engagements.

> *"External is where you have to develop the art of actually networking and negotiating with people…to see a bigger picture. A bigger, positive outlook because you have to network with other agencies, other ministries, so that both sides actually come up [with] a win-win situation." (P20)*

Both, P11 and P18 emphasised the importance of building strong relationships with stakeholders to foster cooperation during the implementation process.

> *"Our relationship with the stakeholders, one it is personal, we have to get their buy in, and we have to be good with them so that when we call for meetings, and they give assistance…their opinions and views." (P18)*

4.5 Theme 3: Managing People for Change

The findings in this section focus on theme three, "Managing People for Change" and its categories related to managing attitude towards change, resistance to change, managing resistance to change and developing change talent.

4.5.1 Managing Attitude towards Change

Participants suggest that the effectiveness of change implementation is dependent on the attitude of the people involved in it. Consequently, it is crucial for ACLs to provide the necessary support, as explained by P11.

> *"…it depends entirely on the attitude…That's why, as a leader, it's very important that you are willing to always provide support." (P11)*

However, their attitude can also become a barrier to effective change implementation.

> *"But when it comes to the ground, there are a lot of barriers, sometimes it is the attitude." (P21)*

P4 suggested that employee attitudes are influenced by their complacency, which stems from being in their comfort zones. P6, who belonged to the same focus group as P4, noted that some people are inherently lazy, a perspective that P4 agreed with but emphasised that complacency drives their behaviour.

> *"Lazy, yeah, but complacent is the word…Complacent because they are in a comfort zone" (P4)*

Furthermore, P22 suggested that there exists a culture of simply "clocking in and out" within the MPS, where employees do the bare minimum to get by.

> *"…maybe some people go into it (civil service) thinking that it's a pretty comfy job. There isn't much to do than clocking in at eight and clocking out at five. So, I'm not going to really bust my whatever to get it done. So, I'm just going to do the barest minimum, get by, and be comfortable." (P22)*

P15, on the other hand, highlighted that some new recruits find it difficult to cope with their superiors' work approach due to their poor attitude.

> *"Because many new recruits…they cannot adapt with the more senior bosses. They are rude, especially when their bosses are the fierce type, they are unable to cope…" (P15)*

According to both P4 and P21, these attitudes are inherent in nature and stem from their upbringing and educational background. They shape their attitude and behaviour towards work and how they adapt organisationally. P21 further added that there is a diversity of attitudes within the MPS.

> *"It is difficult with attitude because it relates back to how they were brought up, maybe they are not used with…the nature, the nature is so much different, when we entered here, we are not from the same nature." (P21)*

Towards this, participants highlighted the importance of addressing employee attitudes to ensure that change can take place within the organisation. P2 stressed

that this should be addressed at the beginning of the change process.

> *"…when we do not change their attitude, their view, perception, and knowledge…definitely change will not happen as desired…" (P14)*

To do so, both P18 and P19, emphasised that ACLs should take the initiative to understand the mindset of their employees at all levels.

> *"…we will face many lower grades…we will face with middle management grades…the mindset of the people itself actually plays a role in us bringing change." (P19)*

4.5.2 Hierarchical Compliance Culture

Participants highlighted the existence of a culture that promotes a strong emphasis on employees obeying top-down directions and instructions. This sentiment was shared by P22, who added that she is at times compelled to accept and carry out instructions that she personally disagrees with.

> *"It is a top-down approach…how the situation is dealt with, it's by force. You do or die; you just have to do it. And civil servants are trained at the inception. You just follow instructions. You don't question, you do it. So, a person may initially have resistance to it, but then you tend to toe the line at the end of the day because otherwise what's going to happen to you? They're worried about their jobs too." (P22)*

P20 shared that while she follows top-down directives, she noticed that new recruits tend to hold onto their own views and may need to be compelled to follow directives.

> *"…I have no choice but to tell them then this is a directive. So, they have to do it regardless." (P20)*

Affirming this, P9 highlighted that it is the nature of civil servants to work based on directives.

"…like us as civil servants, we carry out our job based on instructions." (P9)

P10, on the other hand, suggested that some superiors have a tendency not to listen to their subordinates.

"Some bosses do not want to listen to the reasoning from their subordinate level…" (P10)

This culture arises due to dependence on top management, the organisational structure, and the limited powers given to functional leaders, as explained by P6. He added that PSOs are hierarchical in nature, where superiors tend to exert hierarchical powers and authority over their subordinates.

"We really rely very heavily on the top management, our bosses, for driving the change because partly of our organisational structure and also the empowerment given to the functional leaders, which is very limited." (P6)

Alluding to the same sentiments, P11 highlighted that PSOs are hierarchical in nature and lack the necessary ecosystem to implement change.

"…we are still a very hierarchical organisation…we are still top bottom. It's still a very traditional set up. We do not have an ecosystem, where everybody plays a different role in making that change." (P11)

P23 expressed frustration with the existing hierarchical structure in her organisation, highlighting that these layers have created a gap between the top and bottom.

"But we can't effect the change, we can't actually push anything because nothing that we say goes through because we got all the bosses that cover those on top." (P23)

This culture also applies to top management, as they take directives from their superiors, including ministers within the sector. P10 added that he also consults the

minister in his organisation on certain administrative decisions under his own purview and authority.

> *"…everyone needs to obey to the service head, which is the Public Sector Service Head and the boss in that term is the Chief Secretary." (P10)*

4.5.3 Resistance to Change

Participants identified the presence of resistance to change within the sector, as illustrated in Figure 22 below. They highlighted that introducing change brings in new elements into the organisation, so there is bound to be resistance.

> *"…you bring in something new. I think there's definitely going to be resistance because it requires a change in thinking, and then you have to actually do something about it." (P22)*

Figure 22: Word Cloud for Resistance to Change

Complacency: Most participants associate resistance with complacency. P23 explained that some employees have been in the same organisation for too long, leading to complacency. According to P4, complacency leads to a failure to recognise the need for change, as employees have been performing the same tasks without issues and perceive this as the norm.

> "*Why? Because they're very complacent…They've always been there, and they don't know better." (P23)*

P22 suggests that some employees are comfortable with the status quo and are not willing to change. Towards this, P17 stressed that a move from the current practice is sometimes perceived as disrupting the existing organisational system and practices.

> *"…people who are comfortable with status quo, they're not going to want to do the work, although it's very important work." (P22)*

Building on the same sentiments, P28 suggested that people who are complacent find it difficult to adapt to change. He added that employees are sometimes resistant to new ideas stemming from different experiences due to their complacency.

> *"…they have been there for a long time, and it is difficult for them to adapt to changes…" (P28)*

P10 emphasised that complacency produces negative outcomes and leads to unproductivity. As such, he suggested that employees need to be rotated.

> *"…when an officer has been in that place for a long time, the outcome will be negative, their productivity will go down, he's going to be static, yes, and when the time comes, they need to move to another place." (P10)*

Additional Work: P3 suggests that resistance to change can stem from the perception that it entails additional work. P16 observed that employees often exhibit reluctance to assume the additional responsibilities associated with change.

> *"They are already comfortable with the existing rules…of course, to implement a change, it is not as easy…not many people are willing to take up that responsibility." (P16)*

Additionally, P18 suggested that employees are reluctant to change because they lack motivation to take on more work without any financial rewards. These views were also

echoed by other participants, who associated change with extra responsibilities and motivation with financial rewards.

> *"Reluctance to change…because they feel comfortable with the existing procedures and policies, because why [do] you want extra work? Nobody wants an extra job without increment in terms of salary…perks and privileges." (P18)*

On the other hand, P16 suggested that employees' reluctance to take on additional responsibilities can be attributed to laziness.

> *"…there is resistance because the officers are lazy to make the changes. It will increase the burden of work on them." (P16)*

Lack of Understanding: Participants indicate that resistance may arise due to a lack of understanding regarding the nature and purpose of the change. P19 shared that resistance tends to reduce as employees gain a better understanding of the change.

> *"…now they have seen the changes…first [there was] resistance, as though they do not want to do it. Now they are looking forward…to do it because they have understood. The challenges are in terms of understanding..." (P19)*

Differences in views: Some participants highlighted that resistance could arise due to differing views between ACLs and their subordinates, posing a challenge for ACLs to motivate them to go through with the change. Additionally, P20 emphasised the necessity to compel them to embrace the change.

> *"…they do not share the same view and outlook as you do…it's quite a challenge to actually bring them to see the same viewpoint…that we have to do this, but why? Because it, they don't relate to the outcome…" (P20)*

Legacy: P25 suggested that some people resist change because they feel the need to support what has been done in the past, which reflects on their own performances.

> *"…why people are resisting change, because they feel that when you make changes, that means what was done before was not right, so indirectly, you are saying that you are not good enough, the people before you were not good enough." (P25)*

Lack of Effort: P17 suggested that some employees may resist change due to their reluctance to participate in it, and when compelled, they do not take the change seriously. He also associated resistance with a lack of financial rewards.

> *"When we want to do something new, there may be some reluctance which means that even if they do it, they do not do it seriously." (P17)*

No Resistance: On the contrary, some participants suggest that employees within the sector do not resist change but rather lack the commitment to effectively implement it, as explained by P16. Additionally, P21 stressed that instead of resistance, the issue lies in the pace at which work is carried out.

> *"No, they do not show resistance, they do not show it, they try to do it, but when we look at the seriousness, it is not there. They do it but they just do it for the sake of doing it, the seriousness is not there…" (P16)*

Reaffirming these views, both P9 and P22 emphasised that employees do not resist change because of the hierarchical nature of PSOs. Additionally, P22 elaborated that although some employees may initially resist the change, they will eventually comply due to their fear of the consequences of non-compliance. However, there will be a lack of enthusiasm to implement the change on their part. This view was also echoed by P11, who emphasised that employees sometimes simply go along with the change.

> *"I don't think there is [resistance], as a civil servant, they comply with the instructions." (P9)*

Building on these sentiments, P8 observed that there is no apparent resistance within his organisation, although there are occasional delays in implementation.

"…not too much resistance or not noticeable resistance from anyone involved…some delay and all those things… that's usual…" (P8)

Managing resistance to change: To effectively address resistance to change, participants highlighted the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of its nature, as explained by P26. This sentiment was also shared by P2.

"Resistance is everywhere. Okay, you must understand first of all why they resist, one is maybe they are misinformed…difference in ideology, lack of motivation until the end no matter how you engage them, they will not move from their stance." (P26)

In line with this sentiment, P4 stressed that ACLs need to manage resistance and remove any behavioural barriers within the organisation. He associates these barriers with organisational culture and suggests that it should be done gradually.

"You need to be able to address resistance. Find a way, people are resistant. Me, you, everything in the new environment, new boss, new policy; we are resistant to change…Remove the behavioural barriers in organisation. There are always barriers." (P4)

P6, who belonged to the same focus group as P4, added that the top management should play a role in managing the resistance, despite expressing his disappointment in their lack of interest in the issue.

"I think leaders, top management really plays a very important part in controlling the resistance itself, which is not very easy. Sometimes at the top, they just make don't know only, they instruct only and expect things to happen." (P6)

Responding to both P4 and P6 in the same focus group, P5 shared that he employs diplomacy to address resistance in his organisation, followed by a carrot-and-stick approach to manage ongoing resistance.

> *"But if they're still resistant, of course I always believe in the carrot and stick approach. First, I motivate you…But if after a while you are still stuck to your old ways, refusing to change while others can change…then you'll get the stick from me." (P5)*

Participants also suggested that resistance can be managed through engagement, as highlighted by P11. Additionally, P14 emphasised the importance of teamwork.

> *"There is bound to be resistance, but this is where engagement is required." (P11)*

Expanding on these sentiments, P23 emphasised the significance of visualising change. She highlighted the need for ACLs themselves to understand and envision the change before gaining buy-in from others. She further noted that once the change can be clearly visualised, resistance will diminish.

> *"…the way we buy them in is for us to really understand what we want to see…we show them…up to the level of visualisation. So, the buy in comes from you understanding what you want, what you have currently and what you envision for that change to be…when they can see the end of it, whatever resistance that was there before, is no longer there." (P23)*

P28, who belonged to the same focus group as P23, emphasised the importance of empathy when dealing with employees to effectively manage resistance. He pointed out that resistance can be individualised.

> *"Maybe also use empathy, resistance to change sometimes from the individual itself. So how do you want to tackle the person. That is very important I feel. Like we have to communicate properly with them, convey the message to them. So that they are willing to have changes." (P28)*

Resistance can also be addressed by receiving proper guidance from ACLs. P12 stressed the importance of establishing guidelines for change and creating a change ecosystem with clear roles for all, as opposed to the existing top-down approach.

> *"…changes will definitely come with some resistance, but it is how you manage change. I always want to set some guidelines. If we want to change something, we must make sure that everybody is in the know, and then I will try to get a team that can help me to change. But if you can create an ecosystem where everybody contributes to that particular process…I think change should be easier to be accepted versus resisted." (P12)*

On the other hand, both P7 and P22 shared that they personally assume responsibility to implement change, when they are unable to compel their subordinates to do so.

> *"…you manage them by getting them to do it. So, if they don't do it, you just do it yourself, that's my personal style. If my subordinate is not wanting to do something, I just do it myself." (P22)*

Other participants suggested various approaches to managing resistance. These included sending employees for training (P18), reassigning employees if their current roles are not suitable (P2), securing support from top management to drive the change agenda (P19), and utilising the powers and influence of the minister, as shared by P8. P25 also echoed the views of P8.

> *"…it is actually a strategy as well, when you make all these important policies as a part of KPIs of the minister and everybody's committed to make it successful because they're answerable to the minister." (P8)*

Motivation: Participants suggest that motivation plays a crucial role in managing resistance. P11 stressed that motivated employees can implement and deliver the change more effectively.

> ***"…****when you motivate, people will always try to find ways to do things better, to deliver better quality of work." (P11)*

This sentiment was also shared by P2, who acknowledged the importance of motivation and how it leads to fulfilment among employees.

> *"…motivation is actually the key factor…for example, if we can implement the change everyone of course will be feeling very happy, very motivated to go to work. If it doesn't work, then everyone will start to create some sort of reason not to go to work…" (P2)*

However, several participants expressed their frustration regarding the changes that have taken place in their organisation, resulting in demotivation. P12 shared her frustration with a major change in her previous organisation that was implemented without prior consultation or clear direction, causing confusion and demotivation among employees.

> *"…that sort of change leaves a lot more, I say emotional damage…on the staff. One thing is you'll be so demotivated to do things, and you don't even know what you're supposed to do." (P12)*

P1 stressed that changes that do not align with the employee's job scope and the functions of the organisation can also cause demotivation.

> *"…the changes are not in line with your function, your organisational function, so you will feel demotivated…you might also feel like to flee or a lack of motivation to perform your duty in your present situation." (P1)*

As a result, participants emphasised the importance of engagement and two-way communication. They stressed the need to involve employees in the change process and motivate them. P4 emphasised the importance of allowing employees to lead conversations about change. He also noted the significance of delegating powers and rewarding employees for their contributions to the change.

> *"…listen to your employees. Allow them to lead the conversation. You don't have to be the boss. Let them, give them the freedom to talk. Give ideas, share. Be transparent." (P4)*

Financial Incentives: Several participants emphasised that some employees lack motivation to take on additional responsibilities associated with the change due to the

absence of incentives, especially financial incentives.

> *"We all get the same salary, why do you want to do extra?" (P6)*

Echoing the same sentiments, P18 suggested that employees are not motivated to take on additional responsibilities without any additional salary or incentives. The same sentiments were also shared by P3, who stressed that employees are not motivated to go the extra mile without any incentives.

> *"Nobody wants an extra job without the increment in terms of the salary, in terms of perks and privileges." (P18)*

Expanding on these views, P5 argued that the lack of incentives can be attributed to the flawed bonus system within the MPS. He emphasised that everyone in the MPS receives the same financial bonus regardless of their performance. Additionally, he noted that bonuses should be based on performance instead.

> *"…every year we get about RM500, RM700 but it is given to everyone. Underperforming you give RM500, overachieving also RM500." (P5)*

Several participants emphasised the importance of recognising and rewarding employees to motivate them. P3 highlighted the importance of a non-monetary reward system to acknowledge employees' role in change. P10 stressed the need for ACLs to demonstrate leadership through appreciation and reinforcement.

> *"Make them feel that the achievement is also their achievement and also have a certain reward system. Reward doesn't need to be monetary, sometimes…[it is] the emotion of the people. They just need to hear that you did a good job because oftentimes many government servants feel that they're doing a job that doesn't get any recognition at all." (P3)*

Additionally, participants also highlighted the importance of healthy competition (P5), job rotation (P23, P27, P10, P3), fostering passion for their job and change (P2, P3, P10), and ensuring job satisfaction among employees (P9) to motivate them.

4.5.4 Developing Change Talent

Competency: Participants emphasised the importance of both ACLs and their subordinates being competent to effectively implement change, as highlighted by P2.

> *"Everyone should be competent and know what they need to do. They must know how to carry out the work professionally and efficiently." (P2)*

They identified a lack of competency as a challenge in implementing change, with P27 attributing it to a lack of knowledge about their job scope.

> *"…there are also a lot of issues with the competency of our government officers, because sometimes…they do not have the background, and they do not want to learn." (P27)*

Some participants highlighted the need to evaluate the organisation's capacity, particularly in terms of human resources, to effectively plan and implement change, as explained by P20. Additionally, both P4 and P14 emphasised the significance of recruiting competent and skilled individuals to implement change.

> *"…they do not take into consideration the limitations of the current agency…to actually deliver that…most of the change…requires a new set of skills and perhaps…manpower to actually carry it out." (P20)*

Participants also emphasised the significance of employees' critical thinking abilities as a crucial skill. P22 expressed disappointment with the lack of critical thinkers in the sector, while P25 stressed that employees should not merely act as messengers.

> *"…our education system is already very flawed because it doesn't create thinkers. In order to become a really good policy maker, you need to be able to be a very good thinker…You have to be able to think beyond what you are taught. We are not encouraged [to do] that in our schools. So, when this person grows up, becomes a graduate, and then gets into the civil service, you just become a follower." (P22)*

Additionally, P25 expressed her disappointment with employees who only follow directions and lack the ability to think critically beyond the given instructions.

> *"…there are some people who work based on directions A, B, C, D, E, F, G, if you don't write it that way, they won't know how to do it. Let's say that you give directions for A, F, H, they are unable to use their brains to figure out the things in the middle to connect it together…you have to spell out, even if high grades also they can't think." (P25)*

Several participants highlighted the importance of continuous learning, as they are frequently rotated between PSOs in the MPS. P21 expressed concerns regarding these transfers but noted that employees can adapt to their new environment by engaging in continuous learning. Additionally, both P15 and P28 suggested that employees need to take the initiative to swiftly learn about their new job scope.

> *"But in the ministry, we have officers that transfer out in 2 to 3 years, so they need to be informed of the current issues and current policies. They need to learn again…because the policy is for 10 years, the officers go out within 3 years…we have to make them understand…whoever will be here, they should follow the ministry's aspiration, otherwise…(sigh)" (P21)*

Training: Most participants shared that they have not received any specific training on change management and change leadership in their careers, as shared by P11.

> *"If literally change management course, I have never attended." (P11)*

Participants noted that despite not undergoing formal training, they have acquired change management skills through hands-on experience, as explained by P5. Similarly, P20 emphasised the significance of on-the-job training in contrast to formal training.

> *"Not training…It's based on working with people with that experience and also as you journey in your career, I guess you learn, you pick up here and there." (P5)*

Several participants pointed out that change management training is usually confined to top management and employees in organisations where change is central to their core business.

> *"…for the past one year, formally yes…It is because I moved to another division. That is really into business process, re-engineering and also change management. So, I learned a lot. But before that informally…" (P6)*

Additionally, some participants expressed disappointment at the lack of competency-based training in their organisations.

> *"…in this ministry, one thing I don't like is, not much training given. I'm not talking about those training courses and all that. But when you come to this ministry, right? They never tell you anything about it, at least give a small course about the Act and work, nothing." (P3)*

Sharing similar sentiments, P9 emphasised the importance of customising training to align with the necessary job competencies instead of prioritising on routine matters, as is currently practised within the MPS. This view was also echoed by P27.

> *"Training must be specialised in their field of work…Only then you will become better, more expert in the field of your forte. We're not just trying to fulfil the seven days (compulsory training days within the MPS), where we include monthly assemblies and lectures, which in reality do not give any significant result to your progress, knowledge, and skills." (P9)*

Training Needs: Participants highlighted the importance of training to effectively manage the implementation of change, as shared by P1.

> *"If there is a change in the organisation you need me to be furnished with all the knowledge. I should be being given opportunity to learn that from a certain course, from a specific formal education on those changes. Not just me by trying myself, trying my luck, my hands on the changes." (P1)*

P16 emphasised the importance of providing change management training at various levels of the organisation.

> *"For middle management to top management yes, it is necessary…lower-level officers, the first thing they have to understand…the basics of doing work…policies and so on. So, once, they move to middle management and top management, then they are sitting in a place where they have to make decisions and changes where necessary. So, they have to attend these courses, at least once in a lifetime." (P16)*

Sharing the same sentiments, P17 stressed that change management training should not be focused on leaders only.

> *"It's important, it's a new thing that we need to apply to the officers. I think everyone should have (training), right? It is not necessarily that only leaders attend this course." (P17)*

Additionally, participants also emphasised on the importance of soft skills training that encompasses communication, engagement, leadership, and other relevant skills pertaining to the change process.

4.6 Theme 4: Strategising Change Implementation

This section presents the findings of theme four, focusing on the implementation and decision-making approach, planning and managing change implementation, and monitoring and evaluating the change outcomes.

4.6.1 Top-down Implementation and Decision-Making

All participants emphasised that PCIs are primarily implemented in a top-down manner within their organisation, as explained by P12.

> *"Change initiatives in an organisation in our context is usually from top down." (P12)*

P13, who belonged to the same focus group as P12, elaborated that change decisions are made by ministers and senior ACLs at the top.

> *"It's always been top down, everything is decided either by the minister's office or by secretary general's office, deputy secretary general's office, top management and then it comes down to us." (P13)*

P20 highlighted that PCIs are implemented formally through directives.

> *"...being in the government system and structure when there's change, the implementation will be done…[in a] very documented and formalised [way], usually through instructions or directives." (P20)*

P20 added that any decisions made by top management are considered directives that must be followed. The same applies to directives from central agencies.

> *"Top down. If it is top down, in our system, basically top down means it's a directive…if it's a directive, obviously we have to carry it out, but within the parameters of what is being allowed in the guidelines or rules." (P20)*

In this context, P13 emphasised that as middle managers, their job is solely to implement change based on decisions made at the top.

> *"We are just implementing, we are the work horse…the change or the decision to make the change…always comes from the top." (P13)*

Participants also stressed the importance of clear directives from the top to ensure smooth implementation, as explained by P15. Additionally, P17 emphasised the necessity for clear and effective communication of directives downward. Conversely, P16 highlighted that unclear directives can lead to conflicts during implementation.

> *"One thing about change [is that], they need to have a clear direction for us to implement [it]. Otherwise, we will do work, thinking, why are we doing this?...it should come from top management, top-down." (P15)*

P12 highlighted the importance of adopting change directives positively and stressed the need to receive these directives in writing to ensure accountability.

> *"If the directive is sent down…it has to be done right? Everything must be done accordingly…if we receive a direction and we want to react negatively to it, will not be good as well, because we still have a long way in our career." (P12)*

In this regard, several participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that directives comply with existing rules and regulations, as explained by P28. P11 added that some directives cannot be implemented as they go against existing rules.

> *"…if he (minister) says do it quickly then we just follow, as long as it does not infringe with rules and regulations, any laws, [and] we are not subjected to audit or SPRM (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission), I don't think we have any objections, and we can do it." (P28)*

On the other hand, P18 stressed that while change within the MPS is typically initiated from the top, there are instances where the bottom-up approach is used. He also cautioned against relying too heavily on top management.

> *"…normally top down. But there are also initiatives that we formulate ourselves…as an officer, civil servant, we should not be expecting too much for changes from the top and to wait for instructions." (P18)*

However, P22 argued that the bottom-up decision-making process is unlikely to happen in the MPS due existing power imbalance in the sector. In contrast, P19 suggested that bottom-up initiatives require top management support for effective implementation with minimal resistance.

> *"The bottom-up is not going to happen because it's very much the power imbalance is really huge." (P22)*

In this context, P7 noted that it is easier to work with top-down directives as they provide guidance for middle managers on what they should work towards. He also

added that top-down initiatives are more structured compared to bottom-up initiatives.

> *"From the top to the bottom first...they will give us the bigger picture...then we will work towards it." (P7)*

Additionally, some participants spoke about delegation of powers and decentralisation, but with an emphasis that it needs to be threaded carefully and with limitations.

> *“You decentralise but with certain powers as we are in the government.” (P4)*

In this regard, P2 suggested that middle managers should be given more decision-making powers to ensure a quicker implementation process.

> *“…middle management can be given green light to do certain types of decision making…That is where things can go faster.” (P2)*

4.6.1.1 Political Mandate

Participants emphasised the significant role politicians play in decision-making within the PSOs. P24 explained the importance of political will in the implementation of change in the public sector context.

> *“…when we want to talk about change right, especially when we formulate government policies, we cannot run away from political will…political will is very important to implement government policy.” (P24)*

P28 emphasised that while change planning can be administratively managed within the PSOs, the implementation of such changes ultimately relies on the political will of ministers to proceed with them.

> *“…we can discuss, we can work out a strategic plan…but at the end of the day you still need the political master’s wisdom…we can give facts and figures but if our political masters say no, we also can’t do anything.” (P28)*

This sentiment was further emphasised by P10, who suggested that the authority to approve change initiatives lies with the ministers.

> *"…even though we have the administrative powers of control…But there is a part where the power is in the hands of the minister, to approve is the power of the minister." (P10)*

Additionally, P21 highlighted the significance of political mandate for major policy decisions that require consideration and approval from the cabinet and parliament.

> *"Political intervention…is sometimes needed when the thing is brought to parliament, to cabinet for major decisions, major policy decisions." (P21)*

Reinforcing these views, P3 suggested that some policy changes cannot be implemented without cabinet approval. He added that policy decisions approved by the cabinet are more easily implemented compared to other change initiatives.

> "…*some the things that need minister's involvement may indirectly need the cabinet involvement...because certain things, if you do not have the endorsement, [from] the cabinet, it's a stalemate. You cannot proceed…it's very easy to drive something once you have a cabinet approval." (P3)*

Participants also shared that change initiatives driven or endorsed by ministers are often well received, and implementation is prioritised within the PSOs. P25 added that the monitoring of change initiatives under the minister's purview is often prioritised and more rigorous.

> *"It is true if the minister asks then it is very fast, even if the thing is pure nonsense, whether there is money or not, they will still make it happen because minister has asked for it." (P25)*

Sharing similar sentiments, P22 suggested that PSOs tend to align themselves with the wishes of the political leaders in the PSOs.

> *"Everybody just does what the minister wants. Simple. He wants a monkey, you give him a monkey, he wants a buffalo. You give him a buffalo. That's it." (P22)*

To ensure effective change implementation, several participants stressed the importance of incorporating the intended outcomes as KPIs of the minister. P8 suggests that this increases the organisation's commitment to implement the change.

> *"One of the ways we want to make sure that the things are delivered is, we'll make it as a KPI of Minister…when you make it a KPI minister…our management is so much more committed." (P8)*

As a result, several participants emphasised the significance of obtaining buy-in and approval from ministers to initiate or implement any major changes, as explained by P10. Both P28 and P24 also stressed the importance of effectively advising and communicating the change to ministers to secure their support.

> *"We need to take it to our stakeholder, the number one yeah, we need to discuss with the minister and finally, only then we translate it at the head of agencies level." (P10)*

Additionally, P24 stressed that change initiatives involving public sentiments should be driven by ministers. According to her, the public often associates the PSOs with political leaders instead of civil servants. Therefore, she suggested that political leaders have a better capacity to convince the public of the required change and potentially gain their support.

> *"Especially change that involves the people, then you need the political will. You have to get their buy in…he (Minister) needs to sell it, because out there, people do not see our faces, people see his face, he is the one who has to sell the policy so that people will buy in that policy." (P24)*

On the contrary, P28 suggested that policy decisions should not overly depend on ministers and administrative leaders should play a more significant role.

"…our policies are now decided by the ministers. I think that should be reduced, the minister's role in making policy decisions. Let us run the country." (P28)

4.6.2 Planning for Change Implementation

In planning for change implementation, ACLs suggest the importance of developing an implementation framework, assessing the change environment, managing bureaucracy, the implementation process, and the challenges that arise.

4.6.2.1 Developing an Implementation Framework

Planning for change is emphasised as an important step in the change process. P4 suggested that without proper planning the change will be an ad-hoc exercise.

"…without planning, it will be hard to understand the process because [when] you don't plan everything is ad-hoc." (P4)

Participants emphasised that the planning needs to be in writing and communicated to those involved following proper existing procedures, as explained by P1.

"Planned change, that's mean you have a proper planning yeah." (P1)

Underscoring the importance of planning, P24 highlighted the need for a framework for new policies introduced in the MPS. She also added that the framework should include a communication plan.

"…there must be a framework in every policy, which I feel it is not practiced at the ministries." (P24)

Expanding on these sentiments, P5 emphasised the importance of setting milestones for the change. He further added that actions currently being undertaken by the organisation should also be considered when developing these milestones.

> *"…when you want to ensure that the change itself is being implemented properly, [it] is the milestones…plan the milestones whereby when they reach certain milestones, then they need to review…When it comes to time, when you need to review, you review, and then you just improvise and go ahead." (P5)*

On the other hand, P2 suggested that there needs to be a clear roadmap for change that considers all the key aspects of change and what it seeks to achieve.

> *"…we need to have a much more staggered and much clearer roadmap. Step one, what is our goal? What is our mission? Why we need that? Who is our client? What is the threat we are having right now? And then what is the strategy to cut down all these things? What is the easiest approach. Why should we use this approach? New technique, new ideas. So, this is the turf whereby people can implement and start experimenting on the result." (P2)*

P12 acknowledged that most change comes from top to bottom and emphasised the need to evaluate if it is a long-term or one-off initiative. She also added that it is important to consider the outcome of the change and what the organisation wants to achieve through it.

> *"I think a lot of the change initiatives that we want to look at, yes it comes from top to bottom, but for us as implementors of the changes, right? We have to look at it whether is it something that's long term or like something that is a one-off thing…" (P12)*

Expanding on her views, P12 also suggested that ACLs should consider their span of control when planning to implement change in their organisation.

> *"It depends on who is in your control…where is your span of control…Because a lot of the changes will affect us beyond our control, that's what I realised. Like us in the traditional hierarchy set up now. We cannot be in charge of every step of the change process because a lot of things are beyond our control." (P12)*

Contrary to earlier views, P25 highlighted that change policies usually come with relevant strategies, thrusts, and action plans, but they do not outline the required implementation steps, which should be planned at the implementation stage.

> *"…when we formulate a policy, we have come up with all the strategy, thrust, and then we have the action plan. However, we do not spell out in the action plan, firstly A, then B. So, when we hand over to the division…when they want to implement, they can't think already, they want the policy division to think for them step by step. So that is another problem, I think, when we say why there are a lot of policies, but the implementation does not move." (P25)*

The importance of planning the necessary resources to implement change was also emphasised, as explained by P1.

> *"…we have to have a proper planning with the resources, the limitation that you have. For example, the budget that you have, you have to manage so that it can sustain changes that is made to your organisation." (P1)*

According to P20, it is essential to consider the type of change to be implemented, whether it involves people or organisational systems, as each requires different considerations.

> *"…depends on the kind of change that you want to implement. Is it, a system change, or a procedure change?" (P20)*

Participants discussed the importance of having an overarching change master plan for the MPS. However, P6 mentioned that the master plan is still being developed. Conversely, P5 emphasised the importance of having a master plan at the organisational level rather than just at the sectoral level.

> *"…we're in the midst of coming up with this guideline for change management in the public sector…[it] is just a guideline, which is, it is sadly to say, yeah, it is voluntary. It is not enforced to all agencies." (P6)*

4.6.2.2 Assessing Change Environment:

Participants emphasised the importance of assessing the change environment before implementing change to ensure a smooth implementation.

Change of Government: According to P1, a change in government can impact the direction of the organisation, leading to new changes in PSOs.

> *"Maybe in the change of government, they want to do it…justify to save a certain kind of allocation to other purposes..." (P1)*

Emphasising the impact of a change in government, P10 shared that it can bring challenges to the PSOs in adapting to the structural changes that come with it. Supporting this view, P20 shared that whenever there is a change in government, everything is overhauled again, bringing new challenges to the PSOs. She also stressed the need to manage all these changes using only available resources.

> *"…with regards to this ministry and agency aspiration, it has become a challenge as this ministry has been changed to 3 different ministries with different names in the last 3 years. That is a challenge. When there are elections and a change in government, it has major impact on the governance of the country, that is short term…if it is too frequent, it will have an impact on the ministry's planning." (P10)*

Economic Conditions: P11 highlighted that the change environment can be influenced by the economic condition of the country. This view was reaffirmed by P18, who emphasised the importance of aligning changes with the country's economic condition. He added that it would be challenging to impose initiatives that impose a financial burden on the people, particularly when the economy is struggling.

> *"…in terms of economic condition sometimes also plays a role. If our economy like now is quite challenging, whatever changes that we do must tally with our economic situation. If we do it very drastically." (P18)*

Organisational Culture: The culture of the organisation also plays a role in the implementation of change, and it is important to understand it, as explained by P19.

> *"…when I entered [the ministry], it was not within the culture because…the agencies under them are all enforcement agencies. So, when you want to implement policies or changes towards prevention, it was indeed a big challenge." (P19)*

On the other hand, P4 suggested that there is a culture of following existing or previous organisational practices within the MPS. He added that this can lead to irrelevant bureaucracies and complacency.

> *"…the way they were brought up in the organisation, the bosses leadership trait and quality, because if your boss is like that, no change…they just follow practices, and they say there is nothing wrong. Just follow. So, they are just followers actually." (P4)*

Expanding on this, P21 stressed the importance of understanding the environment of the stakeholders when implementing change.

> *"…you are in their area, and you have to follow their ways." (P21)*

Unforeseen Circumstances: Participants also shared the importance of preparing themselves for unforeseen circumstances that may occur during the change implementation period.

> *"…you must always educate people, the staff…to think in such a way when a disaster happens…everyone is ready for the job." (P2)*

Reaffirming these sentiments, P8 shared that unforeseen circumstance such as COVID-19 have forced the PSOs to realign their priorities. He went on to share that the KPIs that were previously set before the pandemic had to be revised to adapt to the new reality.

"…after the pandemic…business is not as usual, and we have to realign whatever we are doing." (P8)

4.6.2.3 Managing Public Sector Bureaucracy

The implementation of change can be hindered by bureaucratic processes practiced within the PSOs and the MPS, as P4 explains. P4 went on to suggest that many processes within the MPS were slow.

"…you want to approve things how many months…you want to wait for approval? Secretary General's approval, Director General's, and my approval for example, not only blaming the bosses, our slow process also." (P4)

This view was reinforced by P11 and P16. P16 shared that there exist too many procedures in the MPS, which leads to slow implementation.

"Sometimes when you go through the proper procurement measures, it will take a longer time, and that's why you need to put more effort; you need to discuss with Ministry of Finance and all those things". (P11)

P13 suggested that as more systematic changes are introduced within the MPS, the process becomes more bureaucratic due to the addition of more processes.

"What I realise is the more changes that they try to make there's more red tape to it. It becomes more difficult…things were easier…" (P13)

Expanding on this discussion within the same focus group, P12 suggested that the focus on accountability has resulted in bureaucratic processes.

"I think the more that we want to emphasise on accountability and all that, the more bureaucracy we are creating…in order to avoid abuse, we add on one more step to the process. We keep on adding and adding to a point that we are overwhelmed with steps along the processes." (P12)

P12 further added that the bureaucratic processes are a result of the MPS trying to control how things are done.

> *"We want to have some sort of control on how we want certain things to be. So, when we spend our resources, we are answerable to so many people...So, our processes get very pointed." (P12)*

On the other hand, P6 stressed that the bureaucratic process can also be a result of the hierarchical processes within the organisation.

> *“We really relying very heavily on the top management, our bosses for driving the change because partly of our organisational structure and also the empowerment given to the functional leaders, which is very limited...It is useless if we try to be hero or maverick because you end up nothing." (P6)*

Expanding on this, P6 expressed disappointment that certain bureaucratic practices are imposed by individuals seeking to assert authority over matters or people.

> *“Again, this is one very classic example. On their own, they just want to show that they have authority over somebody. They put bureaucracies here and there, unnecessary. I don't know why.” (P6)*

This sentiment was also highlighted by other participants, who shared their personal challenges in dealing with hierarchical bureaucracies, as emphasised by P23.

> *“[In] my line of work now, there are four levels between the director and myself. So, you imagine…the hierarchy is so high.” (P23)*

P19 highlighted that the hierarchical bureaucracy also impacts the way work is done and prioritised in PSOs.

> *“…if KSU (Secretary General) goes down, everyone will go down. If KSU chairs a meeting, all SUB (Heads of Department) will be there. But if KSU delegate to Deputy KSU, the number one will not be there, there are some*

who are committed that will attend. But the rest, they won't, they will send their deputy. So, from there, I know that if you want to do something in this particular organisation, you will have to get the head." (P19)

P2 suggested that bureaucratic processes within the public sector are the norm. However, he also shared that sometimes changes are made to reduce bureaucracy.

"Basically, bureaucracy in government service is actually a norm, because every government officer stands guided by the General Order and then we have a set of rules from purchasing items…to operational wise." (P2)

This view was also shared by P20, who highlighted that PSOs are beginning to simplify bureaucratic processes in their organisations. Additionally, P21 emphasised that she has improved bureaucratic processes within her organisation, which has made things move much faster. However, at times, her organisation is still stuck with the bureaucracy of other PSOs when collaboration is required.

"…my current organisation…we try to simplify the process and in fact most of the ministries that I have been in, we always see how to simplify the process…we see which one we can eliminate. So, I think bureaucracy actually, in terms of system, I don't think it exists as much as a problem as before." (P20)

4.6.3 Managing Change Implementation

Participants discussed various strategies for implementing change and specifically focused on the top-down approach prevalent in the MPS, as mentioned earlier. In this context, P5 shared that directives from his headquarters are promptly implemented, whereas changes proposed by him are implemented gradually.

"…directives…If it's from HQ, of course we have to do it as soon as possible. If the plan itself is coming from me, I won't implement it straight away…It has to be incremental…test the water, see how they are, must see which group is more resistant, which group is more accepting." (P5)

P25 expressed similar sentiments, sharing that change usually originates from the top and is then passed down to relevant departments, typically the Strategic Planning Division, for further action. This, according to her, applies to both initiatives that are driven from within the ministry and by central agencies.

> *"How it is implemented, usually they will discuss in the top management meeting and usually they will assign from division, which is the strategic planning division to coordinate. That one is the if the change comes from within the ministry, as in our minister…like RMK (Malaysia Plan) and so on. Again, they will chuck it to the Strategic Planning Division, so it is up to the division on how to do it." (P25)*

P1 emphasised the importance adapting to the change and following the established plan during change implementation.

> *"…you follow the SOP…when you implement it, you just follow it…[it is] how you actually manage or adapt to it. If you can adapt, it is easier for you to change. It's no problem." (P1)*

On the other hand, P3 highlighted that change is typically implemented through taskforces in his organisation.

> *"Once you have done your timeline and all the processes…then you have to appoint people to spearhead the initiative…I prefer [to] spread across the ministry compared to just within a few divisions. Hence, I prefer [a] task force. It could even be a sub-task force within the task force." (P3)*

Sharing similar views, P21 highlighted that inter-agency collaboration for change implementation often involves taskforces at various levels, ensuring a comprehensive approach to change implementation.

> *"We do meetings, and then we initiate task forces. Task force not only at the [organisational] level, in fact, we do have [it at] the cabinet's level, and after that, [at] the state level, the ministry level, the district level, and even*

[at] the bottom. This one we have to manage it well; it is like bottom-up, top-down; we use all the approaches." (P21)

Participants also emphasised the importance of considering the local context when implementing change, as stated by P12. She further highlighted the importance of analysing whether the change initiatives are short-term or long-term.

"…we implement programmes, to actually cater for the requirements in the local setting." (P12)

P17 underscored the significance of involving everyone at all levels in the change implementation process to overcome implementation obstacles.

"If you want to change, everyone has to get involved, from the minister to the KSU, the director generals, from the subordinates, and below. Surely, at the beginning, there will be obstacles towards the change, but we can overcome it with the involvement of everyone." (P17)

Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of ensuring that the organisation has the capacity and necessary resources to implement change. P4 emphasised the need to identify the required resources, including human resources. P1 suggested that PSOs are usually required to utilise existing resources. In this regard, P5 highlighted that a lack of resources can hinder the implementation process, sometimes requiring his department to rely on the resources of other PSOs to implement change.

"…you need to identify your resources to make change happen…If you don't have people, the right people, the right team, it won't happen also." (P4)

Echoing P1's sentiments, P2 noted the difficulty ACLs face in obtaining additional resources in the current environment.

"If you talk about resources, we have what we have. It is quite difficult at this time to get more resources. So of course, we have to work in a…very innovative and a very creative manner to mobilise resources we have." (P2)

Participants also highlighted the importance of having an implementation timeline, as explained by P16. This perspective was reinforced by P11, who shared that the implementation of change is time-based and potential delays must be considered.

> *"…the implementation of projects is time based. So, whether you want it or not, you will have to do it." (P16)*

P16 further noted that the implementation of change and its success are dependent on the stakeholders involved in or impacted by the change, especially when it involves the public as the end users.

> *"…we can plan, but of course, when it comes to implementation in Malaysia, hmm, can we hope for the ministry alone without the support of the people themselves. That is quite difficult." (P16)*

Implementation Challenges: P6 shared that change initiatives can be problematic themselves, particularly when they are ambiguous, leading to challenges during implementation.

> "*…when implementing this change, the change initiative itself is too big, too ambiguous. The implementer does not know what to do.'' (P6)*

As mentioned above, P24 shared that the lack of an implementation framework and tools is among the challenges faced when implementing change.

> *"That's why government is famous with, we come up with all kinds of policies, and then implementation does not move. Why? Because they do not have that framework, and they do not have that tool…their boss asks them to do it, [and] they do it." (P24)*

P10 highlighted that challenges in implementing change are to be expected and that there will be individuals within the organisation who will be both supportive and against the change. This sentiment was also shared by P2, who similarly emphasised human factors as a challenge.

> *"When there is a change surely challenges will arise…there will be those who agree and those who do not agree. But in the process of getting the clearance and support, it will surely need time and explanation." (P10)*

P2 highlighted that at times, the person responsible for implementing the change, does not have the required capacity to do so.

> *"They just execute the order [in a] very general [manner] and…[those] responsible for the change management, they just carry it out blindly…So when that happens, the persons or personnel who are involved in that segment, they don't even know what to do." (P2)*

Similarly, P25 shared that sometimes the person tasked with implementing change does not have the required knowledge or expertise, resulting in poor implementation. She attributed this to a lack of experience in the current job scope.

> *"…some of the factors that…result in the change not being successful because the person that is doing it also does not know what to do, and [the organisation] always places the responsibility on one or two persons, which is not fair because we alone cannot think about everything. This is what's happening now." (P25)*

On the other hand, P7 shared that some of the implementation challenges stem from the lack of information sharing between the relevant departments or agencies. He further added that some departments have a tendency not to share data. Additionally, P8 shared the difficulties his organisation had in terms of data cleaning when implementing a nationwide initiative.

> *"…internally, also we have some difficulty of sharing data..." (P7)*

P16 shared that implementation challenges can also result from a gap between the planning and implementation stages that affects the outcome of the change. P3 suggested that these gaps should be reduced during the planning stages through meetings, acknowledging that at times certain things are overlooked.

> *"Like there is a gap…we plan, we have something in our mind that the end product is like this. But for implementors when they are on the ground, they also have problems in which the end result is not the same as what we expected." (P16)*

P11 highlighted that at times there is insufficient time to plan for the change initiative due to political pressure, thus impacting the implementation process. This view was also echoed by P20, who emphasised that the lack of time to plan will impact the implementation process.

> *"When you don't have time to plan and come out with a proper guideline and your guideline is shady, that's where people down there, they will not move." (P11)*

P28 emphasised that implementation challenges can stem from the multitude of policies that are being implemented, the political influence, and the required leadership to move the change forward.

> *"…we have a lot of policies, but when it comes to implementation, [it is] very tough and difficult. One, maybe issue on the political things, and the other is on the individual part, like if the person is willing to take [the] lead, take charge then we can do the thing." (P28)*

Additionally, P20 shared her challenges in implementing change that originates from the central agencies, as these initiatives often do not align with the PSOs.

> *"On paper, they look very good because…you plus A, plus B, plus C, you are definitely going to get D. But passing it down to the implementors, like us ministries. It is not as simple as that because each individual agency and organisation…have their own peculiarities. They have their own needs and specifics. So, the model doesn't fit all." (P20)*

Consequently, participants emphasised the importance of leadership in addressing the implementation challenges, as explained by P6.

"…of course, there are many barriers, and the leaders must become like MacGyver, then anything that happens, this MacGyver leader must know what are the tools and the ways to overcome these barriers effectively, that I think is quite important." (P6)

4.6.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

This section presents the findings pertaining to the monitoring and evaluation of change implementation in line with the predetermined targets set during the planning phases.

4.6.4.1 Monitoring Change Implementation

Based on the interviews, participants emphasised the importance of monitoring the implementation of change, as explained by P5.

"If the initiative is already planned, of course you need to monitor regularly. You just do not let it go just like that." (P5)

P6 highlighted that one way to monitor the implementation of the change is through tracking the milestones of the change initiative.

"When you want to ensure that the change itself is being implemented properly, [it] is the milestones. What we are doing now and what we are enforcing now…" (P6)

Most participants shared that monitoring is done through committees and task forces. P14 suggested that committees should be formed at the appropriate levels to monitor implementation. P12 emphasised that change initiatives must have a clear review mechanism.

"…One committee should be established specially for every action that is implemented, whereby the committee has to start from A to Z until complete, and only then can we see the results." (P14)

Expanding on these views, P25 highlighted that monitoring in her organisation is done by tracking the achievements under the action plan and through a committee chaired by the minister or the secretary general. Sharing the same sentiments, P27 suggested that monitoring should be performed by a dedicated taskforce.

> *"If in my ministry, we will do two methods at the same time, one is, we will collect the achievements, so whatever new change, we will have the action plan, so we will collect the achievements. The committee in actual fact, is just to scare people a little bit…" (P25)*

P23, who belonged to the same focus group as P5, highlighted that monitoring can be done by incorporating the outcomes as the KPIs of the head of the organisation. She emphasised the importance of having suitable people to monitor the change.

> *"…it is attached with the KPI of KSU (Secretary General)…although there are no committees, it will reflect on his yearly performance…But not everything should be attached as KSU's KPI…that is also one of the mechanisms compared to the committees." (P23)*

Additionally, P2 suggested that monitoring can be done through short meetings. On the contrary, P20 suggested that the monitoring system should be systemised instead of relying on meetings only. She added that she also monitors her subordinates through her engagement with them.

> *"…easiest way to monitor the implementation is [to have] a series of short meetings. Every meeting…table out again, what are our goals, what is our vision and mission…we'll get some feedback, on what we have achieved…that will become the best platform for us to discuss what is our weaknesses, what is our next correctional strategies..." (P2)*

On the other hand, P11 shared that monitoring is a continuous process. He added that it should be aligned with the requirements set by the organisation.

> *"…it's a day-to-day job. It can either be on a weekly basis, monthly basis." (P11)*

P21 emphasised that implementation issues can be identified through regular monitoring of the implementation process.

> *"…we monitor how is the progress. But [if] the progress is not up to the standard that we wanted. So, we will look at what the issues are." (P21)*

P9 highlighted that while the implementation is typically carried out, there is often a lapse in monitoring. He suggested that monitoring in his current and previous organisations is occasionally neglected.

> *"…it is good if we look at it from the full circle of management, we have plan, do, check, and action. So, we plan well, and we are okay with implementation, but the check is less…Action towards correction based on the findings of the check is not done. It is not given serious attention." (P9)*

P4 highlighted that despite the numerous change initiatives implemented in the MPS, no one is collating the overall success rate of these initiatives. This observation was supported by P6, who was from the same focus group.

> *"…how many of the transformation initiatives in the government are successful? Who calculate the success rate?" (P4)*

4.6.4.2 Effectiveness of Change Implementation

Participants were asked about the effectiveness of change implementation in their organisation. Several participants highlighted that the implementation of change in their organisation was not effective, as P16 explains. Sharing the same sentiments, P22 suggested that there is a lack of discussion between policymakers at the federal level as well as at the state and local levels, which impacts the delivery of change.

> *"To be honest, it's not effective. We plan, we endorse. When we come up with a new policy and so on, which one they can follow, they will follow. If in the end they can't do it, it is business as usual then." (P16)*

On the other hand, P20 suggested that the effectiveness of the change would depend on the support it receives. She further noted that the implementation of change is impacted when new functions are introduced without eliminating the current ones.

> *"There are two extremes. I guess it is somewhere in between. Some of the initiatives…are quite effective because everyone understands it. And when you have the same vision or when you have the same feelings towards the change, then…it can be done quite effectively…However, when the perception and the differences are quite obvious, probably that is where the change is not that effective." (P20)*

Similarly, P23 shared that one change initiative introduced in her organisation had to be scrapped as it did not receive internal support. She attributed the failure to complacency and a lack of engagement. She added that the success of change is dependent on how success is measured within the organisation.

> *"Throughout the sector, I think there are some are successful, and some [are] not successful. To measure it depends on our measurement, how is our KPI, what is our output and outcome." (P23)*

In this context, P6 highlighted a tendency for PSOs to focus on outputs rather than outcomes. He suggested that this preference is motivated by the desire for positive results for their organisation rather than focusing on the actual outcomes of the change.

> "*When we're talking about calculating of what we have already done, most of us, we would like to go for output, because it is the single easiest way to get what we [want]...But nobody wants to get the outcome. You know why? Because for outcomes, the consequences, how we get it are from our customers and the people who are at the receiving end. So, we do not have the control over the statistics from outcome." (P6)*

P5, who belonged to the same focus group as P6, added that outcomes are hard to control.

> *"…[P6] was saying about output versus outcome, which is very true. Outcome it is very hard for you, perhaps you can measure [it], but it's hard for you to control [it]. And people in real life, by nature, we don't like something that we cannot control." (P5)*

Additionally, P2 suggested that sometimes adjustments are made to the targets of the change to ensure a positive result, rather than realigning the change to achieve the actual outcomes. He attributed this to the organisation's need to demonstrate positive results to stakeholders. Similarly, P5 highlighted that he has witnessed such adjustments made to outputs and outcomes to portray positive results, regardless of the reality behind them. Expanding on this, P22 shared that change elements can be modified and crafted to fit into any national agenda. Both P22 and P5 indicated political elements as a factor in making these adjustments.

> *"…some people just wanted a result. I already achieved the result, so I just make a change and of course the correct term is actually cheating. Cheating means…if you can't achieve it, we just modify some other terms, where we prove that we can achieve it. Rather than we really give it a hard try, we recalibrate our organisation or doing whatever is necessary." (P2)*

On the other hand, P9 attributes these practices to the need to maintain a good image for the organisation and to the fear factor.

> *"…in my opinion, it is because we are too afraid to speak the truth, or we are not scared but we try to maintain the image of the ministry…" (P9)*

Consequently, some participants emphasised the importance of leadership in ensuring the effectiveness and success of PCIs within the MPS domain, as explained by P11. He further noted that advancements in technology contribute to improving the delivery of the MPS.

> *"We are getting better…The rate of getting things done in Malaysia…if we compare to certain countries, it's fast. It is changing, it changes all the time. It all depends on…the leadership of certain organisations…if you have a*

good leader, things [will not be] smooth sailing, but you know you can achieve more, it all depends on the leader." (P11)

4.7 Theme 5: Leading Change Effectively

This section presents the findings of Theme 5, which focuses on the leadership roles of ACLs in implementing PCIs in the public sector and the necessary attributes to effectively perform these roles.

4.7.1 Roles of ACLs

Several key roles for ACLs were identified during the interviews and focus group discussions. These include leading change, making decisions, communicating change, providing advisory roles, planning, implementing, and monitoring, and managing and guiding subordinates towards effective change implementation.

4.7.1.1 Lead the Change

The primary role of ACLs is to lead the change. They are considered the drivers of change within their organisation, as explained by P6.

"…leaders are drivers, and they are the ones that are going to lead the whole organisation…if they are just doing…business as usual or just to play safe…that will lead us too nowhere." (P6)

Sharing similar sentiments, P28 emphasised that change can only occur when the leader takes the lead. Conversely, P11 stressed that the decision to lead or not is dependent on the individual's willingness.

"Individual act as the leader at the…organisation…it depends on that particular person, whether…he or she wants the change or not." (P11)

ACLs were also described as change agents by P18, who emphasised that their role includes leading and securing the necessary support for change.

> *"Change agent, I have to lead, it is me, if not me then who will do it. I am the one, simple…support from below, buy in. If people don't support me, how can I be a change leader, right?" (P18)*

P20 stressed that it is essential to execute the role with knowledge and clear direction.

> *"…to lead the change, you actually have to know where you're going...If you are unsure as well, then who is leading, right?...your subordinates will be even more lost than you. So, to lead the way…you really have to be knowledgeable in that." (P20)*

This sentiment was also shared by P16. However, he emphasised that the direction should come from the management.

> *"That is the most important thing, give directions. We won't be lost…The conflict is when we do not have a direction. So, leaders at the top management, they just give directions; that is sufficient..." (P16)*

P1 suggested that in order to lead, ACLs need to first accept the change, despite the challenges and limitations that the change poses.

> *"…I know I have to take charge, so I have to accept the changes…I don't want to look at any limitations. I just have to move forward." (P1)*

Similarly, P22 emphasised that ACLs must believe in the change in order to effectively implement it.

> *"They need to believe in…the new policy themselves. They're not just doing it because someone is telling them to do it. As leaders, they should justify it for themselves. And if they can't justify it, I think they should throw it out." (P22)*

Expanding on this narrative, P24 suggested that ACLs need to be both competent and genuinely interested in the change in order to lead effectively. The lack of interest and competence should indicate the individual's unsuitability for the position.

> *"You must be competent, the leader must have interest, and if the leaders do not have interest then the person cannot sit at the place." (P24)*

P19 suggested that ACLs should serve as role models in leading change.

> *"…there are some people who are not actually a leader because a leader is actually showing an example and not asking or directing people to do things." (P19)*

However, when the designated leader fails to assume their role, lower-level ACLs will have to assume the responsibility and lead the change.

> *"If the head…is functional, then maybe there is a direction. If [they are] not functional, then it is dependent on…the unit head. If the unit head is functional, then it will be functional, and if [they are] not functional then it won't be functional." (P25)*

4.7.1.2 Decision-Making

One of the key roles of ACLs is to make decisions regarding the change. However, participants suggested that decision-making in the MPS is centred around the top management, as explained by P16.

> *"Top management is surely to make decisions. That is the most important thing, give directions." (P16)*

Similarly, P8 highlighted that the decision-making authority rests with top management. He further emphasised that, as a middle-level ACL, he is not empowered to make such decisions.

> *"…the deciding parts come from…Unit headed by a [grade] JUSA C. Like myself. I'm here [grade] 52 only…we are not in that level to determine the change..." (P8)*

P6 suggested that obtaining approval from top management is an ingrained part of the MPS culture.

> *"…this is our trait; we always seek approval from the top management. As long as we have this top management approval, whatever also can, just do it...then we use it to enforce it onto the organisation." (P6)*

P20, a top management ACL, emphasised the importance of ACLs consulting their subordinates to ensure optimal decision-making for the change. She further emphasised the importance of teamwork.

> *"They have to listen to the team because the team is the one that will be implementing it…the number one on top…has to know all the issues as well…only then he can make the wisest decisions…" (P20)*

On the other hand, P22 highlighted the importance of maintaining neutrality and objectivity when making decisions.

> *"You have to be neutral and objective. You have to not allow any outside influences. When you're objective, you'll not be easily swayed." (P22)*

4.7.1.3 Communicate Change

Communicating change is also identified as one of the key roles of ACLs in the implementation of change, as explained by P18.

> *"The most important thing is that we have to communicate effectively." (P18)*

P2 highlighted the need for ACLs to communicate the change to gain support. This view was shared by P13 and P28 as well.

> *"…of course, you need to sell off your idea, what you want to do, why we need that and so [on]." (P2)*

In executing this role, participants emphasised the importance of effective communication and two-way communication, as explained by P4.

> *"Effective communication, you need to be able to explain to your employees the objective, the changes, the new things you want to implement…let them ask questions…" (P4)*

According to P1, the communication needs to be continuous.

> *"You have to always communicate…and keep them informed" (P1)*

On the other hand, P10 emphasised that communication also plays an important role in obtaining clearance from management.

> *"…in the process of getting the clearance and support, it will surely need time and explanation. The explanation needs to be very polite…evidence must be shown." (P10)*

P12 emphasised that her role as a middle management ACL is to receive the directives from the top and communicate them downward.

> *"It's about how we are receiving it from the top and trickling it down to our subordinate…" (P12)*

ACLs are also expected to communicate change to external stakeholders. In this regard, P15 emphasised the importance of having a clear understanding of what needs to be communicated to stakeholders.

> *"For stakeholders…first thing first we need to have knowledge on what are the impact of these changes. Then we can communicate with them." (P15)*

ACLs are also expected to effectively engage and communicate change with political leaders, as highlighted by P28. Additionally, P10 emphasised the need to keep ministers informed and obtain their clearance on matters related to the organisation.

"…our PR (public relations) with the minister's office is very important, how you communicate, how you convey the message." (P28)

4.7.1.4 Advisory Role

The ACLs, particularly those in middle management, are expected to provide advice and updates to senior management regarding the implementation of change.

"…we are a team…you want this, this way, we advise you on how the best we can deliver." (P20)

Similarly, P11 emphasised that although decision-making powers reside with top management, middle management is responsible for providing advice to them.

"…as civil servants we have the role to advise properly, because I don't believe in the idea of the boss is always right." (P11)

P21, who leads a ministry, emphasised the importance of understanding different roles and the need for reporting progress for decision-making.

"The roles have already been set. You have to report, you have to make sure things moving. Otherwise, you have to come to me to discuss further. So, I will do the changes needed." (P21)

Similarly, P7 emphasised the need to consult with superiors to obtain the necessary clearance. He further noted that the advisory role within the MPS is hierarchical.

"…we don't go directly to the bosses here, so we go to our immediate boss, so the higher one, like immediate boss, discuss with them." (P7)

On the other hand, P22 stressed that the advice given is subject to decisions made by superiors, and she always insists on accountability. Additionally, both P10 and P22 suggested that not all superiors are open to ideas from the subordinates.

"When they propose something and I don't agree with it, I'll tell them why that's not okay and what are the alternatives but if they were to insist that we were to follow that, I will get them to take accountability for it." (P22)

P8 suggested that his superiors are open and supportive, as he can advise and consult them accordingly. He also suggested that ACLs need to provide solutions for the problems they face and allow the top management to make the final decisions.

"They're accommodative. They allocate time...I can get the guidance from them...we don't just bring problems to them…When there is a problem, we already think about what is the solution…whether they agree with the solution or they come up with their own idea of solution." (P8)

4.7.1.5 Plan for Implementation

The roles of ACLs, particularly middle-level ACLs, include planning and strategising the implementation of change. To be effective, P5 emphasised the importance of first understanding the change before planning its implementation.

"I need to understand the initiatives first. I myself must really comprehend what my secretary general, what my ministry wants. Then I must be able to translate that…But before those actions can be taken, I also must make sure my subordinates, my staff have equal understanding." (P5)

Sharing similar sentiments, P20 stressed the importance of analysing the proposed change for implementation before cascading it down for execution.

"You have to actually study more in depth and get more knowledge of the things. It is not just to…get that and then you just pass it down…you guys do the change…to be the leader of it, you have to know what is actually going on, what are the factors involved." (P20)

P20 emphasised that for ACLs to lead the change, they need to have a clear understanding of how to achieve the change goals. To this end, P1 stressed the

importance of planning for change implementation and involving relevant individuals.

> *"…to lead they must know what is it that they want to achieve, what the organisation needs to achieve. That they have to be pretty clear on that and how to achieve it, obviously." (P20)*

ACLs also need to ensure that the organisation has the capacity to effectively implement and sustain the change, as stated by P14. In this regard, P1 stressed that the organisation's limitations must also be taken into consideration.

> *"Whether the capacity of the agency, can maintain the policy or new changes that they want to do..." (P14)*

In doing so, P4 emphasised the need to identify the resources required for the change. Affirming this, both P12 and P17 stressed the importance of identifying the budget requirements for the change.

> *"Identify the resources. What are the resources needed to change?" (P4)*

Participants also emphasised the importance of bringing in the right people to implement change, as stated by P12.

> *"…I think to make change, you have to bring the right people in." (P12)*

4.7.1.6 Manage and Monitor Implementation

Participants suggest that the role of ACLs includes managing and monitoring the implementation of change, as emphasised by P1. He added that optimal change management can lead to sustained change.

> *"You have to manage properly so that it can sustain your changes that be made to your organisation." (P1)*

Their roles also include ensuring that the implementation and actions taken are focused on the predetermined outcomes for the change, as P22 explains.

> *"…what I'm required to do is make sure that the outcomes that we want is translated through that project." (P22)*

Sharing similar sentiments, P21 elaborated on her role in monitoring the implementation of change in accordance with the established goals. She also emphasised the importance of conducting periodic reviews.

> *"…I have to make sure everything that we have set happens and is successful based on the targets that we have set, the KPIs. I will have to look into the indicator that we have set, because we will review from time to time based on the monitoring I mentioned earlier. That is my role." (P21)*

Conversely, P18 highlighted that the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of change rests with the senior ACLs rather than those in middle management.

> *"Because as middle managers we just elaborate and explain. that's one thing, the boss has to monitor." (P18)*

Participants also emphasised the importance of closely managing the implementation process. According to P9, ACLs that micromanage usually have access to details of the implementation progress. However, he stressed that ACLs should avoid excessive interference and allow the implementors to perform their tasks.

> *"…people who micro-manage know the details, but just don't go [overboard]…they study and scrutinise the thing…you know what is being [done] down below you. If everything is pushed down, you will not be able to speak about the real issues below…" (P9)*

Sharing the same sentiments, P22 added that micromanaging will burden the ACLs and that they should consider delegating their responsibilities. She further acknowledged that, while micromanaging is not the best approach, at times it is

needed to deliver the change. Her demeanour and language used indicate her frustration with her subordinates and the delegation process in her organisation.

> *"When you are hands on, you really know the nitty gritty of everything that's happening, so nobody bullshits you. And the con is you're burdened with a lot of work. That you by right, should be able to delegate." (P22)*

4.7.1.7 Manage and Guide Subordinates

Participants emphasised the importance of ACLs guiding their subordinates in implementing change. According to P6, ACLs are expected to underline the implementation steps that need to be undertaken and lead by example.

> *"…you need to guide them; you need to show them what are the steps to be taken in order for the change to happen. You cannot expect them, okay, this is the change, do it. No, you must guide. And I truly believe in leadership by example. You have to do it yourself. Train them, show them how to do it." (P6)*

Sharing the same sentiment, P9 added that it is important for ACLs to also support their subordinates at all levels.

> *"So, the ones below are already waiting, they are ready, so you have to guide us. The guideline is important, and we have to guide. But top management or head of department or their leaders have to support together." (P9)*

However, while emphasising the importance of guidance, P7 stressed that sometimes the top management places excessive expectations on middle managers that go beyond their own authority. Therefore, he emphasised the importance of proper guidance.

> *"Sometimes the expectation from 48 to 52 (middle management grades), they expect you to think like a JUSA C, JUSA B and JUSA A (top*

management grades)…you should always guide them because you are at the high level already. So, if they do not [do] it correctly, you tell them, what you want actually…[give] a clear direction to them so that they know." (P7)

On the other hand, P12, emphasised the significance of ACLs understanding their level of authority within their own organisation and effectively communicating the change to their subordinates.

"…if you want to monitor the implementation, you have to see where is your span of control, who is under you and who do you report to. That way you can actually set your communications to your personnel, and you must communicate…you cannot be in your own world as well because nobody wants that." (P12)

In carrying out the task of managing and overseeing the implementation of change, P9 emphasised the significance of regularly meeting with subordinates to discuss the progress of the change implementation and to engage in discussions with them. This also serves as a means of monitoring the process.

"if before this we used to have morning prayers on Mondays or a meeting session…to discuss the current tasks, and what needs to be done for the week, and on Friday, see what the status is. It means engagement, and in that engagement, we have to place guidelines, motivate, and monitor continuously." (P9)

P11 highlighted the role of ACLs, which includes facilitating their subordinates to ensure that the required actions are taken. He also emphasised that leaders should know what needs to be done.

"I think when you see a leader…they follow the plan, they know how work is being done…it should be fast; it should be mean. You facilitate people…" (P11)

Additionally, P11 suggested that ACLs should support their subordinates to ensure a conducive working environment. Both P6 and P16 similarly emphasised the need to

support subordinates, especially when things go wrong during the implementation process.

> *“That's why as a leader, it's very important that you are willing to always provide support…I always believe that as a leader, [the] word of wisdom could actually push officers and to see the brighter side of things.” (P11)*

4.7.2 Attributes of ACLs

Participants emphasised several key attributes required for ACLs to assume their responsibilities as change leaders. These attributes include being visionary, bold, and firm; being a good communicator; having the ability to influence people; being ethical; and possessing other interpersonal skills.

4.7.2.1 Visionary

Participants emphasised the importance of ACLs being visionary and capable of clearly communicating their vision. When asked about the key attributes of ACLs, P6 highlighted "visionary" as the primary attribute. This view was also shared by P22.

> *"Visionary, that's all." (P6)*

However, P5, who was part of the same focus group as P6, emphasised that a visionary leader also needs to be practical about the potential limitations they might face. He added that ACLs need to be persistent and consistent in guiding the organisation towards its vision.

> *“If overly visionary also it may be difficult. Yeah, I agree, visionary, that's good. But must also be able to [be] visionary, but also be realistic. Must also know what the resources are capable of doing. The leaders have to be persistent and consistent. Keep pushing that agenda.” (P5)*

Sharing similar sentiments, P20 stressed that a visionary leader needs to establish clear directions that can be understood by the members of the organisation. To do this,

they must possess the necessary knowledge regarding the change.

> *"…to lead the change, you actually have to know where you're going…If you are unsure as well, then who is leading right?" (P20)*

On the other hand, P7 stressed that the vision comes from the top management and employees work towards it.

> *"…it is top management, they give us a holistic view what they want actually, and then we can work it out towards that." (P7)*

Conversely, P4 highlighted that visions are individually driven and expressed frustration with the frequent changes in vision within the sector. P4 also suggested the need for guidelines to manage these changes.

> *"…when they come into their post…the first thing they want to do is, I want to change this. I want to change that. I don't like what the previous [person] did, So, is that considered as a master plan, or do we have a written guideline, change policy…I don't think we have that." (P4)*

4.7.2.2 Bold and Firm

Most of the participants emphasised the importance of ACLs being bold and firm in implementing change in their organisation and challenging the status quo. P17 emphasised that ACLs need to be brave, bold, and firm to drive change. He also added that ACLs need to be firm with their subordinates to ensure that what is planned and directed by top management is implemented accordingly.

> *"… just like me, I need directors that are brave. He must be bold, he must be firm with what we want to plan…we make sure that they are brave [and] confident that we can do it. Don't be half-hearted when you want to do it, it won't work…" (P17)*

P4 suggested that ACLs must be brave in pushing for the change agenda. In this regard, P10 shared that for change to occur within the organisation, top management requires individuals who are brave enough to express their views, ideas, and opinions and who can also handle criticism and face challenges. However, he added that ACLs must also be diplomatic and have strong communication skills.

> *"You need a maverick, a maverick that is brave to bulldoze, bulldoze in the sense, but maverick in a sense, not to bulldoze the law, but a maverick to bring change." (P4)*

Participants also highlighted the need for ACLs to be firm when dealing with subordinates and making decisions. P24 stressed that boldness and firmness can drive change, even if it is motivated by fear. She acknowledged that this approach may impact employee morale but noted that it might be necessary to affect change.

> *"…my boss he always gets what he wants done. Because…he is very bold…very enthusiastic…that kind of personality. In a way it is good, being an assertive boss, because change will happen. However, the change is [implemented] with fear, the subordinates will be scared, but the change will happen…Some bosses they have to be bold "do it", like that." (P24)*

P28, who was also part of the same focus group as P24, agreed that ACLs need to be bold and firm to drive change. He shared an experience where his former superior used fear to achieve results. He believes that ACLs must be fierce and firm in certain situations, especially within the government sector, as otherwise progress will be hindered. He acknowledged using a similar leadership style in his work.

> *"If you are not ferocious, ill tempered, some sort of being mean, things will not move in the government, certain things you need to be like that. You cannot be too good, too fair, too friendly, no." (P28)*

However, both P23 and P25, who were in the same focus group as P24 and P28, suggested that there should be limitations on the boldness of ACLs. P25 added that ACLs should be bold in their ideas but should avoid implementing those ideas too

forcefully, which could result in resistance. Instead, she proposed that ACLs should be rational and clearly explain the change task to the implementors. She acknowledged that it is more challenging to drive change as a rational leader, whereas bold leaders find it easier to drive change, particularly for major organisational changes.

> *"I think there is nothing wrong to be bold, being bold like new ideas right, I don't see anything wrong. But the way, we want to implement it, if it's too strong an approach also then there will be resistance…" (P25)*

Other participants also echoed these sentiments. P6 similarly shared that being bold and firm is an effective approach to implementing change in PSOs.

> *"It depends on leaders. If your top two are very mean, very firm, people will start to adhere, listen, [and] work together. When you have a nicer leader…then all will start bickering down there. I don't know why [it is] like this. It has been happening on and off." (P6)*

4.7.2.3 Effective Communicator

Participants emphasised the importance of ACLs being effective communicators, as they are expected to explain the objectives of the change and the processes involved to their subordinates. They also suggested that ACLs should encourage discussions and be good listeners. In this regard, P4 highlighted that ACLs need to have the capacity and ability to communicate with their subordinates, share information about the change, ask questions, and listen to them to ensure effective implementation of the change. Failing to do so will lead to problems in the implementation process. P6, who was part of the same focus group, agreed with the views of P4.

> *"If the boss doesn't talk, doesn't disseminate, doesn't ask questions, doesn't listen. Fail as a good communicator. Then it is finished, change won't happen." (P4)*

Sharing the same sentiments, P16 suggested that changing people who are involved in the change can only be achieved through effective communication.

> *"One more is good communication skills. The reason being, for change, if we want to change the building, it's easy to just knock it and we can build a new one, but if we want to change people, we want to change the policy, then only words can change them." (P16)*

P12 emphasised the importance of ACLs having the necessary knowledge about the change to be effective communicators and effectively communicate the change downward. She also pointed out that some ACLs lack understanding of the change and are leading it blindly. According to her, a good communicator should be able to explain the change, provide clear instructions on what needs to be done, and convey what can be expected. P3 added that he believes communication is more important than knowledge for ACLs as they try to gain buy-in for a new idea. When further questioned about this, P3 responded by saying, "…sometimes you can rely on the knowledge of the people here."

> *"I think a good communicator, somebody who's able to trickle down and somebody who knows the subject is also crucial, especially in terms of making change…somebody who can communicate very well. Who's able to explain the changes that they want to do and what is needed and what is expected." (P12)*

Expanding on this, P21 shared that when communicating change, it is important for ACLs to understand the attitude of the person being communicated to in order to approach them effectively.

> *"…they have to understand the attitude of the other side in order for you to approach them. You cannot follow your own style, right?" (P21)*

P22, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of gathering feedback from subordinates and providing them with opportunities to express their views. P22 also suggested that there should be space for debate, particularly when engaging with

external stakeholders. Echoing these sentiments, P3 proposed that healthy discussions should be an integral part of effective communication and that these discussions should focus on positive outcomes and be facilitated by ACLs.

> *"…encourage discussion, healthy discussion. Not a complaint session… and when you are presiding over that discussion, you'll be the calm one there." (P3)*

The communication between the ACLs and the subordinates also needs to be transparent to ensure that they are not left uninformed about any aspects of the change. To achieve this, P20 emphasised the importance of honesty and openness in conveying the change, which will result in better understanding and a smoother implementation process. Echoing this sentiment, P7 added that if subordinates discover that the ACLs were not truthful about the change initially, it could lead to a loss of respect towards the ACLs.

> *"I'm more to being honest and open because I believe by doing that then it actually smoothens the change process. Because if people are being kept in the dark or not sure why we are doing this, or why is this happening…then the change process would be greatly, affected." (P20)*

Another key aspect of effective communication is the practice of two-way communication. P4 suggested that ACLs should prioritise listening to their subordinates and enabling them to take the lead in conversations and share their ideas. He also emphasised the importance of ACLs being transparent in these two-way conversations. In this regard, P5 supported P4's viewpoint during the focus group discussion and highlighted the significance of actively listening to subordinates and establishing an effective platform for them to express their perspectives and opinions.

> *"…you need to listen to your staff. You need to let them know that you are there to listen. You're willing to listen." (P5)*

Sharing similar sentiments, P20 also emphasised the importance for ACLs to consult with their subordinates to obtain first-hand information about progress in order to

facilitate decision-making. In alignment with this, P13 shared that the secretary general in her organisation is always willing to listen to his subordinates, which she views as an important attribute of her superior.

> *"…he's one person who's willing to listen, he'll always listen if you have a problem, he'll listen…that's very important, especially for the secretary general to listen to junior officers or even middle management." (P13)*

Expanding on these views, P17 expressed that ACLs should approach their subordinates with an open mind, listening to their views and opinions and deciding whether to accept and adapt them. He further highlighted that his organisation has established a dedicated committee as a platform for employees to share their ideas. P3 echoed this perspective, suggesting that ACLs may not need to accept all ideas from subordinates but rather consider relevant aspects.

> *"…they can be open minded, meaning that if there are views from our subordinates, we just entertain them. We see if we can use the idea and so on." (P17)*

4.7.2.4 Influential

Some participants emphasised the importance of ACLs being influential leaders, capable of influencing both internal and external stakeholders towards the proposed change, as explained by P18.

> *"Leadership is about how you want to influence people. Sometimes you have the position, but you cannot influence other people, the other people cannot agree with you. You mentioned 5 [things] they just nodded for two or one? Then it is useless as a leader." (P18)*

Sharing the same sentiments, P23 emphasised the importance of ACLs persuading their stakeholders to understand and visualise the change, as this affects the level of support for the change.

> *"…the buy in comes from the capacity and our ability to convince the person, so that they can visualise, and they can see the change already in the future, although that is just what we have in our minds only." (P23)*

On the other hand, P11 highlighted the importance of ACL's ability to influence and persuade their subordinates to support and implement the change, although he acknowledged that it is a challenging task.

> *"That is why perhaps I think the change…which is required…You need to get people to work for you. Oh, that is tough." (P11)*

P17 proposed that ACLs should genuinely connect with their subordinates to effectively influence them to implement change. By doing so, they can convincingly inspire their subordinates to support the change initiative.

> *"But we try and influence them…If they can change when dealing with this change, we must also deal with their hearts, from the bottom to the top so that we can make sure that what we want, what we dream of can be achieved." (P17)*

P5 emphasised the significance of ACLs in fostering belief among employees in the change process. According to him, this can be accomplished through effective communication.

> *I guess the leader must be able to instil the belief in all the employees, the staff. They need to believe in the process, you must be able to explain well and give analogy." (P5)*

On the other hand, P11 highlighted that the role of ACLs is to motivate employees and encourage them to improve and deliver change effectively. When pressed further on motivation, he added that ACLs need to motivate their subordinates based on their own attributes. Similarly, P20 suggested that ACLs should be knowledgeable, understand how the work is done, and lead by example. By doing so, she believes that subordinates will be influenced and motivated to implement the change.

> *"…the role of the leader has always been to motivate…when you motivate people will always try to find ways to do things better, to deliver better quality of work." (P11)*

P10 emphasised the importance of appreciation in leadership, highlighting the need for reinforcement. According to him, such actions have a positive impact on the leader.

> *"In leadership, we need to appreciate a lot…We need reinforcement with praises and support to the other parties…including as well to our subordinates, we give them praises…it gives an indirect action, that is positive to the leader." (P10)*

Participants also suggested that ACLs should be empathetic towards their subordinates to understand them and the nature of their work. To do so, P11 suggested that ACLs should gain a better understanding of their subordinates' experiences and perspectives. Additionally, P9 suggested that ACLs should also assess their subordinates' inclinations.

> *"Instead of us forcing people to do things they don't like, and they do half-heartedly…We can see it, the work done half-heartedly…we have to look at a person in terms of his tendencies." (P9)*

ACLs are also expected to possess the ability to persuade and convince external stakeholders to support change, as explained by P21. She emphasised the need to first understand them before engaging with them using the right approach.

> *"…the convincing power is…very important for the officers. The way you want to convince this kind of players, there are all types, and they are all not the same…Sometimes you must have the power to persuade, convincing power. Sometimes you have to directly instruct them if we have the rights…through your approach, your style, you can actually convince [them]…[you] have to understand the attitude of the other side in order for you to approach them. You cannot follow your own style, right?." (P21)*

4.7.2.5 Ethical

Several participants emphasised the significance of honesty, transparency, and acting with integrity. They suggest that ACLs should communicate in a transparent manner and cultivate trust among their employees. In this regard, P22 emphasised that ACLs should adhere to strong principles when managing change.

> *"…it goes back to ethics. It goes back to principles; it goes back to values. It goes back to how strong a character you are…what would you stand for? Will you easily crumble? are you easily bought over…that's the very basics. If you don't have that, you fail as a leader." (P22)*

Similarly, P12 highlighted the importance of adhering to personal values, especially in challenging situations.

> *"To me the core would be your values. Sometimes we are asked to bend our backs for [favours] and what not. It goes back to our values, our methods might be different. Like especially middle managers, we're in a very tricky spot actually. If you do it also it might be wrong and if you don't do it also you might be wrong. So, you are put in a position where…it can be very challenging…But it goes down to the values." (P12)*

Sharing similar sentiments, P18 emphasised the importance of adhering to government procedures, maintaining integrity, and prioritising transparency.

> *"…as an officer or manager, what you want to do, do it, I don't care. I want the process, you have to follow the government's procedures, don't deviate from it, don't accept bribes, don't do it without integrity. You must have transparency, you have to follow, if you don't follow, the output will be different." (P18)*

On the other hand, P5 expressed his concerns about the powers that come with the job, as they may be susceptible to negative perceptions regarding their integrity.

> *"Decentralisation and empowerment are good, of course, more things go smoother, faster, but personally, certain things, I don't want to be empowered. I don't want to be decentralised to me. The things that can lead people to say abuse of power, corruption, and so on. And when you have that power, even though how full of integrity you are. People will still say, are you being tested all the time?" (P5)*

As such, ethical behaviour is regarded as a crucial leadership attribute for ACLs, as explained by P22.

> *"…we need the right kind of civil servants. We need civil servants who have solid principles, who have ethics, who are ethical, who will not be swayed by monetary endowments or be tempted with that." (P22)*

4.7.2.6 Other Attributes

Participants also highlighted other attributes of ACLs, such as the need for them to be competent, able to make reasoned judgements and decisions, diplomatic, possess interpersonal and networking skills, maintain a positive attitude, and show humility. Some of these attributes are explained below.

(i) **Politeness and diplomacy:** Several participants emphasised the importance of being polite, diplomatic, and maintaining a positive perception when communicating with others. This includes using diplomatic skills, being firm yet justifying decisions, and avoiding being too fierce or arrogant.

(ii) **Interpersonal Skills and Networking:** Networking and interpersonal skills are important for leaders to build relationships and interact effectively with various stakeholders within and outside the organisation.

(iii) **Positive Attitude:** Leaders should have a positive mindset, be open to accepting changes, and instil belief in their staff. They should create a friendly and approachable environment while maintaining firmness in decision-making.

(iv) **Humility and appreciation:** Participants highlighted the significance of being humble, appreciating others, and showing respect. They mentioned the need to meet people and understand their needs, as well as building trust through demonstrating skills and gaining the respect of others.

4.8 Conclusion of Findings

This chapter consolidates the findings from interviews and focus group interviews with 28 participants from the MPS. The thematic analyses conducted revealed five key themes involving vision, communication, people, implementation, and leadership. These themes and sub-themes provide insights into the implementation of PCIs in the MPS, the processes involved, the considerations made by ACLs during the change process, and the challenges they encounter. The findings also indicate a close relationship between these themes, suggesting that key change factors, processes, and leadership activities are interconnected. The next chapter discusses these relationships and the research outcomes in further detail.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents the overall findings of the study. It includes an overview of the study, a discussion of the research findings, the integration of results to develop a theoretical framework, theoretical contributions, practical implications, recommendations, limitations, future research, and the study's overall conclusion.

5.2 Overview of the Study

As discussed in Chapter 1, the primary goal of this study is to understand the phenomenon of change in the public sector, specifically focusing on the implementation of PCIs. The study explored how PCIs are implemented within the sector, identifying, and examining key themes, factors, processes, and challenges. It also aimed to identify and provide insights into the roles of ACLs as change leaders and the required attributes for effective change leadership. These objectives contribute to the development of a theoretical framework for change implementation in the public sector. To achieve these goals, four research questions aligned with the research objectives were developed and presented in Chapter 1. To recap, Figure 23 illustrates the sequence and focus of the study based on its research questions and objectives.

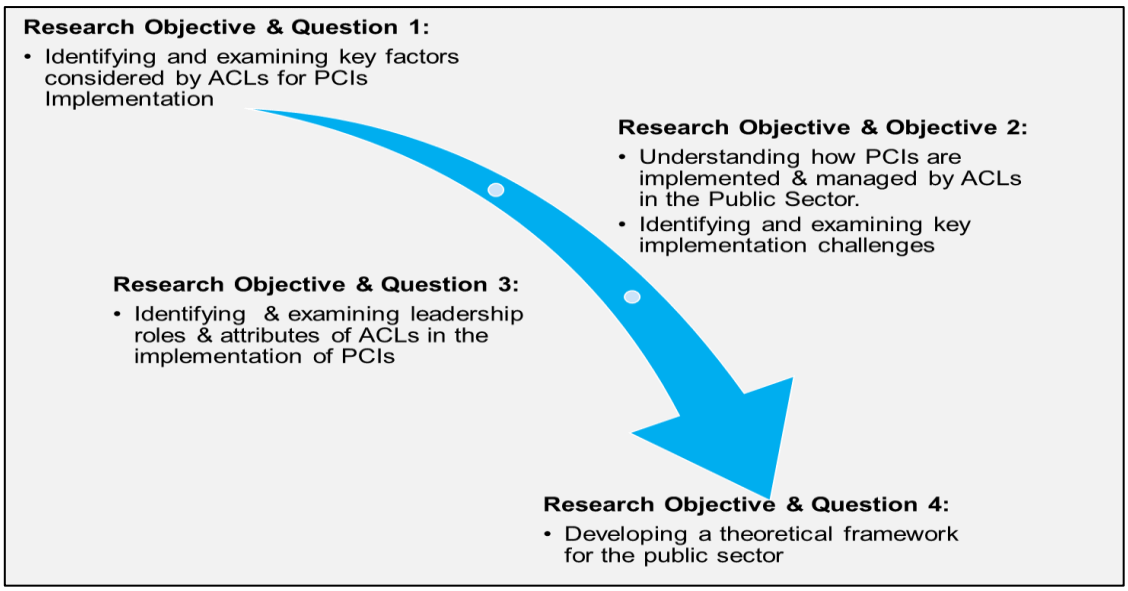

Figure 23: Focus of the Study based on Research Questions and Objectives

Data for this study were collected through interviews and focus group interviews with 28 ACLs from the MPS. The data were thematically analysed using the template analysis method, guided by the main theoretical framework derived from the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and the a priori themes presented in Chapter 3. Following the analysis, five main themes were identified and presented, along with their findings, in Chapter 4. These five main themes are illustrated in Figure 24 below.

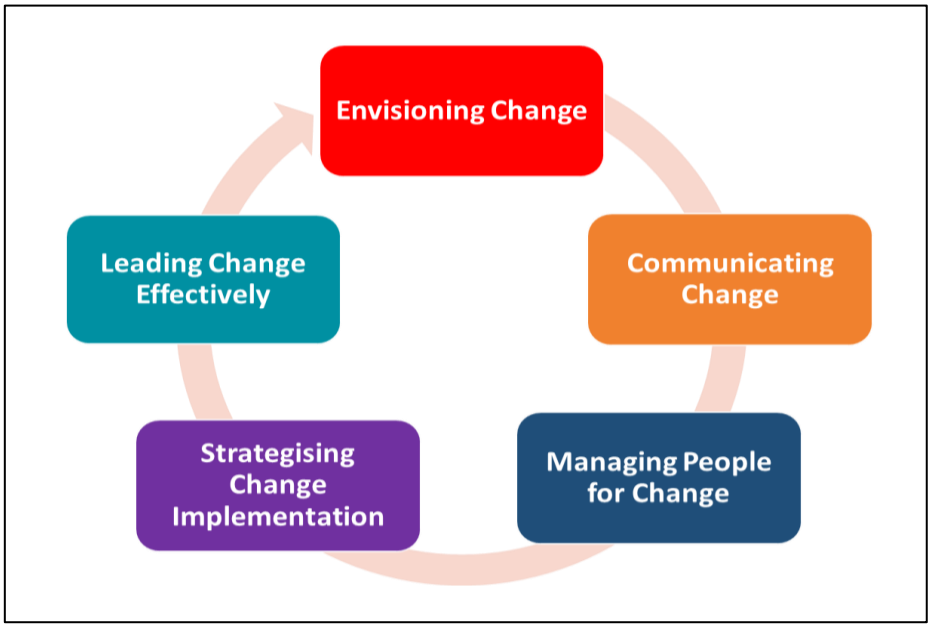

Figure 24: Main Themes of the Study

In the following sections of this chapter, the relationship between the findings of this research and existing literature will be demonstrated. The aim is to draw upon these findings and demonstrate a connection between the research outcomes and existing literature, emphasising the contribution of this study to the body of knowledge on change management and change leadership in the public sector context. The key findings are then mapped onto the initial theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 to develop a theoretical framework for change implementation in the public sector.

5.3 Key Research Findings

This section discusses the key research findings from Chapter 4. It analyses these findings in relation to the research objectives and questions of this study, as well as the existing literature. The discussion in this section focuses on research questions

1 and 2, examining key processes, considerations, and challenges in the implementation of PCIs in the public sector. Section 5.3.8 specifically addresses research question 3. However, other sections also discuss the leadership aspects within their respective contexts.

5.3.1 Establishing a Clear Vision for Change

Research question 1 aims to identify and examine the key factors that ACLs consider when implementing PCIs in the public sector. Among other considerations, the findings indicate that ACLs consider having a clear vision for change as a key consideration in the implementation process. This is consistent with previous research that emphasises the significance of a clear vision in the change process (Kotter, 1996; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Naslund and Norrman, 2022). The role of a vision has also been identified as a key factor in change models (e.g., Kanter's Ten Commandments for executing Change, 1982; Kotter's Eight Step Model, 1996; Luecke's Seven Steps, 2003; Fernandez and Rainey, Points of Consensus for the Public Sector, 2006). Furthermore, previous research in the public sector has also identified vision as a critical factor and determinant of successful change (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Cuningham and Kempling, 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015). Existing literature in the Malaysian context also emphasises the significance of vision in implementing change. Scholars propose that the government should adopt measures to establish clear visions within broader objectives, supported by well-defined strategies and mechanisms to effectively manage change within the MPS context (Beh, 2011; Siddiquee et al., 2019).

The analysis highlights the importance of having a clear vision, as it is communicated downward to ensure understanding of the change and garner necessary support for its implementation. This need is further emphasised by the identification of a gap between the planning and implementation stages of change within the MPS. This gap reveals a lack of involvement and effective engagement of change implementors in formulating and planning PCIs. As a result of this gap and the top-down implementation approach adopted in the sector, change implementors primarily rely on the communicated change vision and subsequent directives from management to implement PCIs. Therefore, a lack of clarity in the change vision

directly impacts their understanding of the change and its subsequent implementation. Chapter 4 presents clear evidence demonstrating how a lack of clarity in the vision affects employees' understanding of change, influencing their support and commitment to it, and potentially resulting in resistance. This finding is consistent with previous research, which indicates that resistance to change is more prevalent when employees lack understanding of the change's purpose or fail to believe in the rationale behind it (Holt and Vardaman, 2013; Luo et al., 2016; Rosenbaum et al., 2018; Lauzier et al., 2020).

Scholars argue that change creates uncertainty within the organisation that affects employees' perceptions and attitudes towards it (Wisse and Sleebos, 2016). Employees are suggested to be more receptive to change when they have the required information about it, which can reduce their perception of uncertainty (Sharma and Good, 2013). The findings indicate that this uncertainty often stems from questions about the need, objectives, and impact of the change, which relate to its underlying rationale (Kempster et al., 2011; Naslund and Norrman, 2022). Scholars further argue that employees are more receptive to change when they understand its rationale (Albrecht et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to establish a clear rationale for the change and foster a mutual understanding of it (Cunningham and Kempling, 2009). In this regard, the analysis reveals a relationship between the clarity of vision and the rationale for change, suggesting that a clear and transparent rationale developed during vision formation can enhance overall clarity. Consequently, having a clear vision for the change can help reduce the uncertainty associated with it and enhance employees' understanding of it.

The process of identifying a clear and transparent rationale for change involves recognising distinct triggers for change, acknowledging a compelling need for change, and defining clear objectives that the change aims to achieve. Identifying these triggers of change, whether they are triggered internally, externally, or influenced by a shift in the operating environment, as the findings suggest, provides an overarching context for the change. This provides a better understanding of the overall need for change and the objectives of the change and can potentially reduce ambiguity about the change. Pettigrew (1985) emphasised the importance of considering the context of change together with the content, process, and outcomes of change. Context

relates to both the internal and external environments of the change and how change is triggered within these environments (Kuipers et al., 2014). According to Dawson (2003), the terms "context" and "triggers" are used interchangeably within the literature. He also identifies context, among other factors, as a determinant in shaping change. Context provides the overarching foundation for the change, or rather a context for the question "Why change?" to avoid the pitfalls of ambiguity (Dawson, 1994; Schein, 2004; Hughes, 2010).

The analysis also demonstrates a relationship between the need for change and the objectives of change. It emphasises the significance of aligning these considerations to ensure that the objectives are based on the actual needs for the change. This ensures cohesive and clear change objectives that are evidence-based (Naslund and Norrman, 2022). To do so, it is necessary to identify and verify the need for change (Fernandes and Rainey, 2006). Identifying the need for change would inevitably lead back to the triggers of change, thus establishing a relationship between the triggers of change that define the need for change, which in turn defines the objectives of the change. As mentioned above, these considerations relate to the overall rationale for change. Therefore, this research posits that the development of a clear vision needs to be supported by the identification of a clear and transparent rationale for change.

Another key finding of this research relates to the strategic alignment of the change vision. Given the complexity of the public sector environment and the cross-boundary nature of PCIs, the vision must align with existing laws, policies, strategies, and functions of other PSOs within the sector. Strategic alignment is recognised as a significant factor in addressing the purpose of change, as argued by Naslund and Norrman (2022). According to them, these considerations are frequently discussed in the change management literature. They emphasise the need to link, fit, and support the overall organisational strategy, suggesting that the change must align with and support it. However, the findings indicate that in the public sector, these considerations extend beyond strategic considerations at the organisational level.

The broad and cross-boundary nature of PCIs, along with the overlapping roles and functions among PSOs within the sector and the overall legal and policy

framework that encompasses different segments of the sector, necessitates strategic alignment at both the organisational and sectoral levels. In this context, the roles and functions of other PSOs within the sector must be carefully considered to ensure that their boundaries are acknowledged and communicated during the planning stages, thus avoiding any potential misalignment or challenges in the implementation process. A lack of strategic alignment, particularly during the planning stages, can result in implementation delays or failure. Consistent with research findings, Naslund and Norrman (2019) emphasised the importance of conducting strategic alignment evaluations during the planning stages to ensure effective alignment. Therefore, this research argues that conducting prior strategic alignment evaluations, both at the organisational and sectoral levels, during the planning stages is crucial. Such evaluations should be integrated into the vision development process to ensure clarity, establish necessary boundaries, and ultimately facilitate effective change implementation. Figure 25 illustrates the relationship between vision, the rationale for change, and the need for vision alignment.

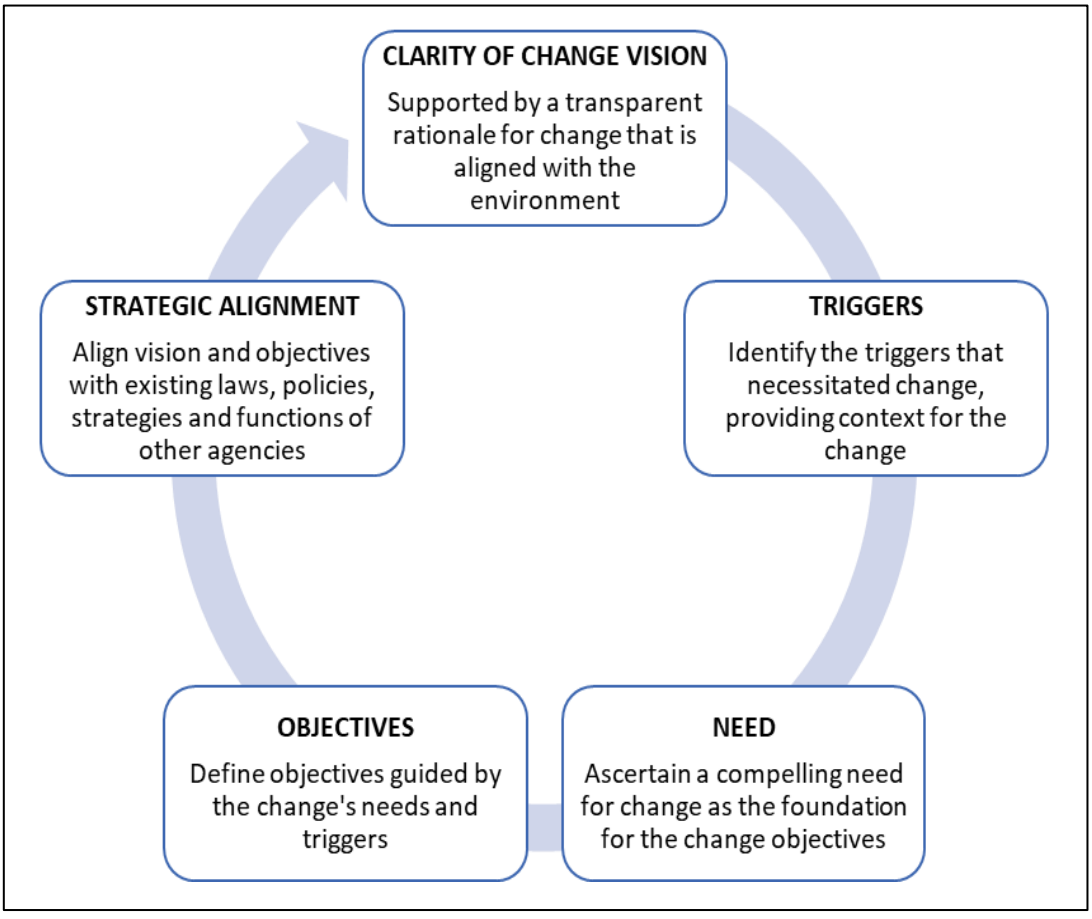

Figure 25: Relationship Between Vision, Rationale, and Alignment

5.3.2 Communication Approach

The findings indicate that the MPS adopts a top-down communication approach in the implementation of PCIs. The vision and directives for change originate from the top and are communicated downward to all levels of the organisation. These directives are primarily directed at ACLs at the middle management level, who act as intermediaries for communication. They interpret the top-down directives, strategise, and communicate them downward for implementation. Previous research in the private sector has also highlighted the crucial role of middle managers as key conduits for change communication between top and bottom levels (Balogun, 2003; Cao et al., 2016; Buick et al., 2016). The adoption of a top-down communication approach aligns with the hierarchical organisational structure of PSOs and the top-down change implementation approach within the MPS. It is further influenced by the concentration of decision-making power at the top, led by ministers and senior ACLs.

Consistent with the study's findings, the top-down communication approach is characterised as a formal and programmatic strategy initiated by management. It is directed at employees through formal channels to relay change information and secure their acceptance and commitment (Lewis, 1999; Russ, 2008; Faupel and Helpap, 2021). Scholars have described this approach as framing the change for downward communication to garner support from employees (Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst et al., 1997). The purpose of this approach is not to solicit input from employees but rather to communicate the vision and persuade employees to conform (Russ, 2008). In this regard, change leaders at senior and middle levels have significant authority in determining how to communicate the change and ensure compliance, which is critical in overcoming implementation barriers (Armenakis and Harris, 2008; Russ, 2008). This aligns with the top-down hierarchical leadership style adopted in the MPS. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the top-down communication approach is influenced by the prevailing hierarchical compliance culture within the MPS. This culture mandates adherence to top-down directives, resulting in passive communication among employees involved in the implementation process. Consequently, their understanding and support for the change are affected due to a lack of efficient two-way communication, thereby impacting the overall effectiveness of the implementation process.

The top-down communication approach emphasises the importance of effective communication to facilitate understanding and garner the necessary support for PCIs. Consistent with existing literature, the findings suggest that effective communication can reduce ambiguity and uncertainty during the change process while enhancing employee receptiveness and commitment to change (Oreg et al., 2018; Petrou et al., 2018; Shulga, 2020). It can also bridge the gap between the planning and implementation stages of change by fostering a shared understanding of the vision among employees at all levels of the organisation. The findings also indicate that the effectiveness of change communication depends on the clarity of the change vision and subsequent directives. The communication also needs to be continuous throughout the change process and directed at both internal and external stakeholders. In this regard, the findings highlight the importance of planning and executing communication strategies at every stage of change: prior engagement and communication during planning; disseminating change information during implementation; and maintaining post-implementation communication for sustained change. Additionally, this study emphasises the significance of developing a change communication plan, as this aspect is often overlooked during the planning stages. The absence of a well-defined communication plan can result in inadequate dissemination of change information to both internal and external stakeholders, potentially resulting in a poor understanding of the change vision and disruption of the implementation process.

Despite the predominant top-down communication approach in the MPS, the analysis also identifies instances of dialogic, participatory, and bottom-up communication channels. However, these communication channels are limited to seeking clarifications, elaborating on the change implementation process at the middle level, and fulfilling upward reporting requirements. The availability and effectiveness of these two-way communication channels are suggested to be dependent on the leadership style of the ACLs leading the change, both at the top and middle levels. Participants also emphasised the need for a more participative communication strategy in the sector to enhance understanding, support, and commitment for PCIs. Towards this, existing literature suggests that the way change is communicated as well as the use of appropriate communication strategies in relaying change information can improve commitment, compliance, and acceptance of change (Bermann, 1980;

Faulpel and Helpap, 2021). Frahm and Brown (2003) propose that top-down monologic communication is suitable for implementing change initiatives that require stability and control. Conversely, they argue that dialogic communication should be used for complex change initiatives that require teamwork and the resolution of complex organisational problems. On the other hand, Helpap (2016) argues that a participatory communication approach, rather than a programmatic approach, can mitigate employee resistance and bolster commitment. He further contends that a bottom-up communication approach has the potential to foster higher employee commitment compared to a top-down approach. Moreover, it is suggested that participatory communication has the potential to cultivate a positive and supportive environment for change (Hemmelgarn et al., 2006).

Undoubtedly, integrating a balanced communication approach that incorporates both bottom-up and top-down communication within the MPS would enhance the effectiveness of change communication. This would foster better understanding, support, and compliance among employees. However, the present top-down organisational structure, the existing decision-making power disparity between the top and bottom levels, and the hierarchical compliance culture may impede the effectiveness of bottom-up communication on a larger scale within the sector. Consequently, concerted efforts are needed from the top to promote more participatory communication practices within the top-down organisational structure of the MPS, thereby facilitating effective communication at all levels of the organisation during the change process.

5.3.3 Engaging External Stakeholders

In addition to maintaining consistent and effective communication throughout the change process, the findings emphasise the importance of effectively engaging external stakeholders in developing the change vision. This is crucial as PSOs tend to have multiple stakeholders who have a vested interest in or are impacted by the change policies and initiatives they implement (Freeman, 1984; Rainey, 2004). The analysis indicates that these stakeholders primarily consist of industry players, non-governmental organisations, the public, other PSOs, and political leaders within the sector. Drawing from Rowe and Frewer's (2005) public engagement elements, the

engagement process typically involves communication, consultation, and participation. The analysis reveals evidence of these aspects in the engagement process in the MPS, but it also raises concerns about the extent and effectiveness of external stakeholder engagement efforts. Often, the engagement process is seen as a mere formality during the change process, lacking sufficient effort to ensure its effectiveness. There have also been questions about the ability of ACLs to facilitate and manage the engagement process and navigate the diverse interests of stakeholders. Consequently, recommendations have been made to establish an engagement framework within the sector and provide ACLs with training to effectively facilitate these engagement exercises and navigate the diverse interests of stakeholders.

Consistent with existing research, this study finds that the engagement process is influenced by the diverse and competing interests of external stakeholders, which may not align with the objectives of the PCIs and the intentions of PSOs (Boyne, 2002; By and MacLeod, 2009). Stakeholders typically expect to leverage their power to influence the outcome of the change during the engagement process (Nguyen et al., 2018). Their actions are usually influenced by incentives to support or resist the change. Accordingly, some scholars argue that the objective of the engagement process should be to negotiate and reach a consensus regarding the change rather than simply persuading the stakeholders to support it (Cunningham and Kempling, 2009). This process is proposed to be more significant in the initial stages of change and is later superseded by the importance of the internal engagement process as the change advances (Kickert, 2014). Similarly, the findings indicate that external stakeholders typically prioritise and protect their interests instead of aligning with the common interests driven by the PSOs. Conversely, ACLs often prioritise the common interests of the change, especially the overarching public interests in developing the change vision.

Consequently, scholars argue that developing a mutually agreeable vision and goals for change can be challenging for PSOs. This, along with other complexities in the environment, may hinder the success of the PCIs (Robertson and Seneviratne, 1995). Therefore, it is necessary to balance stakeholder expectations to gain support for implementing the change (Boyne, 2002; By and MacLeod, 2009). This can be

achieved by evaluating the benefits of the change with its goals. Scholars have suggested the need to proactively assess potential challenges that stakeholders may pose to the implementation of change initiatives (Chow and Leiringer, 2019). Hence, the findings indicate the need for a more inclusive engagement process during the planning stages to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are considered and addressed before implementing the change. The effectiveness of the engagement process can also be improved by involving political leaders when necessary, as the findings indicate that PCIs supported and endorsed by political leaders are more likely to gain the support of external stakeholders. This will help ensure that the implementation of change is not hindered by negative consequences resulting from a lack of engagement and consensus with external stakeholders. As such, this study finds that the presence of multiple external stakeholders with diverse and competing interests increases the complexity of the public sector change environment and makes it more challenging to reach a consensus for change, which could impact the effectiveness of the change implementation process.

5.3.4 Resistance to Change

The findings identify resistance to change as one of the key challenges to successful change implementation in the MPS. This supports earlier research that identifies resistance as a barrier to effective change implementation (e.g., Van der Voet et al., 2014; Al-Ali et al., 2017; Santos and Aires, 2023). Resistance is also seen as an inevitable phenomenon of change and is argued to be more common in PSOs as change is driven from the top (Robbins, 1992; Panozzo, 2000; Vann, 2004). Resistance is linked to employees' attitudes towards change, as the uncertainty that comes with change can result in either a positive reaction characterised by commitment or a negative reaction characterised by resistance (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002; Oreg, 2003, 2018; Liu and Zhang, 2019). Consistent with previous research, the analysis indicates that individual attitudes play a crucial role in determining the success of change implementation, as ACLs heavily depend on employee support for implementing change (Nohe et al., 2013; Huy et al., 2014).

Resistance can manifest itself through verbal opposition to change and nonverbal actions that affect the change process (Goltz and Hietapelto, 2003). It can

be examined from three perspectives: cognitive aspects related to employees' views on the change, emotional aspects related to their positive or negative feelings about the change, and behavioural aspects related to their actions and behaviour during the change process (Piderit, 2000; Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002; Oreg, 2006). The emotional aspect is considered crucial in the implementation process because emotions lead to behavioural reactions that affect the change outcome (Castillo et al., 2020). Previous research on change resistance often focuses on change recipients rather than implementors. However, scholars argue that in the public sector's policy implementation context, the distinction between the two is often unclear. This is because change recipients often assume the role of second-order change agents, actively participating in adapting and implementing change. Therefore, scholars propose that change reactions should be viewed as a continuum rather than simply categorising them as acceptance or resistance (McDermott et al., 2013). While the findings indicate the need to identify and address resistance, scholars argue that employees may change their views and behaviours towards change over time, thus making it necessary to monitor and manage employee reactions throughout the change process (Piderit, 2000).

Furthermore, prior research has examined the link between perceived uncertainty in change and support for behavioural changes to gain insight into how employees respond to change. However, this investigation identified a gap in the existing literature regarding the specific factors, whether positive or negative, that influence this relationship (Katsaros and Tsirikas, 2022). Therefore, it is important to empirically identify and understand the factors that drive employees towards resistance in the public sector. The findings in Chapter 4 provide clear evidence of various forms of resistance in the change process. They also highlight the key factors that contribute to resistance in the MPS. These factors primarily include a lack of understanding of the change vision, employees' attitudes towards change, particularly complacency, and a lack of motivation.

As previously discussed, an unclear change vision and ineffective communication can result in a lack of understanding, potentially leading to resistance. The findings also indicate that passive communication is prevalent among change implementors in the MPS due to the adoption of a top-down communication approach,

a lack of effective channels for two-way communication, and a hierarchical compliance culture. As a result, they hesitate to seek clarification about their doubts, concerns, and the impact of the change on themselves and the organisation. This hinders their understanding of the change and contributes to the overall uncertainty surrounding the change. Consequently, a lack of understanding can lead to mistrust, insecurity, and questions regarding the change (Santos and Aires, 2023). Consistent with previous research, the findings suggest that employees' attitudes and reactions to change are influenced by the level of uncertainty arising from the change, the quality of change information conveyed to them, their understanding of the communicated change, and their perception of the impact of the change on them and the organisation (Cullen et al., 2014; Katsaros and Tsirikas, 2022; Khaw et al., 2022; Santos and Aires, 2023). When used effectively, change communication can disseminate information, promote understanding, guide and direct employees, and, if necessary, modify their behaviour and reaction to change in an effective and timely manner (Johansson and Heide, 2008). Therefore, the findings indicate a strong relationship between effective communication and employees' attitudes towards change. Specifically, a lack of effective change communication can result in a lack of understanding and potential resistance. Additionally, it suggests that gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the change can help decrease resistance to it.

Secondly, the findings indicate that complacency is a significant factor influencing the attitudes and reactions of change implementors in the MPS. The Twelfth Malaysia Plan (RMK12) also recognises complacency as a major factor that has had a significant impact on the efficiency of public service delivery in the MPS (Economic Planning Unit, 2021). However, the plan does not offer any additional explanation for this. There are limited studies that specifically address complacency within the context of change, and the available literature predominantly focuses on the reluctance to initiate change rather than a factor that hinders the implementation of change (see Kotter, 1996). Consistent with Lewin's Field Theory (1947, 1952), this study finds that complacency is associated with a preference for the status quo rather than change. Towards this end, scholars argue that change is sometimes perceived as a threat to the existing status quo and power dynamics within the organisation (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979; Oliver, 1991). The analysis further identifies several sources of employee complacency in the sector. Complacency arises in part from

employees' prolonged tenure in the organisation or department, which renders them entrenched in their current roles and comfort zones. This can be attributed to a lack of meaningful job rotation. As a result, employees lack the motivation to change the way they work and fail to recognise the need for change, making it difficult for them to adapt. Furthermore, they view change as a disruption to their well-established status quo, which fuels the belief that their previous actions were flawed and inadequate. Similarly, scholars argue that employees may experience negative emotions and reactions when confronted with change due to their apprehension of losing a sense of competence in carrying out their tasks and the belief that change is unnecessary for achieving the desired goals (Armenakis et al., 2007). Consequently, complacency hinders their willingness to embrace change and leads to negative outcomes, resulting in unproductivity that affects the effectiveness of the implementation process.

The third prevailing factor in the sector is motivation, or more precisely, the lack of it. A lack of motivation is suggested to impact employees' active participation in change, leading to resistance. The findings also indicate that there is a perception in the sector that change brings additional responsibilities and workloads for employees. However, there is also a prevailing belief that the increased workload does not come with any additional incentives, particularly in terms of financial incentives. Previous research has shown that the additional workload and responsibilities resulting from change typically elicit a negative reaction among employees (Li et al., 2017; Beare et al., 2020), and the findings suggest that the lack of incentives intensifies this reaction. Scholars have also proposed that resistance is usually not directed towards the change itself but rather arises from concerns about the potential loss of status, financial benefits, and personal comfort, which differ from resisting the change itself (Dent and Goldberg, 1999). As a result, this affects their motivation to embrace the increased workload and effectively implement change. These findings indicate a relationship between increased responsibilities and incentives, which has a direct impact on employees' motivation to implement change. To address this, it is necessary to conduct a systematic review of the incentive mechanism to incentivise productivity and enhance motivation in the sector, rather than solely relying on the proactive solutions of change leaders.

The findings also suggest that resistance to change in the MPS is partially influenced by the hierarchical compliance culture, a term coined by the researcher, which is prevalent in the sector. This culture requires adherence to top-down directives and is reinforced by the fear of consequences associated with non-compliance. The analysis indicates that this culture stems from the top-down structure of PSOs, the top-down approach to implementing change involving both administrative and hierarchical bureaucracy in the process, the top-down communication of change, and the prevalence of top-down leadership in the sector. In this context, scholars suggest that the traditional culture within the public sector is often influenced by strict adherence to rules and procedures as the primary means of accountability. This has led to overregulation, inflexible working attitudes, and a reluctance to take risks, ultimately resulting in inefficiency (Dreschler, 2001). The findings also suggest that employees in the MPS are often compelled to take on additional workloads associated with change and implement them due to the hierarchical compliance culture in the sector. Despite this compliance, the implementation process is compromised by a lack of motivation, resulting in a slower and less rigorous pace. In this regard, some research participants believe that due to this prevailing culture in the MPS, employees do not resist change. Instead, they attribute challenges in implementation to a lack of pace and commitment in executing change directives. However, further analysis reveals that these factors are indeed associated with negative reactions and resistance to change.

As mentioned earlier, resistance can take the form of non-verbal actions that influence the effectiveness of the change process (Goltz and Hietapelto, 2003). Previous research has also indicated that both change implementors and recipients in the public sector tend to adhere to policy changes due to the existing legal framework and control systems within the sector. However, being compliant does not necessarily mean accepting and supporting the change or that the change is not being resisted (Broadfoot and Ashkanasy, 1994; Reginato et al., 2016). According to Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), compliance with directives and instructions represents the minimum level of support displayed by employees and does not require any additional effort to support the change. They further suggest that both cooperation, which involves a modest amount of sacrifice on the part of the employee, and championing, which entails personal sacrifices and actively promoting the change, demonstrate support for the change (Rafferty and Minbashian, 2019). Therefore, this study posits that

change is not outright resisted in the public sector due to the prevailing hierarchical compliance culture, reinforced by the fear of consequences associated with non-compliance. Instead, resistance is manifested in the way change is implemented by employees. Consequently, resistance to change within the context of the public sector is partially mediated by the prevailing hierarchical compliance culture.

5.3.5 Top-Down Implementation and Decision-Making Process

PCIs are primarily implemented in a planned and top-down manner in the MPS. This is in line with the findings of previous research, including studies conducted in Malaysia, which indicate that change is implemented in a planned and top-down manner in PSOs (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Burnes, 2009; Beh, 2011; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Xavier et al., 2016; Siddiquee et al., 2019). Most existing research argues that the planned and top-down approach is influenced by the complex public sector environment, which includes political influence, multiple stakeholders, conflicting interests and goals, and public accountability and scrutiny (Andrews et al., 2008; Boyne, 2002; Karp and Helgo, 2008; Cunningham and Kempling, 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014; Kickert, 2014; Rainey, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014, 2015). While the findings of this study align with those of previous research, they also indicate that the planned and top-down approach is adopted due to the hierarchical organisational structure of PSOs, where power and control are centralised at the top. Consistent with previous research, the change decision-making process in the MPS is led by political leaders who hold positions as ministers and deputy ministers, followed by senior ACLs who form the top management of these organisations (Kickert, 2014; Klein et al., 2021). Additionally, the analysis reveals that task forces established to monitor the implementation of major PCIs are typically led by senior ACLs or ministers. This further reinforces the centralised decision-making structure at different stages of the change process, indicating that the power and control of the change process remain at the top throughout.

The findings further indicate that strategic change decisions made by top management have limited involvement from change implementors in PSOs. This is primarily a result of the top-down change implementation approach, the centralisation of decision-making power at the top, and the distinct roles of various departments

within PSOs. Additionally, implementors are also often not directly involved in the planning stages of the change for the same reasons, and they only become involved during the implementation stages when the change is passed down for implementation. Despite evidence of engagement during the planning stages, concerns have been raised regarding the consistency and effectiveness of the process, with some perceiving it as merely a formality. Similarly, previous studies have shown that implementors in PSOs are frequently only engaged during the implementation phase and not involved in determining the goals, timeline, and outcomes of the change. This responsibility typically lies with top management, including ministers (Kuipers et al., 2014; Kickert, 2014). Consequently, this creates a gap between the planning and implementation stages of change, as change implementors are not directly involved in the planning stages. This gap impacts their understanding of the change and opens the possibility of varied interpretations (Kickert, 2014), especially when downward communication about the change is ineffective. As a result, implementors often question the necessity and validity of the change, which affects their support, commitment, and identification with it (Grama and Todericiu, 2016; Santos and Aires, 2023). However, these concerns are often not communicated to top management due to the hierarchical nature of the communication process.

Change decisions are cascaded downward through top-down directives to relevant departments and subsequently to middle-management ACLs and lower-level employees for implementation. Due to the top-down implementation approach and hierarchical compliance culture, these directives are perceived as mandates that necessitate compliance. Middle-management ACLs view themselves as intermediaries between top management and lower-level employees. Their roles include strategising and communicating the PCIs downward for implementation, as well as monitoring the implementation process daily. This aligns with previous research findings that suggest middle managers play an active role in designing the implementation plan below them and ensuring coordination across the organisation (Livijn, 2019). Gatenby et al. (2014) suggest that the hierarchical position of middle managers within the organisation requires them to look both upwards and downwards as well as bridge strategic goals with operational needs. They further indicate that the bureaucratic structure may occasionally influence the role of middle managers. Owing

to their intermediary roles, middle managers can become entangled within the intricate bureaucratic structure, which can impede the smooth dissemination of change-related information throughout the organisation.

Therefore, clear directives from top management are crucial for effective change implementation, as middle-management ACLs rely on these directives and interpret them for implementation. However, the analysis reveals several challenges in this regard, including a lack of clarity in the vision, vague directives, ineffective communication from top to bottom, and limited involvement of change implementors at the middle and lower levels in the planning and decision-making process. To address these challenges, it is necessary to involve change implementors from all organisational levels in the change process, especially during the planning stages. This will help gain their support and facilitate effective implementation. Consequently, integrating a more participatory approach into the existing top-down decision-making process is essential to ensuring employee participation across the organisation. This can be achieved through an effective engagement process that involves both middle managers and lower-level employees in the planning stages and decision-making processes. As discussed in Chapter 2, the cascading change approach, which integrates both top-down and bottom-up approaches in planning and implementing change, may be an effective approach for implementing change in the PSOs (Edwards et al., 2020). The implementation of GTP initiatives also provides evidence of the effectiveness of this approach in the public sector, as it adopts a consultative approach that aligns with the cascading change approach (Iyer, 2011; Siddiquee, 2014; Siddiquee et al., 2019). However, other aspects of implementing change also need to be considered together to ensure the effectiveness of this approach, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, there are differing views in the literature regarding the most effective way to implement change in the public sector, despite the widespread use of the planned approach (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015). While proponents of the planned approach argue for its necessity in the complex public sector environment, others contend that this complexity imposes limitations on the feasibility of such an approach (Haveri, 2006; Karp and Helgø, 2008; Burnes, 2009; Van der Voet et al., 2015). Arguably, the environmental complexity and

fast-paced nature of the public sector environment make planning and directing change difficult, thus hindering the effectiveness of the planned change approach (Osborne and Brown, 2005). To this end, scholars suggest that the devolved and continuous approach of emergent change is better suited for the public sector environment (Burnes, 2017).

To contribute to this discussion, the study's findings suggest that the existing power imbalance in the public sector, which is concentrated at the top, and the lack of meaningful delegation of powers hinder a bottom-up approach to change and decentralised decision-making. The organisational structure, hierarchical compliance culture, and power dynamics between political leaders and senior administrative leaders in the public sector can also impede a more inclusive and participatory decision-making process. Without meaningful and effective structural reforms in PSOs, the emergent change approach may not be the most feasible approach, particularly for major change initiatives. Consequently, a blended approach that combines planned and emergent approaches is more fitting within the context of the public sector. Despite these findings, the research also reveals divergent perspectives, with some participants expressing the importance of avoiding excessive reliance on top management and emphasising the need for proactive initiatives on their part, which may be most suited to the emergent change approach.

5.3.6 Political Leadership in Change Implementation

The preceding discussion highlights the significant roles played by political leaders in decision-making. Consistent with previous research, the findings indicate that for change to be effectively implemented within PSOs, it needs to receive support and approval from the minister (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kickert, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Hagebakken et al., 2020). The findings also reveal that a political mandate for change is crucial in PSOs for two main reasons. The first reason is for major policy decisions that require consideration and approval from the Cabinet and/or Parliament, where ministers bear the sole responsibility of acquiring such approval as members of both political institutions. This highlights the importance of a political mandate in initiating and driving major change policies in the public sector. It also suggests that political leaders possess considerable influence over these policies,

necessitating not just their endorsement but also a commitment to drive the change agenda for the necessary approval and subsequent implementation. The analysis also suggests that change policies and initiatives that have been approved by the Cabinet and/or Parliament can be implemented more effectively.

The second reason is related to the influence of political leaders in PSOs and the prevailing hierarchical compliance culture in the MPS. The findings indicate that PCIs driven or endorsed by political leaders are typically prioritised for implementation and achieving the set KPIs. This reflects the top-down hierarchical bureaucracy between political leaders and civil servants. In this context, Kickert (2014) conducted a study on the implementation of change in four Dutch ministerial departments. Through interviews and document analysis, Kickert concluded that change in PSOs cannot happen without consistent support or approval from the minister. Change initiatives implemented without political consent are unlikely to garner the necessary support in the PSOs, as employees tend to be loyal to their political leaders and typically follow their directives. The findings in Chapter 4 report similar dynamics between political leaders and civil servants in the MPS. It also indicates that a political mandate for PCIs increases the commitment of PSOs as a whole to effectively implement the change. Additionally, the findings also reveal that external stakeholders are more likely to support PCIs endorsed by political leaders. Scholars suggest that a political mandate adds credibility to the change process and validates its need for change (Abramson and Lawrence, 2001; Harokopus, 2001; Lambright, 2001; Rossotti, 2005). Consequently, this study posits that political mandates can effectively be used to advance necessary change initiatives in the public sector and can have a positive impact on the implementation process due to the influence of political leaders and hierarchical compliance culture.

There are also differing opinions on the impact of political involvement in the public sector. While the prevailing theme in the literature suggests that the involvement of political leaders adds complexity to the change process in the public sector (e.g., Boyne, 2002; Rainey, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Hijal-Moghrabi et al., 2020; Klein et al., 2021), there is no consensus on its impact on the change process. Political involvement is suggested to have either a positive or negative impact on change and its outcomes (Reichard, 2003; Wollman, 2000; Kickert, 2014; Van der Voet et al.,

2015). The findings suggest that political involvement in change can lead to both positive and negative outcomes. As discussed above, positive outcomes are generally associated with the support and approval of the change due to the influential role of political leaders in the public sector. This influence is inherent in their positions as ministers and members of both the cabinet and parliament, giving them considerable power and authority, particularly over ACLs at all levels. Therefore, this study confirms that strategic change decision-making in PSOs is led by political leaders, and the interplay between political and administrative leadership increases the complexity of planning and implementing change (Askim et al., 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014; Kickert, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015).

The analysis also reveals several key challenges faced by ACLs during both the planning and implementation stages of change, particularly related to negative political influence on the change process as presented in Chapter 4. This challenge arises when the distinction between strategic policy decision-making and operational decision-making processes is blurred due to the involvement of political leaders in the change process. This does not only complicate the ongoing implementation of PCIs but also places undue pressure on implementors, impacting the overall trajectory and successful implementation of the PCIs. The findings indicate that the involvement of political leaders in operational matters during the implementation of PCIs can exert a negative influence on the implementation process. The findings also recorded divergent views during the interview process, with some participants advocating for a reduction in the minister's role in policy decision-making and proposing its transfer to administrative leaders. This underscores the perceived necessity for a more balanced approach to change decision-making that involves both political and administrative leaders.

5.3.7 Navigating Public Sector Bureaucracy in Change

The findings indicate the presence of a bureaucratic environment within the MPS that has a direct impact on the implementation of PCIs. This aligns with previous research findings asserting that the public sector environment is inherently bureaucratic with high dependence on top management and conformity with prevailing rules and regulations (Kuipers et al., 2014; Osborne and Brown, 2005; Van der Voet

et al., 2015; Krukowski et al., 2021). Scholars also argue that the bureaucratic structure of PSOs has an impact on how change is managed, but this area has not been extensively investigated (Coram and Burnes, 2001; Isett et al., 2013; Van der Voet, 2014). The analysis identifies several key factors contributing to this bureaucratic environment within the sector. As discussed above, PCIs are driven from the top and cascade through all levels of the organisation for implementation, with relatively limited delegation of powers to lower levels. This results in a hierarchical decision-making process that can impede and slow down the implementation of PCIs. This top-down implementation approach is further characterised by formal bureaucratic processes and procedures that necessitate compliance, often established to ensure transparency and accountability among those involved in the change process. Existing literature suggests that this bureaucratic formalisation adds complexity to the change process and places specific demands on the administration of these entities (Doyle et al., 2000; Karp and Helgø, 2008; Burnes, 2009; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Krukowski et al., 2021). Corresponding to the findings of this research, Robertson and Seneviratne (1995) suggested that PSOs are impacted by the bureaucratic and formal processes that are in place for check and balance, the institutionalised culture within the sector, and the high standards of accountability. The analysis also indicates that these bureaucratic mechanisms may also stem from a hierarchical bureaucracy designed to uphold command and control in the hands of superiors rather than those directly involved in the implementation process. The hierarchical bureaucracy is reinforced by a prevailing hierarchical compliance culture within the sector, characterised by a heavy reliance on top-down mandates and directives.

The findings underscore the significance of hierarchical structures and formal procedures that contribute to the overall bureaucratic nature of the MPS, despite efforts to simplify them. Recognising the inherent top-down structure of the MPS, the existing systematic bureaucratic environment can be addressed by devolving operational decision-making powers to middle management ACLs. Strategic decision-making powers that set the direction of the change can be retained at the top. This will address the significant gaps between different hierarchical levels within the PSOs and the limited empowerment of lower-level ACLs. It will also remove constraints on their decision-making authority and reduce the need to navigate through bureaucratic processes in the implementation of PCIs. It ensures that command and control of the

implementation process can be managed at the implementation point rather than from the top, thereby mitigating the bureaucratic processes that may hinder the effective implementation of PCIs. This will also provide flexibility in adapting the change to the implementation environment (Van der Voet, 2014). Participants expressed the need for simplifying processes, eliminating unnecessary procedures, and tailoring rules and regulations to specific circumstances. They believe that a more streamlined and flexible approach would lead to prompt and efficient outcomes in the change process.

5.3.8 Effective Change Leadership in the Public Sector

Research Question 3 focuses on the roles of ACLs in implementing PCIs and the required attributes for undertaking such responsibilities. The findings reported in Chapter 4 highlight the key roles and required attributes of ACLs in the implementation of PCIs in the public sector. Additionally, the discussion in the preceding sections of this chapter has implicitly addressed the roles and involvement of ACLs in the implementation of change at both top and middle management levels within their respective contexts. These findings offer a comprehensive understanding of change leadership in the public sector context, an area that has received limited attention in the literature (Fernandez and Pitts, 2007; Kickert, 2010; Van der Voet et al., 2014), particularly within the focused context of administrative leaders addressed in this study. There are also suggestions within the literature that change leadership in the public sector is not theory driven (Kuipers et al., 2014). This research addresses three key aspects of change leadership: the leadership approach adopted in the sector; the roles of ACLs in the implementation of PCIs; and the required attributes of ACLs.

The findings indicate that the leadership approach adopted in the public sector corresponds with the traditional top-down leadership perspective, affirming the findings of previous research (Fernandez, 2005; Boin and Christensen, 2008; Van der Voet et al., 2014). In this context, strategic leadership and decision-making are centralised among a select few individuals at the top, including senior ACLs and political leaders in their roles as ministers and deputy ministers. This empirically affirms previous research findings that suggest change leadership is linked to hierarchical leadership models (Fernandez, 2005; Boin and Christensen, 2008) and is centred around the heads of agencies (Van Wart, 2003; Chustz and Larson, 2006; Van der

Voet et al., 2014}. In the middle, ACLs assume the role of functional leaders, responsible for implementing change and addressing the operational needs of the process. They operate based on directives received from the top, with limited decision-making authority subjected to the top-down directives. These directives are interpreted and strategised for implementation by the middle managers, who then communicate them downward to their subordinates for implementation. As such, effective communication and clarity of the change vision take precedence in this leadership framework, as directives are communicated from the top to all levels of the organisation.

The findings further indicate that, within the context of MPS, the top-down leadership approach is heavily influenced by the hierarchical compliance culture. This culture reinforces a centralised and authoritative form of leadership, which is associated with autocratic rather than participative leadership. Additionally, the lack of active participation and engagement from middle and lower-level employees in the change decision-making process supports this assertion. Conversely, transformational leadership has consistently been linked to organisational change, particularly in the private sector (Bass, 1985; Thomas, 1996; Stewart and Kringas, 2003). Moreover, literature within the field of public management suggests that transformational leadership is compatible with the public sector context due to its alignment with sector objectives and incentives (Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010; Wright et al., 2012; Campbell, 2018). Transformational leadership is known to instil purpose, vision, and motivation to achieve the ascribed goals (Bass, 1990; Hoffman et al., 2011). Accordingly, the findings emphasise the importance of motivating employees to embrace change and the necessity of a more participative decision-making process, a clear change vision, and two-way communication to mitigate the hierarchical compliance culture's presence. This shift would enable ACLs to transition from a top-down leadership approach to a more transformational leadership-centric approach within the sector, thereby potentially enhancing the effectiveness of change implementation. However, previous research indicates that the transformational leadership approach may be more suitable for middle managers given their role in the implementation process (Van der Voet et al., 2014). This is consistent with the findings of this research, which indicate that middle management ACLs play an intermediary role in implementing and communicating change, which necessitates transformational leadership.

The analysis reveals that most of the roles identified for ACLs in this research align with the roles of change leaders in the private sector, where the literature is more comprehensive compared to the public sector context (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Fernandez and Pitts, 2007; Kickert, 2010; Burke, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). These roles revolve around initiating and leading change (Borins, 2002; Burke, 2002); developing and communicating the change vision (Kotter, 1996; Kanter, 2000); decision-making (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Andersen, 2010); planning and monitoring implementation (Judson, 1991; Beer and Nohria, 2000; Antonakis and House, 2014); and managing and motivating people (Gill, 2002; Gioia et al., 2013; Van et al., 2013). This indicates that the roles of change leaders in both sectors are largely similar. However, prior research has suggested that leadership in the public sector should be considered within its specific context, as the environment is suggested to be more complex (Kuipers et al., 2014). One such complexity identified in this research and the literature is the split nature of leadership in the public sector, which is divided between administrative and political leadership (Ingraham and Getha-Taylor, 2004; Askim et al., 2009). While split leadership can be advantageous, it also adds a layer of bureaucracy to the change process, especially in decision-making, as both political mandate and endorsement are considered vital in a public sector setting. The findings highlight instances where senior ACLs seek the endorsement of their political leaders for decisions that they have absolute authority over. This illustrates the impact of the hierarchical compliance culture at play and the complexity of leading change in the public sector.

Previous literature also suggests that change leaders play a dual role in leading change: as supporters of the change and as change agents (Nazim et al., 2014). This research confirms this finding within the public sector context, as the analysis reveals the need for ACLs to support the change before setting it in motion for implementation. This indicates that ACLs can only lead the change effectively if they believe in it themselves. Additionally, the analysis reveals that ACLs in both top and middle management share similar leadership roles and attributes. However, the execution of these leadership roles differs and is influenced by the context in which they operate. Change leaders at the top-management level typically adopt a more central and strategic perspective in the implementation process, while middle-management ACLs are directly involved in implementing the change. The primary distinction lies in the

decision-making authority, with top-management ACLs possessing strategic decision-making powers while middle managers exercise functional decision-making powers. However, functional decision-making powers are suggested to be limited as they are bound by the directives that they receive from the top. As such, they do not have the full autonomy to make operational decisions but rather act within the powers delegated to them through top-down directives.

Furthermore, the research findings affirm the importance of several change leadership attributes, highlighted in Chapter 4, commonly associated with the private sector change leadership literature, such as being a visionary and effective communicator. However, it also identifies a number of change leadership attributes that are more specific to the public sector context. The analysis reveals that maintaining ethical conduct is a key attribute of ACLs. This attribute is particularly important in their decision-making roles to ensure both actual and perceived transparency and accountability in the process. In this context, ethical conduct pertains to their ability to be honest and transparent and exercise their roles with a sense of high integrity. This emphasis is attributed to the nature of PSOs and the complex environment in which ACLs operate. They are not only duty-bound to act within the legal and administrative boundaries of the public sector but also have an overarching responsibility towards their stakeholders, including the management of public perceptions. Robertson and Seneviratne (1995) suggested that the high level of bureaucratic and formal processes within the public sector are in place for check and balance, the institutionalised culture within the sector, and the high standards of accountability.

The ability to influence people is also a key leadership attribute within the public sector context as ACLs deal with a wide range of stakeholders, both internally and externally. The analysis suggests that this ability must precede their authority within the organisation to ensure that they can persuade and garner support for the change from all levels of the organisation and external stakeholders. Previous research suggests that leaders' attributes do not only influence their decisions and actions but also have an impact on their followers' attitudes (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Oreg and Berson, 2011). This shows that influence also plays an important role in affecting their leadership roles in all aspects of change. The findings additionally indicate a

linkage between influence and communication, as leaders need to communicate persuasively to influence and gain the buy-in of those involved in the change. This implies that the ability to influence people is dependent on their ability to communicate the change effectively and persuasively.

5.4 Integration of Results: Theoretical Framework

One of the main objectives of this study is to develop a theoretical change implementation framework for the MPS. This objective led to the development of research question 4, "What is the Appropriate Change Implementation Framework for the MPS?". To achieve this, a theoretical change implementation framework based on existing literature and the key objectives of this research were developed and presented in Chapter 2. Research questions 1 and 2 provide the foundation of the framework by identifying and understanding how PCIs are currently implemented within the sector, the challenges that arise in the implementation process, and the key factors considered by ACLs. To incorporate a change leadership perspective into the framework, research question 3 was developed to identify and understand empirically the key roles and attributes of ACLs. The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 is reintroduced here to guide the discussion in this chapter, as illustrated in Figure 26 below.

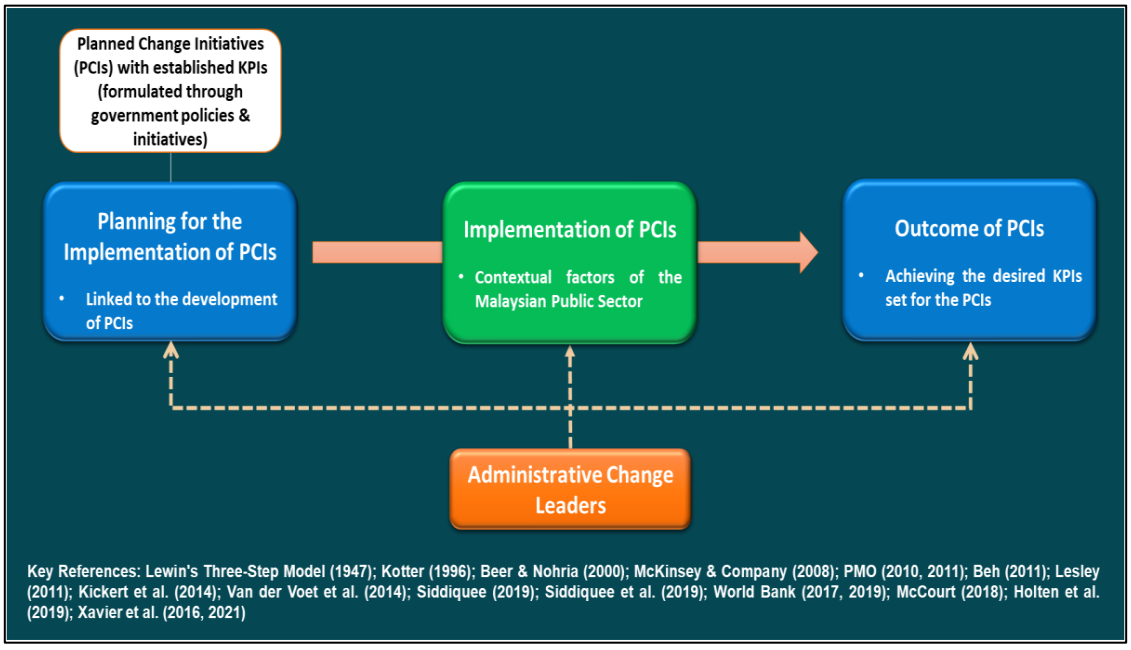

Figure 26: Theoretical Framework based on Literature Review

The findings and discussions presented in Chapters 4 and 5 indicate an interdependent change process within the MPS, where each change factor influences the others. Similarly, scholars have emphasised the intricate interrelationship and reciprocal influence of change factors within organisations (Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015). Central to the findings of this study is the prevalent top-down theme that exists in the organisational structure of PSOs, as well as in their change implementation, communication, and leadership approaches. The preceding discussion has established a link between these approaches and demonstrated how they mutually influence each other. Unless there is a systematic change in the organisational structure of PSOs and a reduction in hierarchical bureaucracy, the top-down theme in the implementation of change is likely to persist.

The findings also indicate a linear progression of change through successive change stages similar to the steps within Lewin's Three-Step Model (1947) involving the processes of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. This aligns with the conventional top-down planned change implementation approach and existing linear change models. These models are often premised on Lewin's Three-Step Model (1947), incorporating additional change considerations and phases into their models (see Lippit et al., 1958, Seven Phase Model; Bullock and Batten, 1985, Change Model; and Kotter's Eight Step Model, 1996). Change models offer a method to systematically implement change on a broader scale and encompass a variety of intervention strategies to assist the organisation in aligning the change with its overall strategy (Burnes, 2017; Senior et al., 2020). This is accomplished by developing a clear vision and effective planning with the participation of organisational members (Grover, 1999; Worren et al., 1999; Al-Haddad and Kotnour, 2015). In the public sector, this also involves engaging external stakeholders, as the findings suggest. However, this study does identify some limitations and challenges associated with this process, as discussed above.

In developing the theoretical framework for this study, three key aspects were considered: understanding how change is implemented in the context of the MPS, the stages of the change process, and the key change factors considered by ACLs. The initial theoretical framework outlines three primary change stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation of change outcomes. The key factors identified in this

study are discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 and summarised in Figure 27 below. To further develop the theoretical framework based on the research findings, the key considerations are integrated into the initial framework. The findings of this research also acknowledge the need to divide the planning stage into two interdependent processes: developing a clear vision and planning for the implementation of change.

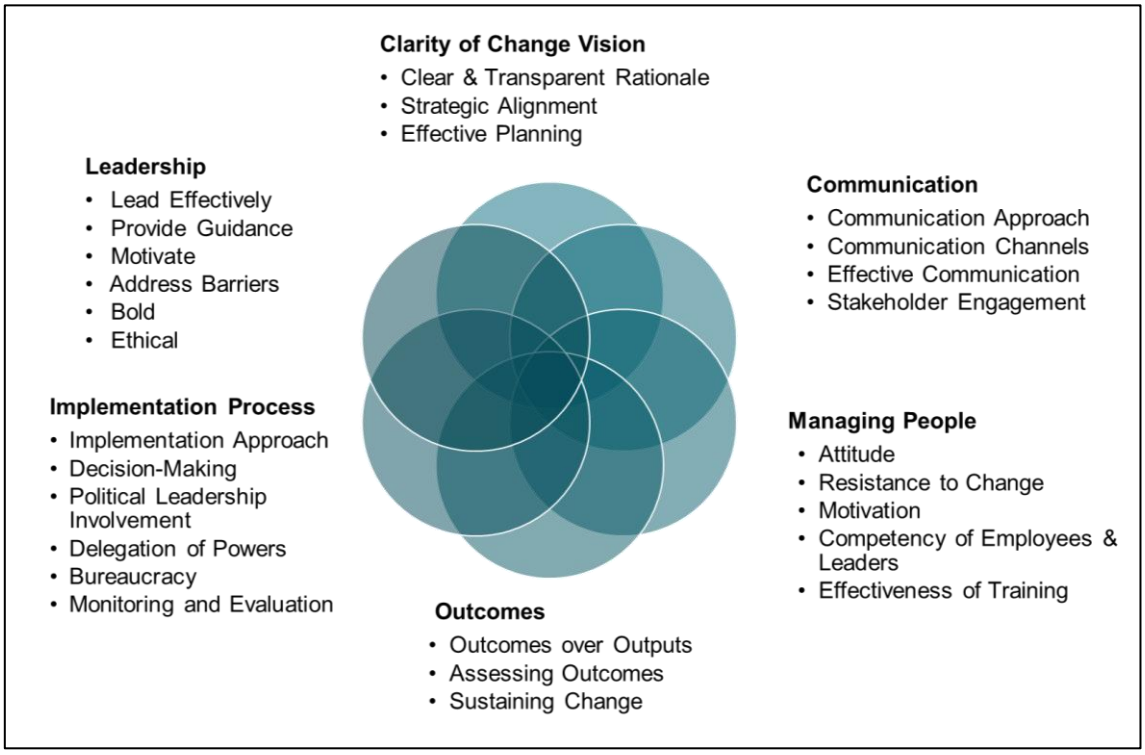

Figure 27: Summary of Key Considerations in the Implementation of PCIs

The following discussion highlights how the key stages of change and considerations identified in this study were contextualised and how the relevant tags were incorporated into the framework. These tags were identified based on the codes, categories, and thematic findings presented in Chapter 4 and the discussion in this chapter. This contextualisation contributes to the development of the final theoretical framework of this research, which is presented in Figure 28 below.

(i) **Developing a Clear Vision:** The first part of the planning stage involves developing a clear vision for change supported by a transparent rationale for change. As discussed earlier, it is important to communicate and engage with both internal and external stakeholders to develop an effective vision. To ensure the vision's feasibility within the public sector context, it must strategically align with

existing laws, policies, strategies, and functions of other agencies due to the cross-boundary nature of PCIs and PSOs. Additionally, the findings also highlight the significance of considering the overall resources needed to implement the vision. Decision-making in developing the vision of change and the PCIs involves the interaction between senior ACLs and political leaders, although the ultimate decision-making authority always lies with the political leaders. Therefore, the role of political leaders is introduced in this framework within the decision-making context. Additionally, the findings highlight the need for a more devolved decision-making process that involves implementors through effective engagement and a consultative approach. During vision development, both internal and external communication channels are necessary to ensure a comprehensive engagement process. The findings also indicate the need for a comprehensive communication plan to guide this process. Therefore, the tags “Vision for Change”, “Communication and Engagement”, “Rationale for Change”, “Strategic Alignment”, “Resource Considerations”, “Communication Plan”, “Decision Making”, and “Political Leaders” are incorporated into the framework.

(ii) **Planning for Implementation:** During the planning stages, the findings indicate the importance of developing an implementation framework with effective strategies to achieve the intended outcomes of the change, implement the vision, and monitor progress. This involves setting clear targeted outcomes using KPIs, milestones to measure implementation progress, and allocating necessary resources to facilitate the process. Additionally, any bureaucratic processes that could hinder implementation should be identified and addressed. At this stage, the change vision should be effectively communicated to gain support and promote acceptance. Any form of resistance to the change should also be identified and addressed. However, due to the dynamics of the public sector, where passive communication and a hierarchical compliance culture are prevalent, this process may extend into the implementation stage. Therefore, continuous motivation, employee support, two-way communication, and continuous monitoring are essential during implementation. As a result, the tags “Strategies for Implementation and Monitoring”, “Addressing Bureaucratic Processes”, “Allocation of Resources”, “Communication of Vision”, and “Resistance to Change are included under Implementation Planning in the framework.

(iii) **Implementation:** This stage involves executing the strategies for vision implementation and mobilising the allocated resources to achieve the intended vision and outcomes of the change. Decision-making during the implementation stage is considered vital and involves both senior and middle ACLs. In some cases, political leadership may also be involved through vertical reporting and their participation in taskforces for major PCIs. The findings indicate that an integrated and consultative decision-making process is necessary to minimise bureaucracy and ensure effective and timely implementation. Communication plays a key role at this stage, ensuring that change information, directives, and implementation challenges are effectively communicated across all levels of the organisation. A two-way communication approach is suggested to be the most effective way to facilitate this process. As mentioned previously, it is crucial to continuously monitor and support employees throughout the implementation process to ensure productivity and address any concerns or resistance. Monitoring and evaluation are also vital processes to ensure that the change is achieving its targeted milestones and outcomes. The findings also indicate that realignment may be necessary during the implementation process, requiring modifications to the strategy, required actions, and KPIs to ensure that the change achieves its overall objectives. Therefore, the tags "Implementing the Vision," "Resource Mobilisation," "Integrated Decision-Making," "Two-way Communication," "Human Resource Management," "Monitoring and Evaluation," and "Change Process Realignment" are incorporated under Implementation of PCIs in the framework.

(iv) **Evaluation of Outcomes:** This stage is an extension of the monitoring process, ensuring that the set KPIs and intended objectives of the change are achieved. This process may involve short-term, medium-term, and long-term review processes. Additionally, there is a need to monitor the sustainability of the change and whether it delivers the intended outcomes over the long term. This is particularly important in the public sector context, as PCIs are typically part of a larger policy implemented over the long run. Therefore, the tags “Outcome Evaluation”, “for Short-term, Medium-term and Long-term Review Processes” and “Institutionalisation of Long-term PCIs” are incorporated under Outcome of PCIs in the framework.

(v) **Roles and Attributes of ACLs:** One of the key objectives of this study is to identify the roles and attributes of ACLs in the public sector's implementation of PCIs, as presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in this chapter. Therefore, the framework incorporates the key roles and attributes of ACLs into the framework. The key roles include "Lead", "Communicate", "Decision-Making", "Advisory", "Plan", "Implement", "Manage and Monitor Implementation" and "Guide Subordinates". The key attributes included are "Visionary", "Bold and Firm", "Effective Communicator", "Influential", "Ethical", "Interpersonal Skills", and "Positive".

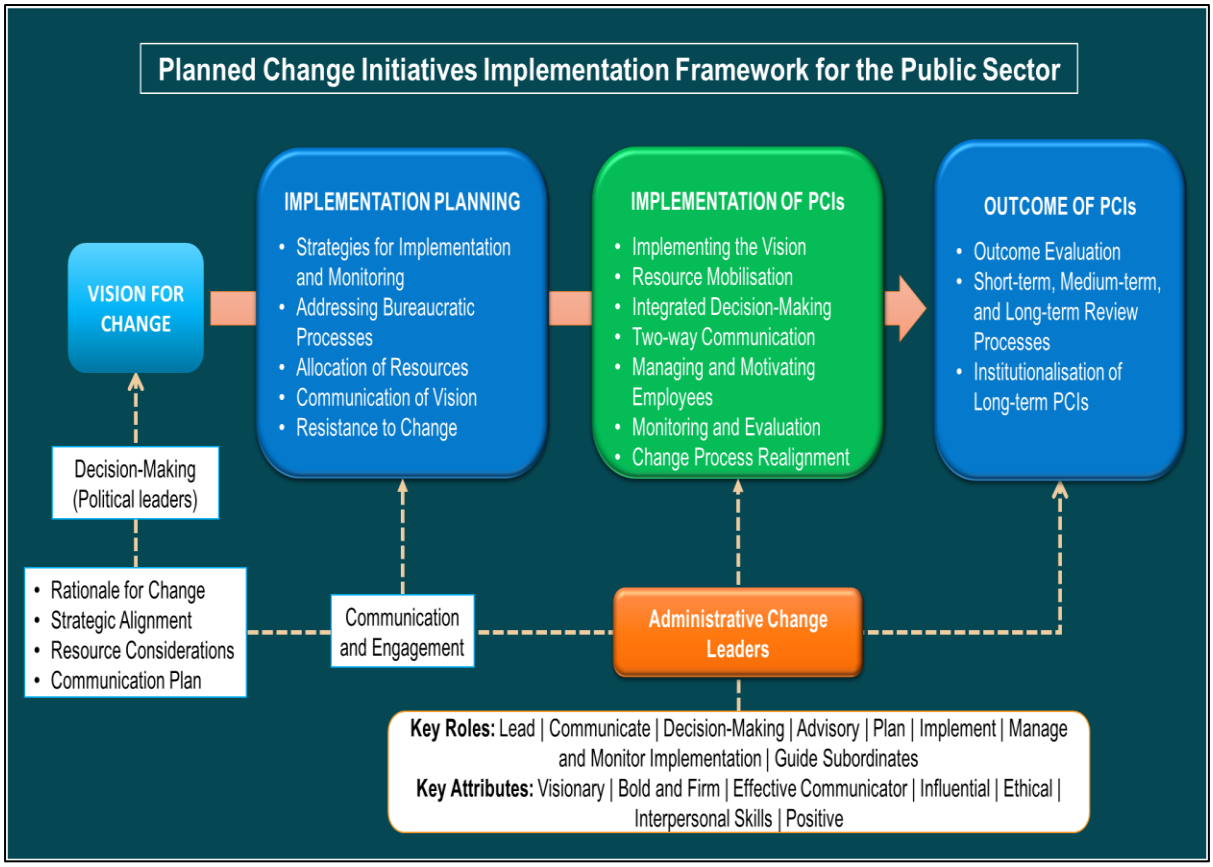

Figure 28: Theoretical Framework of this Study

5.5 Theoretical Contribution

This section presents the theoretical contributions of this study in the field of change management, specifically within the MPS and public sector contexts. As highlighted in Chapter 1, limited empirical research has been conducted within these specific contexts (Burnes, 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014; Burke, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015; Homberg et al., 2019; Siddiquee et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is suggested that

previous research on change management in the public sector has not resulted in theory generation, and there is limited understanding of the applicability of private sector change management theories to the public sector context (Van der Voet, 2014). The existing literature primarily concentrates on understanding the content and reasons for change, with limited attention given to how the implementation of change is managed within the sector (Kuipers et al., 2014). In this regard, the first key theoretical contribution of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how PCIs are implemented in the public sector, especially within the context of the MPS. This includes the key processes and considerations that ACLs take into account during change planning and implementation stages, the sector's specific characteristics influencing the implementation process, and the implementation challenges faced by change leaders, as presented in both Chapters 4 and 5. Some of the significant contributions of this study to existing knowledge are highlighted below in the following areas:

(i) **Hierarchical Compliance Culture:** Central to the findings is the identification of a hierarchical compliance culture as a distinctive characteristic of the sector that exerts influence on the change process and the people involved in it. This culture necessitates adherence to top-down directives and is reinforced by the fear of consequences associated with non-compliance with top-down directives. It has a strong influence on how change is communicated within the sector, where the culture leads to passive communication among employees. Additionally, it facilitates the adoption of a top-down implementation approach and decision-making process, ensuring that both power and control over change decisions and processes remain at the top. This culture also mitigates the extent and prevalence of resistance to change in the sector while encouraging a more assertive approach among change leaders.

(ii) **Political Leadership:** The findings empirically affirm the key role of political leaders in the decision-making process of change (Sergio and Fernandes, 2014; Kuipers et al., 2014; Kickert, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014). The findings contribute to the existing literature by identifying the role of political leaders in advancing major change policies and initiatives that require consideration and approval from both the Cabinet and Parliament, given their

association with these political institutions. Additionally, the findings identify political mandate as a positive enabler for successful change implementation within the public sector context. It also confirms empirically that excessive involvement of political leaders in the implementation process increases complexity and exerts undue pressure on ACLs (Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014).

(iii) **Strategic Alignment:** This research identifies strategic alignment as a key enabler for successful change implementation in the public sector. The findings indicate that strategically aligning the PCIs with existing laws, policies, strategies, and functions of other agencies within the sector has a positive impact on implementation. This process can be attributed to the distinctive nature of PCIs and the sector, due to their cross-boundary nature and overlap in roles and functions between agencies within the sector.

(iv) **Top-down Implementation Approach:** This study affirms that PSOs adopt a top-down approach in implementing PCIs (Beh, 2011; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014; Siddiquee et al., 2019). It further demonstrates the relationship between the top-down approach and the top-down decision-making process, the top-down communication approach, and the top-down leadership strategies. It also identifies a link between these approaches and the top-down organisational structure of PSOs.

(v) **Clarity of Vision:** This study highlights that the clarity of the change vision is partially dependent on identifying a clear and transparent rationale for change, encompassing the identification of triggers of change, the need for change, and the objectives of the change. It further emphasises the significance of aligning objectives with the need for change to ensure clarity.

(vi) **Motivation:** This study identifies factors impacting the motivation of public sector employees to implement PCIs, particularly within the context of the MPS. It further identifies and demonstrates empirically a relationship between public sector employees' perception that implementing PCIs entails increased

workload and the need for additional incentives, influencing their motivation to implement change.

(vii) **Change Leadership:** This research finds that a top-down change leadership strategy is adopted within the sector that is influenced by the top-down change implementation approach and organisational structure of the PSOs. It identifies empirically the roles and attributes of administrative leaders involved in the implementation of PCIs in PSOs, especially within the context of the MPS.

The second key contribution of this research is the development of a theoretical framework for implementing PCIs in the public sector, as shown in Figure 28 above. This framework provides a holistic perspective on how PCIs are implemented within PSOs, particularly within the context of the MPS. In formulating this framework, this research has empirically identified the key change processes, considerations made by ACLs when implementing PCIs, and the required leadership roles and attributes of ACLs. While there are various change frameworks, methods, and models that have been prescribed within the private sector, there is limited focus in the literature on empirically formulating a change management framework specifically for planned change in the public sector. Existing research in the sector primarily focuses on critical success factors (e.g., Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Cunningham and Kempling, 2009), leadership perspectives (e.g., Van der Voet, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014; 2015), literature reviews (e.g., Kuipers et al., 2014), and specific areas of change management in the public sector. Therefore, the development of this framework contributes to the field of change management, specifically in the context of the public sector and the MPS.

Additionally, this framework also considers the change leadership roles and attributes of administrative leaders within the MPS context. Most existing frameworks concentrate on the process of change (e.g., Lewin's Three Step Model, 1947; Judson Method, 1991; Kotter's Eight Step Model, 1996; Insurrection Method, 2000), with the implicit understanding that these processes will be led by change leaders. The framework outlined in this research also identifies two key change leadership roles: political leadership and ACLs, highlighting how the change process is led and governed by them within the public sector context. Consequently, the framework offers

a comprehensive perspective on understanding the top-down change process, which is intricately linked to the roles and responsibilities of key change leaders in PSOs.

5.6 Practical Implications

One of the primary objectives of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of a specific phenomenon (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of change implementation in the MPS and public sector contexts, contributing to existing knowledge in the field of change management. In addition to theoretical contributions, this research also strives to offer practical insights for change practitioners within the sector.

Firstly, change practitioners in the public sector can use the theoretical framework derived from the empirical findings of this study to guide the implementation of PCIs in their organisations. This framework provides a structured foundation and comprehensive insight into how PCIs can be implemented in PSOs. It outlines the key change processes, factors to consider during the planning and implementation stages, and the essential change leadership roles for guiding and managing the process. As mentioned earlier, integrating some of the key findings of this study and elements of the framework, such as the integrated decision-making process and two-way communication approach, would require a shift from a purely top-down approach to a more blended approach that combines both top-down and bottom-up change implementation strategies. Although a complete overhaul of the government structure and culture is unlikely, it is possible to adopt this framework within the current top-down structure to improve the effectiveness of change implementation in the public sector. This can be done by gradually introducing a more participatory and consultative approach within the existing top-down structure, allowing for meaningful participation of lower and middle-level employees in the planning and decision-making processes through effective two-way communication and engagement. Despite the complexities involved in the implementation of PCIs, this framework serves as a valuable resource for public sector change practitioners, enabling them to better understand the implementation of change and make informed decisions within their organisations.

Secondly, this research also highlights the importance of addressing employee resistance through motivation. At the core of these findings is the relationship between the perception that change introduces increased workload and responsibilities and the lack of incentives, particularly financial incentives, which leads to a lack of motivation for implementing change effectively. This is attributed to weaknesses in the current incentive mechanism, prompting calls within this study for a review of the mechanism to ensure that performance is adequately rewarded during change. Taking these insights into account, public sector practitioners can leverage the research findings to gain a deeper understanding of employee motivations in change implementation and conduct a systematic review of the existing incentive mechanism to ensure its effectiveness in achieving its objectives and facilitating effective change implementation in the sector. However, reviewing the incentive mechanism within the public sector context would require a strong mandate from the top and careful deliberation of its potential implications, particularly its financial repercussions, since it would be implemented throughout the entire sector.

Thirdly, the findings of this research also contribute to the future development of change leaders in the public sector. The findings indicate a current lack of emphasis on developing competent change leaders within the sector, particularly at the middle and senior management levels. Through this research, key leadership roles and their required attributes for change leaders are identified, providing a foundation for PSOs to determine training requirements and structure the development of change leaders within their organisations. Furthermore, this research offers a basis for identifying the right talent, considering the necessary attributes, to lead the change process, especially at the middle management levels. Additionally, the findings highlight the need for lower-level employees to undergo training in both change management and domain-specific knowledge to effectively fulfil their roles in the change process. Consequently, practitioners can develop targeted training programmes to enhance knowledge and skills and contribute to effective change implementation.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights gained from this research, several key recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness and management of the

change process in PSOs, particularly within the MPS context. These recommendations seek to address the identified change processes in the implementation of PCIs, the key factors influencing their effectiveness, and the required leadership for leading and managing them.

(i) **Enhancing the Top-down Approach through Participatory Decision-Making:** The top-down implementation approach of PCIs in PSOs can be reviewed and strengthened by incorporating a more participatory approach to the decision-making process. Currently, this process is centred at the top, reflecting the inherent nature and structure of PSOs, where power and control are vested in senior administrative and political leaders. While a complete overhaul of this structure is unlikely, a shift towards a more participatory approach to decision-making can have a positive impact on the top-down change implementation approach. This shift would involve continuous and meaningful engagement and communication among employees at all levels who are directly involved in or impacted by the change. Methods such as periodic meetings, open forums, town hall sessions, pilot projects, and inclusive communication strategies can be employed to facilitate this participatory approach. Such an approach has the potential to improve employee support for the change and reduce resistance to it while promoting more transparent decision-making and change processes.

(ii) **Strengthening PCIs through a Clear Vision:** There is a need for PSOs to establish a clear vision that is supported by a clear and transparent rationale for change. This can be accomplished through an effective problem diagnosis process to identify and verify the triggers of change, the need for the change, and the objectives the change seeks to achieve. A clear vision can lead to the formulation of a well-defined, targeted, and measurable outcome that is aligned with the rationale of the change. This will allow PSOs to not only build a strong foundation for the change but also set a clear direction for the change. Given the specific nature of PSOs and PCIs, careful consideration must also be given to aligning the change with existing legal and policy frameworks, ensuring overall fit with the organisation’s strategy, and assessing the functions and

impact on other agencies within the environment. This strategic alignment is essential to securing the clarity and implementability of the change vision.

(iii) **Leveraging Political Leadership for Effective Change Implementation:** The findings indicate that PCIs that are driven and endorsed by political leaders are prioritised for implementation and to achieve the desired outcomes. These initiatives also tend to receive positive feedback and support from external stakeholders. Consequently, PSOs can strategically leverage the influence of political leadership to advance a necessary change agenda through their patronage. An effective approach to this involves aligning change outcomes with the KPIs of political leaders. However, this would require the agreement and consistent support of the political leaders.

(iv) **Developing an Implementation Framework:** To enhance the implementation of PCIs, it is imperative that PSOs develop a comprehensive implementation framework. This framework will serve as a guiding tool throughout the implementation process, ensuring that all key factors are considered. It should encompass a detailed explanation of the change vision, actionable strategies for implementation, the required resources, the identification of key stakeholders, communication and engagement plans, and a clear mechanism for implementation and monitoring. Due consideration also needs to be given to available resources, especially financial and human resources.

(v) **Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement Strategy:** Key to the change process within the public sector context is the diversity of stakeholders with different and sometimes competing interests. To ensure effective engagement of these stakeholders and secure their buy-in for the change, PSOs must develop an effective engagement strategy and plan. This strategy should include the identification of relevant stakeholders for the change and the need for prior engagement during the planning stages. Prior stakeholder engagement is an important process to effectively communicate the change, gather feedback, and attain their buy-in. Additionally, engagement during the implementation period is also vital to ensure ongoing support, stakeholder participation, and to address any potential implementation barriers from the environment. Key to the

engagement strategy is the need for PSOs to identify competent ACLs to lead and manage the process.

(vi) **Enhancing Employee Readiness for Change:** Proactive measures must be implemented within the PSOs to ensure that the employees who are involved and impacted by the change are prepared to embrace it. To achieve this, clear communication about the change vision and the implementation strategies is crucial to foster understanding and alleviate uncertainties in the employees' minds. This process can also help identify any potential resistance to the change, and remedial actions can be taken to address it. In doing so, it is important to address any form of resistance or behavioural barriers at both individual and group levels to ensure their readiness and commitment to the change. As such, there is a need to provide continuous support and create a positive environment for change.

(vii) **Strategic Implementation and Monitoring:** To effectively implement change, PSOs need to ensure compliance with the change implementation framework developed during the planning stage. ACLs with the necessary competency and skills should be identified to lead the change and establish a change team. A task force involving key stakeholders should also be established to monitor the implementation of change. Key to this process is the need to assess and evaluate the outcomes of the change. Where necessary, corrective actions need to be taken to ensure that the change achieves its desired objectives.

(viii) **Development of Change Leadership Training Programmes:** ACLs play key roles in the change process, as they lead both the strategic and operational decision-making processes. Senior ACLs also play a key role in advising and persuading ministers to support the PCIs. As a result, it is crucial for PSOs to ensure that ACLs are competent and equipped with the necessary skills to lead and manage the change process. The identification and selection of suitable ACLs to lead the change process are vital, although this process is dependent on the job design and structure of the organisation. Therefore, developing change leadership talents within PSOs is an important aspect of effective change implementation. Training and continuous competency development for

ACLs in change management, change leadership, and domain-specific knowledge and skills are necessary to build the overall capacity of the organisation to implement PCIs effectively. This can be achieved through the development of change leadership training programmes in PSOs.

5.8 Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this research and future research opportunities are identified in this section. Firstly, this research is conducted solely from the perspective of ACLs from the Administrative and Diplomatic Service of the MPS that serves the federal ministries, agencies under the federal ministries, and central agencies under the Prime Minister's Department (PMD). Hence, this research is within the federal government context. The findings of this research may not directly apply to other levels of government. Therefore, future research may want to focus on the perspective of other levels of government, such as the state government or the local government. A comparative study can also be conducted between these different contexts of change.

Secondly, consistent with the objectives of this research, it focuses on the sectoral perspective of the MPS rather than exploring its sub-sectors, such as health, education, and security. This sectoral focus, combined with the adoption of a qualitative research method, ensures a broader and more holistic understanding of change implementation within the public sector context, particularly the MPS. Additionally, the resulting theoretical framework is intended to serve as a guide across all sub-sectors within the MPS, given their shared characteristics. Future research may want to focus on the specific sub-sectors under the MPS to affirm these findings in their context and identify any additional factors or characteristics influencing change implementation in each sub-sector.

Thirdly, despite the prevailing discussions on the distinctions between change implementation in the public sector and the private sector within this study, the objective of this research is not to conduct a comparative study between these two sectors. Future research may leverage the findings of this study to undertake a comparative analysis of change management practices in the public and private sectors, an aspect that has received limited attention in the literature.

5.9 Conclusion

The main findings and contributions of this research to both theory and practice are presented in this chapter. All findings correspond to the research questions and objectives of this study, which aimed to explore the implementation of PCIs in the public sector, specifically within the MPS context. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, this area has received limited attention in the change management literature (Vann, 2004; Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Kuipers et al., 2014; Burke, 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2014; Homberg et al., 2019). This study addressed this gap by providing insights into how PCIs are implemented in the public sector. In conclusion, this thesis has explored the key themes, processes, factors, and challenges faced by ACLs in the implementation of PCIs.

Through rigorous investigation and analysis, the findings of this study suggest that PSOs primarily adopt a top-down approach when implementing PCIs. This approach is reinforced by top-down decision-making, communication, and leadership. Power and control over change decisions and processes remain centralised at the top and are communicated downward through top-down directives. The findings also reveal that the change process is significantly influenced by the involvement of political leaders in their capacity as drivers, decision-makers, and advocates of change. Their drive and support for change are seen as catalysts in bringing the organisation together to effectively support and implement change. Their influence also extends beyond the organisation to the sector's environment, as their support is viewed as crucial in fostering consensus within the complex public sector environment. However, the findings also indicate that their participation in change adds to the complexity of implementing and managing change.

Importantly, this study has addressed the research objectives outlined in the preceding discussions and the findings in Chapter 4, which highlight the key factors that ACLs consider when planning and implementing PCIs to achieve their desired outcomes. These findings contribute to our understanding of key themes relating to vision, communication, people, implementation strategy, and effective leadership, which are identified as key factors in the change process. The study also identified and analysed several contextual factors specific to the public sector environment,

particularly within the context of the MPS. These factors include the presence of a hierarchical compliance culture in the sector, which affects the implementation of change and the reactions of change implementors. They also include the influence of political leadership on decision-making and change processes, which can have both positive and negative impacts on change implementation. The findings also indicate that the public sector environment is inherently bureaucratic, and this affects the effectiveness of change implementation. It also identifies the cross-boundary nature of PSOs and PCIs, which require additional considerations within the sector's environment. Additionally, there is a need to engage diverse stakeholders and reconcile their competing interests in the change process.

Furthermore, the analysis examined challenges in implementing change, such as managing resistance to change, which is predominantly manifested through non-verbal actions in the sector; resource availability during planning and implementation stages that is often confined to existing available resources; managing both internal and external stakeholders; and navigating both the administrative and hierarchical bureaucracy of the sector. The analysis reveals that these contextual factors and resulting challenges add complexity to the change process and pose challenges to public sector change leaders in effectively implementing change. This strengthens the argument that change needs to be implemented in a planned and structured manner in the public sector to address this complexity at each stage of the change process (Burnes, 2009; Kuipers et al., 2014; Van der Voet et al., 2015). It also underscores the importance of proper planning, engagement, and a clear vision to effectively implement change in the public sector.

Consequently, the findings indicate the need for a systematic approach led by competent ACLs to initiate and manage change in PSOs. To characterise the competent change leader in the public sector context, this study identified the key roles and attributes of ACLs, providing insights into the change leadership literature that has a limited theoretical foundation within the public sector context (Kuipers et al., 2014). The findings also suggest a need for greater participation of ACLs and employees at the middle and lower levels of the organisation in the change process, particularly in planning and decision-making. This reduces the gap between the change stages and could potentially enhance employee understanding, identification, and commitment to

change, as well as promote the effective implementation of change in the sector. It can also mitigate resistance to change, the prevalent hierarchical compliance culture, and improve change communication across all levels of the organisation.

The findings of this study have resulted in the development of a theoretical framework for the implementation of PCIs in the public sector. This framework structures and contextualises the key change processes and factors for effective change implementation in the sector, as well as the key roles and attributes of ACLs. Along with other contributions, this framework signifies the primary contribution of this research to both theory and practice. As such, this thesis represents a significant contribution to the field of change management through the advancement of existing knowledge and understanding of the implementation of PCIs in the public sector, particularly within the context of the MPS.

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Appendix 1: List of Articles on Public Sector Reform in Malaysia

No	List of Articles and Reports	Year	Mode of Research	Focus Area
1.	Public management reform in Malaysia: Recent Initiatives and Experiences. *International Journal of Public Sector Management.* Author: Siddiquee, N.A.	2006	Descriptive review and analysis of secondary source information	Analysis of reform initiatives undertaken by the government from 1981 to 2005.
2.	Paradox of Public Sector Reforms in Malaysia: A Good Governance Perspective. *Public Administration Quarterly.* Authors: Siddiquee, N. A. and Mohamed, M. Z.	2007	Descriptive review and analysis of secondary source data and information.	Analysis of reform initiatives undertaken by the government, with an emphasis on reforms from 1981 to 2005.
3.	Service delivery innovations and governance: The Malaysian experience. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy.* Author: Siddiquee, N. A.	2008	Descriptive review and analysis of secondary source data and information	Service delivery innovations and reforms undertaken within the public sector.
4.	Managing for results: Lessons from public management reform in Malaysia. *International Journal of Public Sector Management.* Author: Siddiquee, N. A.	2010	Descriptive review and analysis of secondary source data and information	Reviews and analyses the reform initiatives implemented in Malaysia based on the result-based management concept.
5.	Malaysia. *In:* BERMAN, E. M. (ed.) *Public Administration in South East Asia: Thailand, Philippines, Malaysian, Hong Kong, and Macao.* CRC Press. Author: Beh, L.	2011	Descriptive and comparative reporting (book).	A descriptive account of public administration development in Southeast Asia. A general overview of policy development in Malaysia.
6.	Tying Performance Management to Service Delivery: Public Sector Reform in Malaysia, 2009 - 2011. *Innovations for Successful Societies.* Author: Iyer, D.	2011	Qualitative method through interviews and secondary data analysis.	Descriptive analysis of previous reform initiatives prior to the 2008 election and the implementation of GTP post-2008.
7.	Can Top-Down and Bottom-Up be Reconciled? Electoral Competition and Service	2012	Descriptive review and analysis of Secondary source	Comparative analysis of top-down and bottom-up reform and

No	List of Articles and Reports	Year	Mode of Research	Focus Area
	Delivery in Malaysia. *World Development.* Author: McCourt, W. 2012.		data and information	development approaches in Malaysia and analysis of GTP as a bottom-up initiative.
8.	A Diagnostic Approach to Performance Management: The Case of the Performance Management and Delivery Unit of Malaysia. *International Journal of Public Administration.* Author: Xavier, J. A.	2014	Semi-structured interviews and secondary information analysis.	Comparative analysis of reforms prior to GTP and post-GTP focuses on the diagnostic approach.
9.	Mapping A Transformation Journey: A Strategy for Malaysia's Future, 2009–2010 In *Innovations for Successful Societies*. Author: Lesley, E.	2014	Qualitative method through interviews and secondary data analysis.	A descriptive review of reform outcomes prior to GTP and the implementation of GTP.
10.	The Government Transformation Programme in Malaysia: A Shining Example of Performance Management in the Public Sector? *Asian Journal of Political Science.* Author: Siddiquee, N. A. (2014).	2014	Descriptive review and analysis based on interviews and secondary source data.	Analysis of the implementation of GTP, focusing on performance management perspectives, and an interim assessment of the outcome of GTP.
11.	The Government Transformation Programme of Malaysia: a successful approach to public service reform. *Public Money and Management.* Authors: Xavier, J. A., Siddiquee, N. A. and Mohamed, M. Z.	2016	Descriptive review and analysis of secondary source data and information.	Analysis of GTP as a public service reform initiative. Comparative analysis of the best practices and best-fit approaches within the reform agenda in Malaysia. Analyses the achievements of GTP.
12.	Driving performance from the centre: Malaysia's experience with PEMANDU. Author: The World Bank.	2017	Report.	Reviews and analyses the elements and functions of PEMANDU as an effective driver of reform in Malaysia.
13.	The Evolution of Development Planning in Malaysia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies.* Authors: Cassey Lee and Lee Chew-Ging	2017	Descriptive review and analysis based on secondary data.	Reviews Malaysia's development based on the five-year development plans utilised by the

No	List of Articles and Reports	Year	Mode of Research	Focus Area
				government to develop the country.
14.	New Directions for Public Service Reform in Developing Countries. *Public Administration and Development.* McCourt, W.	2018	Comparative analysis is based on secondary data and information.	Compares and analyses the problem-driven approach utilised in recent reform initiatives through PEMANDU and Nepal's Public Service Commission perspectives.
15.	Driving performance in the public sector: what can we learn from Malaysia's service delivery reform? *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management.* Author: Siddiquee, N. A.	2019	Case study with primary (interviews) and secondary data analysis.	Reviews and analyses gaps in previous reform initiatives in Malaysia and provides a detailed analysis of GTP as a reform model.
16.	Malaysia Economic Monitor: Re-energizing the Public Service. 2019. Author: The World Bank.	2019	Report.	Analyses (SWOT) the development of the Malaysian Public Service and how it relates to the country's development.
17.	What Works and Why? Lessons from Public Management Reform in Malaysia. *International Journal of Public Administration*. Authors: Siddiquee, N. A., Xavier, J. A. and Mohamed, M. Z. 2019	2019	Case study with primary (interviews) and secondary data analysis.	Analyses the development of reform initiatives in Malaysia from a performance management perspective and how the recent approaches adopted by GTP and NBOS have progressed.
18.	Collaborative approach to public service improvement: the Malaysian experience and lessons. *International Journal of Public Sector Management.* Authors: Siddiquee, N. A. and Xavier, J. A.	2021	Qualitative approach with multiple data sources (semi-structured interviews, site visits, focus group discussions, and review of documents).	Reviews the public sector development and performance management in Malaysia and how it has evolved towards NBOS and how it is designed and implemented.
19.	Public management reform in the post-NPM era: Lessons	2021	Qualitative approach with	Reviews and analyses NBOS as a current

No	List of Articles and Reports	Year	Mode of Research	Focus Area
	from Malaysia's National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS). *Public Money and Management.* Authors: Xavier, J. A., Siddiquee, N. A. and Mohamed, M. Z.		multiple sources of data (semi-structured interviews, site visits, focus group discussions, and review of documents).	reform initiative in Malaysia, including how it is designed, implemented, the outcome, and the impact of the initiative.

Appendix 2: List of Ministries in Malaysia

LIST OF MINISTRIES FOR THE CURRENT MALAYSIAN CABINET 2022 (as of February 2022)

1. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries
2. Ministry of Communication and Multimedia
3. Ministry of Defence
4. Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
5. Ministry of Education
6. Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
7. Ministry of Entrepreneurship Development and Co-operatives
8. Ministry of Environment and Water
9. Ministry of Federal Territories
10. Ministry of Finance
11. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
12. Ministry of Health
13. Ministry of Higher Education
14. Ministry of Home Affairs
15. Ministry of Housing and Local Government
16. Ministry of Human Resources
17. Ministry of International Trade and Industry
18. Ministry of National Unity
19. Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
20. Ministry of Rural Development
21. Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation
22. Ministry of Tourism, Art, and Culture
23. Ministry of Transport
24. Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
25. Ministry of Works
26. Ministry of Youth and Sport

Appendix 3: Categorisation of Federal Ministries and Agencies

CATEGORISATION OF FEDERAL MINISTRIES AND CENTRAL AGENCIES BASED ON SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY

No	Categories	List of Ministries and Central Agencies	Key Considerations Based on the Profiles of the Ministries and Agencies	Source
1.	**Trade and Industry (5 Ministries)**	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries	• Transformation of the agricultural industry, establish farming as an industry, and position Malaysia as a key food producer in the world.	Mafi.gov.my. 2022. *Profil - MAFI*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mafi.gov.my/profil> [Accessed 8 May 2022].
		2. Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs	• Promotion and development of a competitive domestic economy within Malaysia, especially with regards to the distributive trade sector.	Kpdnhep.gov.my. 2022. *Functions of KPDNHEP*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kpdnhep.gov.my/en/corporate-info/functions-of-kpdnhep> [Accessed 8 May 2022].
		3. Ministry of Entrepreneurship Development and Co-operatives	• Creating a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem within the country, driven by the knowledge entrepreneurship development agenda.	Medac.gov.my. 2022. Mission, Vision & Functions. [online] Available at: <https://www.medac.gov.my/index.php?id=11&page_id=22&articleid=232> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		4. Ministry of International Trade and Industry	• Development and implementation of policies relating to industrial development, international trade, and investment.	Miti.gov.my. 2022. *Kementerian Perdagangan Antarabangsa dan Industri*. [online] Available at: <https://www.miti.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/2047?mid=705> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		5. Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities	• Development of the commodity industry and its contribution to the nation's economic growth.	MPIC, P., INFO, G. and VISION, M., 2022. *Kementerian Perusahaan Perladangan dan Komoditi - VISION, MISSION & OBJECTIVES*. [online] Mpic.gov.my. Available at: <https://www.mpic.gov.my/mpi/en/profil-mpic/general-info/visi-misi-objektif> [Accessed 9 May 2022].

No	Categories	List of Ministries and Central Agencies	Key Considerations Based on the Profiles of the Ministries and Agencies	Source
2.	**Social Wellbeing**	6. Ministry of Health	• Nation's health system and the facilitation and support for the people to attain their health potential through productive lifestyles, both economically and socially.	Moh.gov.my. 2022. *Portal Rasmi Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia*. [online] Available at: <https://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/137?mid=14> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		7. Ministry of Human Resources	• Skills development, labour and occupational safety and health, trade unions, industrial relations, industrial court, labour market information and analysis, and social security.	Mohr.gov.my. 2022. *MINISTRY of HUMAN RESOURCE - MOHR Corporate Portfolio*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mohr.gov.my/index.php/en/corporate-info/profile-us> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		8. Ministry of National Unity	• Enhancement of new unity efforts based on an integrative foundation to strengthen the spirit of goodwill among the people.	Perpaduan., 2022. *Vision & Mission*. [online] Perpaduan.gov.my. Available at: <https://www.perpaduan.gov.my/index.php/en/corporate/latar-belakang-kementerian/vision-mission> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		9. Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development	• Increasing the participation of women, families, and communities in the development of the country and as beneficiaries of the country's development towards achieving gender equality as well as family and community development.	Kpwkm.gov.my. 2022. *Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kpwkm.gov.my/kpwkm/index.php?r=portal/about&id=ck80LzFHSTA4a2paK2o1eEloZGRGUT09> [Accessed 8 May 2022].
		10. Ministry of Youth and Sport	• Development of youth and sports culture towards the country's aspiration and prosperity.	Kbs.gov.my. 2022. *Visi dan Misi*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kbs.gov.my/en/info-kbs/maklumat-am/visi-dan-misi.html> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
3.	**Development**	11. Ministry of Housing and Local Government	• Provision of affordable housing, quality municipal services, fire prevention and rescue, and an advisory role in the planning	Kpkt.gov.my. 2022. *Portal Rasmi Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kpkt.gov.my/index.php/pages/view/312?mid=466> [Accessed 8 May 2022].

No	Categories	List of Ministries and Central Agencies	Key Considerations Based on the Profiles of the Ministries and Agencies	Source
			and management of land as well as landscape and solid waste.	
		12. Ministry of Works	• Infrastructure development planning, implementation, and maintenance; the federal road network; and the construction industry.	Kkr.gov.my. 2022. *Profile	Ministry of Works*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kkr.gov.my/en/organization/profile> [Accessed 8 May 2022].
		13. Ministry of Transport	• Spearheading the integration of a holistic national transportation system as well as the development of policy, planning, and the execution of transport infrastructure.	Mot.gov.my. 2022. *Ministry of Transport Malaysia Official Portal Introduction To MOT*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mot.gov.my/en/about/introduction> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		14. Ministry of Federal Territories	• Development and progress of the Federal Territories in terms of infrastructure, economy, social, and environmental aspects as the leading capital of Malaysia.	Kwp.gov.my. 2022. [online] Available at: <https://www.kwp.gov.my/index.php/en/info-korporat/function-and-role> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		15. Ministry of Rural Development	• Developing and upgrading the wellbeing of the rural community.	KEMENTERIAN PEMBANGUNAN LUAR BANDAR. 2022. *Visi, Misi dan Moto - KEMENTERIAN PEMBANGUNAN LUAR BANDAR*. [online] Available at: <https://www.rurallink.gov.my/visi-misi-dan-moto/> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
4.	**Science and Natural Resources**	16. Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation	• Moving the country towards a high-tech nation through advanced technology and innovation.	Mosti.gov.my. 2022. [online] Available at: <https://www.mosti.gov.my/en/mengenai-kami/> [Accessed 9 May 2022].

No	Categories	List of Ministries and Central Agencies	Key Considerations Based on the Profiles of the Ministries and Agencies	Source
		17. Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources	• Spearheading the electricity supply and natural resources of the country with a focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and optimal use of resources.	Ketsa.gov.my. 2022. *KeTSA Background*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ketsa.gov.my/en-my/AboutKetsa/Pages/default.aspx> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		18. Ministry of Environment and Water	• Ensure sustainable environmental and water conservation through policy formulation, legal compliance, mitigation activities, adaptation, and education, in line with international standards and practices.	Kasa.gov.my. 2022. *Profil Kementerian*. [online] Available at: <https://kasa.gov.my/ms/info/visimisi> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
5.	**Others (Differing scopes and responsibilities for Ministries that are less than 3 in a group)**	19. Ministry of Tourism, Art, and Culture	• Development of the tourism industry in Malaysia as well as arts and cultural activities.	Motac.gov.my. 2022. *Client's Charter - Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Official Portal*. [online] Available at: <https://motac.gov.my/en/profile/client-s-charter> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		20. Ministry of Finance	• Preparation of the annual budget for the country, the disbursement of funds, and related financial responsibilities. •	Kementerian Kewangan Malaysia. 2022. *Client's Charter*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mof.gov.my/portal/en/profile/clients-charter> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		21. Ministry of Foreign Affairs	• Conducting Malaysia's foreign relations with other countries, including political relations, economic affairs, security matters, and social and cultural promotion.	Kln.gov.my. 2022. *Roles & Function - Portal*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/role-function> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		22. Ministry of Communication and Multimedia	• Enhancement of the communication ecosystem and telecommunication infrastructure, moving the country towards digitalisation, dissemination of government	Kkmm.gov.my. 2022. *Clients Charters*. [online] Available at: <https://www.kkmm.gov.my/en/info-korporat/pengenalan/clients-charter> [Accessed 9 May 2022].

No	Categories	List of Ministries and Central Agencies	Key Considerations Based on the Profiles of the Ministries and Agencies	Source
			information, and developing the creative industry.	
		23. Ministry of Home Affairs	• Maintenance of safety and public order for the wellbeing of the people and other services relating to immigration affairs, societies, volunteers, rehabilitation, and other related services.	Moha.gov.my. 2022. *Fungsi Kementerian*. [online] Available at: <https://www.moha.gov.my/index.php/en/fungsi-kementerian> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		24. Ministry of Defence	• Managing the country's defence to ensure that the country's strategic interests, sovereignty, and integrity are always upheld, and also to develop the defence industry.	Mod.gov.my. 2022. *Client's Charter*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mod.gov.my/en/about-us/client-s-charter> [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		25. Ministry of Higher Education	• Development and sustaining quality of the higher education ecosystem involving public universities, private higher educational institutions, polytechnics, and community colleges.	Korporat, U.K., 2020. Introduction. *MoHE*. Available at: https://www.mohe.gov.my/en/corporate/about-us/introduction [Accessed May 10, 2022].
		26. Ministry of Education	• Delivery of a quality education system within the country to develop individual potential and the aspirations of the country.	Moe.gov.my. (2019). *MOE - Vision and Mission*. [online] Moe.gov.my. Available at: https://www.moe.gov.my/en/corporate/vision-and-mission.
6.	**Central Agencies**	27. The Treasury (Refers to the Ministry of Finance)	• Please refer to Para 20.	N/A

No	Categories	List of Ministries and Central Agencies	Key Considerations Based on the Profiles of the Ministries and Agencies	Source
	under the Prime Minister's Department	28. The Economic Planning Unit (EPU)	• Socio-economic development planning of the country by formulating medium- and long-term socio-economic development plans at the national, regional, and state levels, as well as the distribution of allocation resources.	Epu.gov.my. (2020). *Functions | Official Portal of Economic Planning Unit*. [online] Available at: https://www.epu.gov.my/en/department-profile/profile/functions.
		29. The Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU, PMD)	• Coordination and monitoring of the implementation of national development through effective coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of national policy programmes and projects.	Unit Penyelarasan Pelaksanaan - icu.gov.my. Available at: https://www.icu.gov.my/?pg=info_k&type=carta [Accessed May 9, 2022].
		30. The Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU)	• Modernisation and transformation of the public service delivery system	Laman Web Rasmi MAMPU. (n.d.). *MAMPU Department*. [online] Available at: https://www.mampu.gov.my/en/about-us/role-of-mampu-department/ [Accessed 9 May 2022].
		31. The Public Service Department (PSD)	• Development of the public service human resource by structuring and rationalising the public service.	*PSD's Profile*. (2019). Jpa.gov.my. https://www.jpa.gov.my/en/coporate-info/jpa-profile

Appendix 4: Revised List of Ministries and Central Agencies as of November 2022

	Categories	MINISTRIES
1	**Trade and Industry (5 Ministries)**	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
		2. Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living
		3. Ministry of Economy
		4. Ministry of Entrepreneurship Development and Co-operatives
		5. Ministry of International Trade and Industry
		6. Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
2	**Social Wellbeing**	7. Ministry of Health
		8. Ministry of Human Resources
		9. Ministry of National Unity
		10. Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
		11. Ministry of Youth and Sport
3	**Development**	12. Ministry of Local Government Development
		13. Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
		14. Ministry of Transport
		15. Ministry of Works
4	**Others**	16. Ministry of Communications and Digital
		17. Ministry of Defence
		18. Ministry of Education
		19. Ministry of Finance
		20. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
		21. Ministry of Higher Education
		22. Ministry of Home Affairs
		23. Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment, and Climate Change
		24. Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation
		25. Ministry of Tourism, Art, and Culture
5	**Central Agencies under the Prime Minister's Department**	26. Implementation Coordination Unit
		27. Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit
		28. Prime Minister’s Department
		29. Public Service Department

Appendix 5: Research Project Interview Questions Validation Form

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL VALIDATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Dear Reviewers,

I am a PhD student at the University of Nottingham, Malaysia pursuing a PhD in Business and Management. As part of my doctoral studies and fulfilment of the requirements for this degree, I am conducting a research project on change management in the public sector titled “Managing Planned Change Initiatives in the Malaysian Public Sector: An Administrative Change Leadership Perspective”. As part of this research process, I will be collecting data from participants across the Malaysian Public Sector (MPS) through one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews. In preparation for this, I have prepared a list of interview questions based on my research framework that will be used during the interview process. The aim of this review process is to validate, academically and professionally, the interview questions before proceeding with the pilot data collection process. I thank you for your kind interest to contribute to my research by validating the interview questions below and look forward to your insightful comments.

Purpose of the Research

This research seeks to investigate the phenomena of change in the MPS. It focuses on the role of administrative leaders as change leaders in managing the implementation of planned change initiatives introduced to improve the efficiency and quality of service delivery of the MPS. The objectives of this research are to examine the planning, management, and subsequent challenges that Administrative Change Leaders (ACLs) face in the implementation of planned change initiatives within the context of the MPS. It also seeks to identify the key roles and attributes of ACLs in the change implementation process towards successful implementation of change.

Problem Statement

Malaysia has been embarking on major reform initiatives since its independence to develop the country’s economy, eradicate poverty and improve the government’s efficiency and quality of service delivery. Despite the progress made, the country has been experiencing slow growth rates and lags in its aspiration to be a developed nation. Reform initiatives introduced to improve the efficiency and the quality-of-service delivery of the MPS have produced mixed results and fell short of its aspired objectives leading to a stagnation in the performance of the MPS. Malaysia’s performance in the World Bank’s Government Effectiveness indicator has remained stagnant or declined in recent years. The lack of consistent reform pace and success were primarily attributed to poor implementation and gaps between what was planned and implemented that affected the outcomes of these reform initiatives. Leadership is suggested to be the key driver of change and administrative leaders are responsible for the implementation of reform or change initiatives in the public sector context.

Considering the gaps within the change management and change leadership literature in the public sector context and the limited empirical research carried out within the MPS context, there is a need for further research to examine and understand the phenomena of change in the MPS from the ACLs perspective.

Interview Questions

1. What is your view on planned change initiatives introduced to improve the efficiency of your organisation?

2. What are the key challenges faced in the implementation of planned change initiatives in your organisation?

3. How do these challenges impact the implementation process of planned change initiatives in your organisation?

4. What factors do you consider when planning for the implementation of planned change initiatives in your organisation?

5. How do you align and monitor the implementation process of planned change initiatives towards the desired outcomes?

6. What are your key roles in managing the implementation of planned change initiatives in your organisation?

7. To what extent is your role impacted by the bureaucracy of your organisation?

8. How do you manage the implementation process of planned change initiatives in your organisation?

9. How do you manage the challenges in implementing the planned change initiatives?

10. How do you manage relationships with multiple stakeholders within and outside your organisation?

11. How do you manage unforeseen disruptions in the implementation process brought about by internal and external forces?

12. How do you manage resistance to change within your organisation?

13. In your opinion, what are the key leadership characteristics and skills required to implement planned change effectively in your organisation?

14. What type of guidance would you expect from a change leader within your organisation?

A reply sheet is attached for you to provide your comments. Upon completion of the review, please email the reply sheet to saxas4@nottingham.edu.my. Should you have any queries with regards to this validation process or any further questions on

this research, please contact me at [redacted] or via the email address provided above.

Thank you for your time and contribution towards this research.

Best regards,

Ajitpal Singh Santokh Singh
PhD Student (Year 2)
Nottingham Business School, Malaysia

Appendix 6: Revised Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What do you think of planned organisational change initiatives introduced in your organisation?** *(Apakah pandangan anda mengenai inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang yang diperkenalkan dalam organisasi anda ?)*

2. **What are the factors you consider when planning for the implementation of planned organisational change initiatives?** *(Apakah faktor-faktor yang anda pertimbangkan semasa merancang untuk pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang?)*

3. **How do you implement planned organisational change initiatives in your organisation?** *(Bagaimanakah anda melaksanakan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang dalam organisasi anda?)*

4. **How do you monitor the implementation process of planned organisational change initiatives towards its desired outcomes?** *(Bagaimanakah anda memantau proses pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang ke arah mencapai hasil yang telah ditetapkan?)*

5. **How do you manage relationships with multiple stakeholders in the implementation of planned organisational change initiatives?** *(Bagaimanakah anda mengurus perhubungan dengan pelbagai pihak berkepentingan dalam pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang?)*

6. **What are the challenges faced in the implementation of planned organisational change initiatives?** *(Apakah cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi dalam proses pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang?)*

7. **How do these challenges impact the implementation of planned organisational change initiatives?** *(Bagaimanakah cabaran-cabaran tersebut memberi kesan terhadap proses pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang?)*

8. **How do you manage the implementation challenges faced?** *(Bagaimanakah anda menangani cabaran-cabaran pelaksanaan yang dihadapi?)*

9. **How do you manage resistance to change within your organisation?** (Bagaimanakan anda menangani sebarang tentangan terhadap perubahan organisasi dalam organisasi anda?)

10. **How do you manage unforeseen disruptions in the implementation process?** *(Bagaimana anda menguruskan sebarang gangguan yang tidak dijangka dalam proses pelaksanaan perubahan organisasi?)*

11. **What are your key roles in managing the implementation of planned change initiatives in your organisation?** *(Apakah peranan utama anda dalam mengurus pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan yang terancang dalam organisasi anda?)*

12. **Can you explain of any bureaucratic influence on your role?** *(Bolehkah anda menerangkan sebarang pengaruh birokrasi terhadap peranan anda?)*

13. **Are you trained as a change leader?** *(Adakah anda dilatih sebagai seorang pemimpin perubahan organisasi?)*

14. **In your opinion, what are the key leadership attributes required to implement planned organisational change effectively in your organisation?** *(Pada pendapat anda apakah sifat kepimpinan utama yang diperlukan untuk melaksankan perubahan terancang dengan berkesan dalam organisasi anda?)*

Appendix 7: Information for Research Participant Sheet

Information for Research Participants *(Maklumat untuk Peserta Penyelidikan)*

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project. Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you may change your mind about being involved in the research at any time, and without giving a reason. *(Terima kasih kerana bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam projek penyelidikan ini. Penyertaan anda dalam kajian ini adalah secara sukarela, dan anda boleh menukar fikiran anda tentang penglibatan anda dalam kajian ini bila-bila masa, tanpa memberi sebab.)*

This information sheet is designed to give you full details of the research project, its goals, the research team, the research funder, and what you will be asked to do as part of the research. If you have any questions that are not answered by this information sheet, please ask. *(Lembaran maklumat ini direka untuk memberikan butir-butir penuh projek penyelidikan, matlamatnya, pasukan penyelidikan, pembiaya penyelidikan, dan apa yang anda akan diminta untuk lakukan sebagai sebahagian daripada penyelidikan ini. Jika anda mempunyai sebarang soalan mengenai projek in anda boleh menghubungi kami).*

What is the research project called? *(Apakah tajuk projek penyelidikan ini?)*

Managing the Implementation of Planned Change Initiatives in the Malaysian Public Sector: An Administrative Change Leadership Perspective *(Pengurusan Pelaksanaan Inisiatif Perubahan Organisasi Terancang dalam Sektor Awam Malaysia: Dari Sudut Perspektif Administrative Change Leadership)*

Who is carrying out the research? *(Siapakah yang menjalankan penyelidikan?)*

This research is a PhD research project in Business and Management leading towards a PhD degree. This PhD degree is funded under the Public Service Department Scholarship. *(Penyelidikan ini adalah projek penyelidikan PhD dalam bidang Perniagaan dan Pengurusan yang menuju ke arah ijazah PhD. Ijazah PhD ini dibiayai di bawah Biasiswa Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam)*

What is the research about? *(Apakah matlamat penyelidikan ini?)*

This research seeks to investigate the phenomena of change in the Malaysian Public Sector (MPS). It focuses on the role of administrative leaders as change leaders in managing the implementation of planned change initiatives introduced to improve the efficiency of MPS. The key objectives are to examine the planning, management, and subsequent challenges that Administrative Change Leaders face in implementing planned change initiatives within the MPS context. It also seeks to identify the key roles and attributes of Administrative Change Leaders in the change implementation process. *(Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat fenomena perubahan organisasi dalam Sektor Awam Malaysia (MPS). Ia memfokuskan kepada peranan pemimpin pentadbiran sebagai pemimpin perubahan dalam mengurus pelaksanaan inisiatif perubahan organisasi terancang yang diperkenalkan untuk meningkatkan kecekapan MPS. Objektif utama penyelidikan ini adalah untuk mengkaji perancangan, pengurusan dan seterusnya cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi oleh Pemimpin Pentadbiran selaku peneraju perubahan dalam melaksanakan inisiatif perubahan yang terancang dalam konteks MPS. Ia juga bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti peranan dan sifat utama Pemimpin Pentadbiran selaku peneraju perubahan dalam proses pelaksanaan perubahan organisasi.)*

What groups of people have been asked to take part, and why? *(Siapakah yang akan diminta untuk mengambil bahagian, dan mengapa?)*

Participants for this research will be selected from the Management and Professional Group of the Malaysian Civil Service. They are identified based on their role as implementors of government policies as they can contribute towards the key objectives of this research. *(Peserta untuk penyelidikan ini akan dipilih daripada Kumpulan Pengurusan dan Profesional Perkhidmatan Awam Malaysia. Mereka dikenal pasti berdasarkan peranan mereka sebagai pelaksana dasar kerajaan kerana mereka boleh menyumbang ke arah objektif utama penyelidikan ini.)*

What will research participants be asked to do? *(Apa yang perlu dilakukan oleh peserta kajian ini?)*

Data collection will be undertaken through interviews, either one-to-one interviews that will last for approximately 60 minutes or focus group interviews that will last for approximately 90 minutes. The interview may be repeated for validation purposes that will take a shorter time. These interviews will

be carried out either in person or through a suitable online platform with the consent of the participants. Participants are expected to share their professional experience, views and make suggestions on the research topic during the interview. *(Pengumpulan data akan dilakukan melalui sesi temu bual, sama ada sesi temu bual bersemuka satu dengan satu yang akan berlangsung selama lebih kurang 60 minit atau temu bual secara kumpulan fokus yang akan berlangsung selama lebih kurang 90 minit. Temu bual mungkin diulang untuk tujuan pengesahan yang akan mengambil masa yang lebih singkat. Temu bual ini akan dijalankan sama ada secara bersemuka atau melalui platform dalam talian yang sesuai dengan persetujuan peserta. Para peserta diharapkan untuk berkongsi pengalaman profesional mereka, pandangan dan membuat cadangan mengenai topik penyelidikan semasa sesi temu bual.)*

What will happen to the information I provide? *(Apa yang akan berlaku kepada maklumat yang saya berikan?)*

The data collected from participants will be stored securely in digital and paper format for academic purposes only. It will be retained for the duration of this research. Interviews will be recorded using an audio recording tool subject to the approval of the participant. All data obtained from the participants will be processed, analysed, and reported securely and anonymously. Participants will be referred to in this research using numbers to ensure their anonymity. Any direct quotes from the participants will be used anonymously in this research unless otherwise requested. *(Data yang dikumpul daripada peserta akan disimpan dengan selamat dalam format digital dan kertas untuk tujuan akademik sahaja. Ia akan disimpan sepanjang tempoh penyelidikan ini. Temu bual akan dirakam menggunakan alat rakaman audio tertakluk kepada persetujuan peserta. Semua data yang diperoleh daripada peserta akan diproses, dianalisis dan dilaporkan dengan selamat dan tanpa mengaitkan nama peserta. Peserta akan dirujuk dalam penyelidikan ini menggunakan nombor untuk memastikan mereka tidak dikenali. Sebarang petikan langsung daripada peserta akan digunakan secara tanpa nama dalam penyelidikan ini melainkan kebenaran dipohon daripada peserta.)*

What will be the outputs of the research? *(Apa yang akan menjadi output penyelidikan)?*

The findings from this research will be published as a PhD thesis at the university and submitted to the Public Service Department for records. The research findings may also be used in conferences, published as research articles in academic journals and by government agencies towards change management development. *(Dapatan daripada penyelidikan ini akan diterbitkan sebagai tesis PhD di university ini dan diserahkan kepada Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam untuk tujuan rekod. Dapatan penyelidikan juga boleh digunakan dalam persidangan, diterbitkan sebagai artikel penyelidikan dalam jurnal akademik dan oleh agensi kerajaan ke arah pembangunan pengurusan perubahan organisasi.)*

Contact details *(Butiran Perhubungan)*

Researcher *(Penyelidik)*:
Mr. Ajitpal Singh Santokh Singh
Phone(M):
Email:
Address:

Complaint procedure *(Prosedur Aduan)*

If you wish to complain about the way in which the research is being conducted or have any concerns about the research then in the first instance please contact the supervisor *(Jika anda ingin mengadu tentang cara penyelidikan dijalankan atau mempunyai sebarang kebimbangan mengenai penyelidikan itu, sila hubungi penyelia pada seawal mungkin)*:

Dr Maniam Kaliannan
Director, NUBS Executive Education
Associate Professor of Human Resource Management
email: NUBS.EDP@nottingham.edu.my
Phone: +6(03) 8924 8274

Or contact the NUBS REC *(atau hubungi NUBS REC)*:
Research Ethics Committee
Nottingham University Business School
The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus
Jalan Broga 43500 Semenyih
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Email: nubs-rec@nottingham.edu.my

Appendix 8: Participants Consent Form

Nottingham University Business School
Participant Consent Form

(Borang Persetujuan Peserta)

Name of Study (Nama Penyelidikan)**:** Managing the Implementation of Planned Change Initiatives in the Malaysian Public Sector: An Administrative Change Leadership Perspective (*Pengurusan Pelaksanaan Inisiatif Perubahan Organisasi Terancang dalam Sektor Awam Malaysia: Dari Sudut Perspektif Administrative Change Leadership)*

Name of Researcher(s) *(Nama Penyelidik)***:** Ajitpal Singh Santokh Singh

Name of Participant *(Nama Peserta)***:**

By signing this form I confirm that (please initial the appropriate boxes)**:** *(Dengan menandatangani borang ini saya mengesahkan bahawa [sila tandakan kotak yang sesuai]):*	**Initials** ***Inisial***
I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. *(Saya telah membaca dan memahami Lembaran Maklumat Peserta, atau ia telah dibacakan kepada saya. Saya telah dapat bertanya soalan tentang kajian dan soalan saya telah dijawab dengan kepuasan saya.)*	
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. (*Saya bersetuju secara sukarela untuk menjadi peserta dalam kajian ini dan memahami bahawa saya boleh menolak untuk menjawab soalan dan saya boleh menarik diri daripada kajian pada bila-bila masa, tanpa perlu memberi alasan.)*	
Taking part in this study involves an interview or a focus group completed by the participant that will be recorded using audio and written notes for in person interviews / focus group and/ recorded using audio, video, and written notes for online platforms. The recordings will be transcribed and destroyed after the completion of this research. (*Mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini melibatkan temu bual atau kumpulan fokus yang disiapkan oleh peserta yang akan dirakam menggunakan audio dan nota bertulis untuk temu bual secara peribadi / kumpulan fokus dan/ dirakam menggunakan audio, video, dan nota bertulis untuk platform dalam talian. Rakaman akan ditranskripsi dan dimusnahkan selepas selesai penyelidikan ini.)*	
Personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the study team. (*Maklumat peribadi yang dikumpul tentang saya yang boleh mengenal pasti saya, seperti nama saya atau tempat tinggal saya, tidak akan dikongsi di luar pasukan kajian)*	
My words can be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs. (*Kata-kata saya boleh dipetik dalam penerbitan, laporan, halaman web dan hasil penyelidikan lain.)*	
I give permission for the de-identified (anonymised) data that I provide to be used for future research and learning. (*Saya memberikan kebenaran untuk data yang tidak dikenal pasti (tanpa nama) yang saya sediakan untuk digunakan untuk penyelidikan dan pembelajaran masa hadapan.)*	

I agree to take part in the study (*Saya bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini)*

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant *(Nama Peserta)*	Signature *(Tandatangan)*	Date *(Tarikh)*
Ajitpal Singh Santokh Singh		
_____	_____	_____
Researcher's Name *(Nama Penyelidik)*	Signature *(Tandatangan)*	Date *(Tarikh)*

2 copies: 1 for the participant, 1 for the project file (2 salinan: 1 untuk peserta, 1 untuk file projek)

Appendix 9: Ethic's Approval Letter from NUBS Research Ethics Committee

University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Faculty/School/Department
University of Nottingham Malaysia
Jalan Broga
43500 Semenyih
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Malaysia

+6 (0)3 8924 8000
nottingham.edu.my

16 February 2022

Dear Ajitpal Singh Santokh Singh:

Reference Number: NUBS-REC-2022-1
Project title: Managing the implementation of planned change initiatives in the Malaysian public sector: an administrative change leadership perspective

The NUBS Research Ethics Committee approves your application. This approval is for the research work you describe in your application. If you change your research design (i.e., the research questions, the methodologies, the research period, or the respondents), you must apply for an ethical approval again.

We would like to remind you of your ethical responsibilities to research participants. Please consult the University of Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-integrity) and Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (https://bit.ly/2Ui5sEQ).

This NUBS Research Ethics Committee's approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities; nor does it certify that they have been met.

We hope you have the best of luck with your research project.

Regards,

Rasyad Parinduri

Rasyad A. Parinduri
Chair
NUBS Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 10: Themes, Categories and Codes of the Study

	THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODES
1.	**Envisioning Change**	Rationale for Change	• Need For Change • Objective of Change

		Triggers of Change	• Internal Triggers
			  ○ Strategic Decisions
			  ○ Politically Driven
			  ○ Best Practices
			• External Triggers
			  ○ External Stakeholders
			  ○ Central Agencies
			• Environmental Shift

		Strategic Alignment	• Laws and Policies • Internal Strategies • Inter-Agency • International Commitment

		Change Planning	• Prior Planning
			• Defined Strategy
			  ○ Vision
			  ○ Rationale of Change
			  ○ Feasibility Study

2.	**Communicating Change**	Change Communication	• Effective Communication
			  ○ Explain Change
			  ○ Promote Understanding
			  ○ Comprehend Change
			• Top-down Communication
			  ○ Mediating role of ACLs
			  ○ Passive Communication
			  ○ Vertical Communication
			  ○ Two-way Communication
			• Adaptive Communication
			  ○ Tactful Communication
			  ○ Level of Communication
			• Communication Plan
			  ○ Prior Communication

		Stakeholder Engagement	• Internal Stakeholders
			  ○ Collective understanding
			  ○ Discussions

	THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODES
			• External Stakeholders ○ Communication platform ○ Check and Balance ○ Periodical Engagement ○ Impact on Decision Making • Managing Stakeholder Interest ○ Multi Stakeholders ○ Self Interest • Lack of Engagement • Engagement Skills ○ Lack of Engagement Skills ○ Negotiation Skills ○ Networking Skills
3.	**Managing People for Change**	Managing Attitude towards Change	○ People's Attitude ○ Complacency ○ Inherent attitudes ○ Compliance Culture
		Resistance to Change	• Complacency ○ Status Quo ○ Laziness ○ Comfort Zone • Additional Work • Lack of Understanding • Differences in Opinions • Legacy • Lack of Effort • No Resistance • Managing Resistance to Change ○ Behavioural Barriers ○ Diplomacy ○ Understanding and Visualisation ○ Motivation ○ Incentives
		Developing Change Talent	• Competency ○ Knowledge ○ Critical Thinking ○ Continuous Learning ▪ Frequent Transfers • Training ○ Training on Change Management ○ Train Change Leadership ○ Job Specific Training ○ Training Needs

	THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODES

4.	**Strategising Change Implementation**	Decision-Making	• Top-Down Decision Making
			  ○ Clear Directives
			  ○ Delegation of Powers
			  ○ Dependence on Top Management
			  ○ Role of Central Agencies
			• Political Mandate
			  ○ Political Will
			  ○ Policy Decisions
			  ○ Prioritised Change

		Planning for Change Implementation	• Implementation Framework
			  ○ Implementation Strategy
			  ○ Implementation Roadmap
			  ○ Span of Control
			  ○ Required Resources
			  ○ Change Masterplan
			• Assessing Change Environment
			  ○ Change of Government
			  ○ Economic Conditions
			  ○ Organisational Culture
			  ○ Unforeseen Circumstances
			• Bureaucracy
			  ○ Slow processes
			  ▪ Multi-level procedures
			  ▪ Simplifying Processes
			  ○ Control leading to Bureaucracy

		Managing Change Implementation	• Top-down Implementation
			• Support for Change
			• Stakeholder engagement and Participation
			• Follow Change Framework
			• Operational Considerations
			  ○ Resources
			  ○ Skillsets

		Monitoring and Evaluation	• Monitoring Implementation
			  ○ Taskforce
			  ○ Leaders KPI's
			  ○ Lower-Level Monitoring
			  ○ Realignment
			• Assessing effectiveness
			  ○ Lack of Effectiveness
			  ○ Effective Implementation
			  ○ Outputs Over Outcomes
			  ○ Gaming

	THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODES

5.	**Leading Change Effectively**	Attributes of ACL	• Visionary
			  ○ Clear Vision
			  ○ Receptive to Ideas
			  ○ Practical
			• Bold and Firm
			  ○ Confident and Committed
			  ○ Fierce with limitation
			  ○ Challenge Status Quo
			• Effective Communicator
			  ○ Communicate Change Effectively
			  ○ Knowledge about change
			  ○ Listening Skills
			• Influence
			  ○ Convince People
			  ▪ Instil Belief
			  ▪ Empathy
			  ○ Motivate
			• Ethical
			  ○ Honest
			  ○ Integrity
			  ○ Perception
			• Other Attributes
			  ○ Diplomacy
			  ○ Interpersonal Skills
			  ○ Positivity
			  ○ Humility

		Roles of ACL	• Lead Change
			  ○ Individual Dependent
			  ○ Clear Directions
			  ○ Accept and Believe in Change
			• Decision-Making
			  ○ Centered at the Top
			  ○ Give Directions
			  ○ Listen to Views
			• Communicate Change
			• Advisory Role
			  ○ Vertical Reporting
			  ○ Consultation on Directions
			  ○ Hierarchical Levels
			• Plan Implementation
			  ○ Understand Change
			  ○ Interpret Change
			  ○ Capacity to Implement

	THEMES	CATEGORIES	CODES

			• Manage and Monitor Implementation
			  ○ Actions towards Outcome
			  ○ Monitoring Role
			  ○ Micromanaging
			• Manage and Guide Subordinates
			  ○ Guide Employees
			  ○ Expectations
			  ○ Span of Control
			  ○ Support