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Resistance to Organizational Change and the Value of Communication: the case of Volvo Cars Human Resources Department

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Author: Xiaofei Yang

Supervisor: Cheryl Marie Cordeiro

Examinator: Thomas Jordan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the consequences of Human Resource (HR) transformation from an individual perspective. With the theory brought up by Ulrich, HR transformation is a process and means for organizations to restructure in order to deliver the right support in the HR area to be more global and competitive. This study investigates how employees react to change and resistance. What kinds of resistance they have may determine the success of the implemented change. It's common that employee resistance comes along with change process and it is interesting to investigate how HR transformation has influenced individual's work and attitude. The research was conducted at Volvo Cars Corporation in Gothenburg by collecting data from several semi-structured interviews. The study showed that HR transformation at Volvo Cars still has a long way to go since respondents expressed their reflections with negative feelings. Also communication plays an important role in how employees react to change.

Keywords: change; HR transformation; employee resistance; communication

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In today's complicated environment, change is common in every company and is needed for an organization in order to remain competitive. It doesn't matter if the company is small, large, local or international; the process of organizational change is just as important. Human Resource Management (HRM) is at the heart of the organization in order for it to reach its goals (Nilsson et al, 2011). It plays a crucial role in the success of the organization. Constant change is considered as an important factor that can affect the organization and it is necessary to adapt to fulfil the requirements of the society. There are numerous challenges that organizations need to face in order to be competitive in the market. In HRM research, HR transformation as a field of study has popular focus due to how it affects organizational processes. Organizations can restructure the whole organization, or specific departments, such as the HR department to achieve their goals.

Some common topics within the HR department are how the organization needs to be aligned with its business strategies, be centralized and globalized and at the same time be cost efficient. A result of the ongoing globalization in the world is organizational reconstructions, which is called HR transformation (Ulrich et al, 2009). The organization wants to make sure that employees are working as they are expected to and employees should be encouraged and motivated to reach better results. As a result, the organization has put an emphasis on dividing the working tasks into strategic and operational within HR staff, they have begun to remap the HR structure by doing reconstruction of HR, and such HR reconstruction is introduced by professor Ulrich called HR transformation (Economist, 2009). Some obstacles that could negatively influence HR transformation are poor planning, lack of direction or simply poor implementation, which may lead to employee resistance. Resistance to change is inherent in every kind of change process. It is the nature of humans to react negatively when they experience the threat of insecurity and change. There are many organizations that have done HR transformations; however there seem to be a lack of communicating the processes during and after the HR transformation period within the organization.

1.2 Introduction to the case company

Volvo Car Group (Volvo Cars) is owned by Zhejiang Geely Holding (Geely Holding) of China. Volvo Cars formed part of the Swedish Volvo Group until 1999, when Ford Motor Company bought the company. In 2010, Geely Holding acquired Volvo Cars, which attracted a lot of attention. Volvo Cars set the vision "To be the world's most progressive and desired premium car brand" by taking China to its second market in the long-term growth plan. The company has a clear goal "to make life less complicated for people" and "Design Around You". The Company has put a lot of emphasis on acting in a nimble way and valuing people. With the People Strategy, the company tries to build efficient and engaging working environment with passionate people to align with business strategy. Since the acquisition of the company, the structure, leadership, technology and the concept of the company has been an ongoing change (Wu, 2013).

Volvo Cars had decided to implement HR transformation within the company for various reasons. The HR Transformation is all about building HR capability to deliver the People Strategy. HR needs to become thought leaders in people areas, real change agents, true business partners, people specialists and efficient. HR also needs to become more customer focused, faster, more flexible and global (Carlsson, 2013). It is vital that, as a company, it succeeds in reaching a prioritized and mutual global HR agenda. As a result, Volvo Cars developed a new HR service delivery model trying to standardize the way of work to improve the quality and quantity of HR's deliveries.

1.3 Problem Discussion

HR transformation is seen as one of the one of the most important restructuring processes of HR department in the organization, but there are not too many HR transformation models to follow (Thilander, 2013). The lack of models can be attributed to the limited research conducted in this area. The biggest challenges for HR are to help the business achieve its strategic objectives, sourcing and simply deliver what the organization needs. Businesses can restructure their organizations and make significant changes to their HR area – and this is what HR transformation is all about (Ulrich et al, 2009). There are many organizations that have done HR transformations, like the case organization Volvo Cars; they followed the structure of

Ulrich's model concept, to divide the HR tasks into operational and strategic level in order to deliver the right support in the business area, by developing their own model called Service Delivery Model. The reason for developing their own model is that there are not so many HR transformation models to follow. Existing models might have disadvantages when implementing the change process, such as employee resistance.

Albert (2002) concluded in his paper that organizational change can cause skepticism and resistance to happen to employees and it can make it difficult or impossible to implement organizational change. It is important for managers to realize the phenomenon and try to make an effort to overcome resistance. Otherwise, it may cause unexpected problems and even undermine the effort that the company has made for the change process. A lack of understanding of the underlying reasons for change in relation to the context of other organizational factors is one of the most important factors for resistance to change (Judge and Douglas, 2009). Communication and communicative processes, defined as how messages are produced, transferred/ delivered, shared and decoded/understood by the receiver, is a crucial factor that might aid in the lowering of barriers to resistance to organizational change. Employees may communicate positive or negative information depending on the perception of the organizational performance and if the company lost the faith and ambitions in their employees, it will face a battle to rebuild their credit (Finbarr et al, 2003). Organizational change should be well structured, planned; communicated and implemented to make sure that the changes can lead to an expected result (Ulrich et al, 2009).

New roles and responsibilities make employees fearful of losing their current jobs. The lack of information why this happens leads to some employees not trusting the company anymore and develop a negative attitude. According to a pilot study with employees at Volvo, they always feel confused why the organization changes all the time, what is the purpose of that? They feel scared and think it is unnecessary to change and want to be better informed. It is interesting to get an understanding of how the organization looked like before and after they implemented the HR transformation

and how individuals that got influenced by the transformation process react due to their own feelings.

1.4 Research questions

The thesis investigates what consequences and changes followed the implementation of HR transformation in Volvo Cars, Sweden. The roles of the different groups within the organization such as, Volvo Cars Human Resource Service Delivery Professionals (HR SDP), Volvo Cars Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP) and line managers are investigated and studied. The study may be of practical value for organizations that are planning to implement an HR transformation, and to use the findings to prepare themselves. The contribution of this study is that it allows for a better understanding of HR transformation and its processes. It is also interesting to examine how Ulrich's model has been experienced as an international organization that is Volvo Cars.

The goal of this study is to collect information about the process of change, its consequences and effects for a real world organization by studying primary sources from said organization. Consequences in this context include how HR work is affected by an HR transformation. The study also put an emphasis on employee's perspective, how do they react to change, how the transformed HR department affect individuals emotions? In order to find the answer to the problems, some questions will be investigated:

1. What are the main objectives of the HR transformation?
2. What are the consequences observed in the organization after the HR transformation as reflected by HR employees?
3. How do employees react to HR transformation?
4. What kind of knowledge did they get from the HR transformation?

2. Literature Review and Theory

The study investigates the consequences of HR transformation in Volvo Cars HR unit - reflected by employees and the use of communication from the HR transformation. HR transformation can be defined as: "an integrated, aligned, innovative and business focused approach to redefining how HR work is done within an organization so that it helps the organization to deliver on promises made to customers, investors and other stakeholder" (Ulrich et al, 2009). In order to analyze and explain the reflections of employees about transformation, it is crucial to find theories that can explain it. This chapter starts with giving various definitions about HR transformation, the change process, followed by the effects resulting from HR transformation. The theory and model of this study is the Ulrich model and employees' resistance to change also referred to by Lawrence (1969).

2.1 Links to previous research

HR transformation is seen as one of the one of the most important restructuring processes of HR department in the organization (Thilander, 2013). A significant impact on the results has to do with how the organization begins its HR transformation journey. The results could be disappointing if the organization only focuses on HR operations. The key is to have a longer perspective, thinking 'what is next', or 'what can be done to define a more powerful future for the businesses. HR strategy, process and operations, technology and sourcing - all need to be considered for the organization to meet its needs (Deloitte, 2014). HR transformation is not a common topic in early ages and it has limited knowledge about what happens during and after HR transformation. Whether it is a successful transformation or not will affect the efficiency of all HR work (Thilander, 2013) and in order to remain competitive, organizations need to warrant the process of transformation. HRM in organizations have made significant progress over the years in reducing costs, improving operating effectiveness through HRM systems, outsourcing, employee self-service and shared services. Apart from these services, the next big step for HR is to aid their businesses in achieving their strategic objectives for growth and performance.

The problem of resistance was brought up by Lawrence (1969), he argued that resistance to change is one of the most baffling and recalcitrant of the problems which

business executives face. Researchers have studied the reasons of employee resistance by using a normative approach focusing on what is resistance to change, the reasons for it and how to overcome it. The reasons why employees resist change can be various from fear of the unknown, lack of trust, failed change before can be important factors. Employees always feel anxiety and are worried that change will influence their current job, performance, working environment, relations among colleagues and other factors (Baker, 1989). As a result, it is crucial for managers to choose the right channels to communicate with employees regarding the uncertainty of change process and the influence on the individual (Brashers, 2001). Effective communication between employees is the key elements in implementing a change process as it can reduce resistance by providing a sense of community and belonging to the company (Elving, 2005). Communication has been considered a key factor in the process of implementing change. Communication in organizations represents the interactions between the employees and members of an organization. Deetz defines communication as a "Phenomenon that exists in organizations" (Jablin & Putnam, 2001). In his view, this means that the organization is a container in which communication takes place. Deetz also defines communication as "a way to describe and explain organizations" (Jablin & Putnam, 2001). If we consider this definition, this means that communication is the central process through which employees exchange information, create relationships, and build meanings, values, and an organizational culture. Managers use communication as a tool to advertise, announce, explain and inform people to be prepared for the change process and the effects it brings (Spike & Lesser, 1995). The use of communication can motivate employee commitment to change and reduce the confusion and resistance (Lippitt, 1997).

Previous studies have strengthened the links between communication and successful change management in two perspectives: theoretical and practical (Finbarr et al, 2003). Communication has an impact from the commonality of factors on both sides, such as, organizational structure and culture, business environment and leadership styles (Finbarr et al, 2003). Researchers who are working independently in both areas identified the factors from a theoretical perspective and established it. De Nisi (1991) studied the link between communication and change management from an academic

perspective by a study of employee communication during a merger process. He found when managers are honest regarding the information and communication process, the employees turn out to have high levels of productivity, lower levels of turnover compared with lack of communication. According to Lawrence (1969), managers should have a better communication strategy to deal with employees' attitude by encouraging a broader perspective and facilitating creative thinking. According to Baker (1989), managers should have correct action by providing proper information about change and consider employees' fear when they announce the information. They should also try to convince employees with real reasons for change to ease the transition process and reduce employees' frustration. What is more, managers have to create an encouraged work atmosphere to motivate employees try out new ideas related to change and these actions are connected to an effective communication.

2.2 Changes in HR

2.2.1 HR transformation

In the perspective of HRM, HR transformation is an extra need for organizations to manage the complexity from outer changes (Ulrich et al, 2009). A stronger connection could be created to organizations stakeholders by transforming the HR department. Such a transformation could occur when an organization is restructuring itself or when internal and external conditions need to be better reflected by the HR practices. A key difference between HR transformation and HR change is that HR transformation is a fundamental reconstruction of the HR (Ulrich et al, 2009).

HR transformation aims to change the structure of the HR department by doing less operation tasks and more focusing on strategies, so that to make HRM practices more efficient and flexible. This trend as such began in 1995 (The Economist, 2009).

2.2.2 The Ulrich Model

There are several discussions about what HR should do in order to deliver the right support to business during the past years and it has been found that there are several ways that HR could be organized (Taylor & Woodhams, 2012). The HR transformation requires building a structure that can link business organization and

HR strategies together. Many organizations follow the Ulrich Model to go through HR transformation and it has been more and more popular (Economist, 2009). The model has an emphasis on how to design the newly transformed HR department; there are three components in his model: business partners, shared services and a center of expertise.

The business partner works close to business unit and line managers, they have the responsibilities to develop strategies. They are always working in the business unit where they have a chance to implement strategies and deliver the support to management teams. The role of responsibilities varies in different organizations, size, culture and HR structure, etc. (Ulrich et al, 2009). The shared service center works with salary review, administrations, recruitment, training and development, etc. The shared service center aims to create values for its stakeholder deliver the right support in operational tasks. It is a good back up for people in the company when they seek for help (Granberg, 2011). The center of expertise works with talent management, organizational change management, employee relations, compensation and benefits, etc. They are expected to deliver high quality HR services. The employees in the center of expertise have the knowledge to deliver services in the area of learning, training and such (Ulrich et al, 2009).
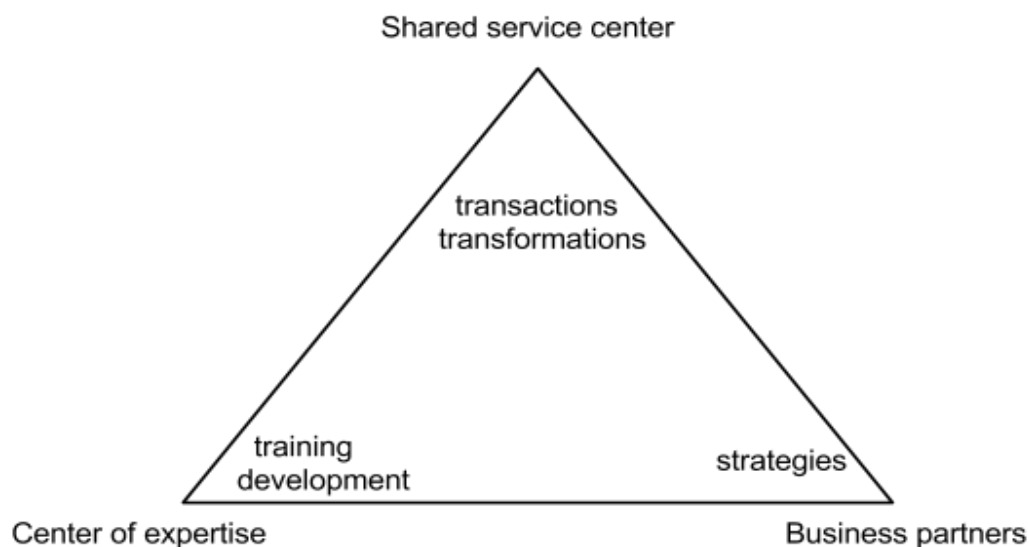
Diagram 1: Ulrich's Triangle Model

2.3 Employee resistance to change

The restructuring of the HR department can be one of biggest changes in HR employees when one move to more strategic work from operational one and such changes could cause employee resistance.

Employee resistance is common existing topic in psychology literature and management books and the focus was out on employees (Ackar, 2013). It is important to cooperate with employees if an organization wants to successfully implement the change (Piderit, 2000). What resistance consist of is hard to define but it is certain that it can stop the implementation of change. Thomas and Hardly (2011) divided people into two groups when they react to change: for and against. The kind of people that react negatively, or the ones who do not accept change can be divided in the group with "resistant to change". People react differently with their emotional feelings with aggression, fear, happiness and excitement; these feelings can be seen as resistance (Piderit, 2000). Both positive and negative sides of the resistance have been argued to affect individual's behavior. Researchers argued multi-dimensional aspects of employee resistance to change, when an individual respond to change, it is their behavior, feelings and thoughts that are involved (Erwin & Garman, 2010).

There are various reasons why employees resist change. First of all, the involvement in the change process is argued as one of the sources that can cause resistance (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005). Secondly, employee attitude, behaviors and emotions is another factor in how they react to change (Thomas & Hardy, 2011; Piderit, 2000). Coch and French (1948) concluded that motivations are the causes of employee resistance during change process. Moreover, it is l inked to psychological mechanisms according to Folger & Skarlieki (1999). The cause of employee resistance to change can be summarized as misunderstandings, lack of information, different individual characteristics, emotional effects, etc. Most of the literatures agreed that the job insecurity is the cause of resistance to change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999).

2.4 Communication

Many researchers have discussed the importance of communication during the change process. To inform the involved person beforehand is one of the most efficient ways

to overcome employee resistance (Raluca, 2010). They have the right to know when the change happen and how it will be implemented, what is expected from them, how it will influence their jobs and what kind of support they can get in order to be motivated and engaged to change (Kottor & Schlesinger, 1979). The early information can effectively decrease employee resistance, confusion, and anxiety before rumors spread out in the whole organization.

People have a wish to have their working environment predictable and this is the reason why managers should be well prepared with the outcome from change and give employees reasonable information about why, how and what is implemented in the near future (Cilgeous & Chambers, 1999).

2.4.1 Organizational communication

Organizational communication can be defined as "process whereby members gather pertinent information about their organization and the changes occurring within it" (Kreps, 1990). It is crucial to use communication within organizational members to discuss their personal experiences and pertinent information. It also enables individuals to reach their goals by understanding organizational change and coordinate their personal needs with the responsibilities of their involvement. Moreover, communication can be seen as a data-collecting usage for individuals to gather information that makes sense.

2.4.2 Communicating change

Communication commonly exists in daily life at work. Managers and employees use communication to collaborate, exchange knowledge, information and get people motivated (Deresky, 2000). Communication includes different aspects, such as: timing, communication approach, the content of the message, etc. It is crucial for managers to be aware of is that it is impossible to successfully implement change process without an effective communication. Barrett argues that "without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured" (Barrett, 2002).

How effective the communication is can determine the level of employee resistance during change process, also can encourage employee to be engaged to it, accept and

support, maximum the extent of outcome from change. Organizational performance is also influenced by one of the key factors –the communication between employees and employers (Harshman & Harshman, 1999).

3. Method and Data

3.1 Research approach

There are three kinds of research methods: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders et al, 2003). The study aims to analyze and describe changes at Volvo Car Corporation headquarters. Emphasis is made to evaluate the change, which is HR transformation from the employees' perspective. In order to know what kind of consequences and reflections from employees can be obtained from such a process of transformation, a combination of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory approach will be adopted. Qualitative methods will be conducted in my study. A more personal opinion from employees will give a better understanding of the actual situations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with HR SDPs and HR managers involved during the change process in order to get more direct reflections about their feelings. The qualitative approach gives the advantage of having a closer relationship and relaxed atmosphere, plus a more open discussion (Raluca, 2010). By conducting interviews, it is possible to get an overall picture of the organization about the organizational change and its actual influences on the HR work.

To conduct a survey would also have been useful in this study since it is a great way of collecting data from a larger sample. However, I chose not to use this approach since this study focuses on the individual reflections from specific changes, which is hard to gather data and find right persons.

A meeting was set up with the Vice President of Marketing, Sales and Customer Services from HR prior to the study. She introduced the change situations with some PowerPoint presentations and internal material; these help me to formulate research questions as well. She settled possible contact persons that would be suitable for the interview during the preparation phase.

3.2 Case selection

Based on the research approach, a single-case study has been adopted to gather the empirical data. Zikmund (1994) states that case studies as holistic case study and embedded case study. The embedded study is used when attention is given to one or

more subunits. The holistic case study examines only the global nature of a program or organization.

Taking into consideration the purpose of the study, the chosen case in my study should follow two criteria. Firstly, it would be interesting to do the research in a company that has implemented the HR transformation since the purpose for the study is to investigate the consequences of HR transformation and the reflections from the HR staff. The company should have made the reconstruction of the HR department a few years ago. Secondly, the case company should not be too small because there are limited resources in small size companies and since HR transformation is a new topic. What's more, larger companies are always more likely to share information about the strategies and more people to look into.

I have chosen Volvo Car Corporation as the company to study because as a big international company, they had done a HR transformation three years ago. Another reason for choosing this company is because I had the opportunity to directly contact the HR Vice president of the HR department; therefore I got the name of contact person responsible for the HR transformation, also some contact lists of the people who were affected by the HR transformation. All the participants are very happy to cooperate with me and it was important for me to get contact to the person that work directly with HR area and they are still there since the HR transformation.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

There are two sorts of data that can be collected in a research: primary data and secondary data. Saunder et.al. (2003) State that whatever sources the research choose, they have to be aware of their weaknesses and strengths. Weidersheim-Paul and Eriksson (1997) define primary data as "data that a person gathers on his/her own with a specific purpose in mind" and secondary data as "data that has already been gathered by other researchers with different purposes in mind".

In my paper, I will use both primary data and secondary data. The primary data consists of interviews. The secondary data consists of the company's internal sources of communication and published articles, such as, intranet, company newspaper and meeting materials, presentations, annual reports, etc. I will collect the secondary data

first to analyze the company's situation, understand the problem such as, HR transformation process, consequences, employees' resistance to change, how do they deal with these factors, did they just let it go or try to communicate, what kind of communication has been used during HR transformation. Additional information will be collected from articles, scholars or other database in order to get as much information as I can to conduct the study.

The data will then be analysed via discourse analysis, which is a close and systematic reading of how the participants use language when talking about organizational change and management (Mumby 1988; Cordeiro-Nilsson 2009). In this case, the word 'discourse' not only refers to the language in use, but it is also seen as a process, which is socially situated. As Candlin (1997:ix) said, "However...we may go on to discuss the constructive and dynamic role of either spoken or written discourse in structuring areas of knowledge and the social and institutional practices which are associated with them. In this sense, discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the over- arching social formation." With the case study, the data analysis based on interviews among HR employees and the author analysed it from an objective point of view, since different respondents have various opinions and perceptions of the phenomenon.

3.4 Interviews

The main method for the study is through interviews, where an interview guide is created beforehand. It is important to get a direct and personal contact working at Volvo Cars in order to get the right information. The interview guide helps to be well prepared and it will be easier for me to talk to different people and get to know what they think of the HR transformation, what consequences they experienced from it, how they communicate and such.

I have conducted thirteen interviews in the company with six HR service delivery professionals (SDP) and six HR managers. One interview was conducted with an HR

transformation project manager in order to get a better understanding of the whole HR transformation process. The target group of participants was all involved in the HR transformation with the role split from Human resource business partner (HRBP) to HR SDP and HR managers. Twelve out of thirteen interviews took place in the headquarter office in Gothenburg from March to April during a period of eight weeks; one interview was answered by email due to the workload of the interviewee. All interviews have been recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Interview was held in English and took around forty-five minutes to one hour. The participants are free to speak whatever they want and their anonymity is ensured. With the help of the recording and the notes taken during the interviews, transcriptions have been done right after each interview. It is of great help to take notes and recordings during interviews in order to capture reflections, emotions, body movement, which is suitable for the study (Silverman, 2006).

3.5 Reliability and validity

The correlation of the results to the study depends much upon the manner in which the data is obtained and analyzed. If most of the interviewees have similar points from the same question, then we can say the concluding result of the data is fairly reliable. Gender issue was also considered when selecting participants. As what has been mentioned in the previous part, I conducted thirteen interviews with six HR SDP and six HR managers, Five of them are male and eight of them are female, which would result in a fair distribution of a sample since in the HR department, female outnumber males. The validity of a study is whether the data collected has correlation with the work gathered or not (Thurén, 2006).

The collection of the data has come from the case organization's internal materials and part of that are from secondary sources. The empirical findings also have primary data collections from interviewees. The results from empirical findings are after the case organization implemented the HR transformation process, and it would be running after the study finished, as a result, the content validity was identified.

3.6 Ethical consideration

Regarding the ethical consideration, I will present my research goals to the company and how the thesis will be done. I will have an agreement with the company regarding to the use of confidential data that I will collect during interviews. Before the interviews, the goals and results of the research will be informed to every participants and I will contact my supervisor in the company to inform the person that will be involved beforehand in order to have a consent answer to participate the study. The participants will have the right to refuse to take part in the study and the list of participants will be anonymous during the study.

4. Empirical findings

The empirical findings will be presented in this chapter, which will involve: the organization of Volvo Car Corporation, HR transformation, consequences after the HR transformation, employees' reaction and the use of communication during the HR transformation process. The secondary and primary data have been used in this chapter. It should be clarified that the organizational change differs from organizational transformation. The previous one focuses on the whole reconstruction of an organization like an HR department. HR transformation emphasizes on a fundamental change of a specific HR practices by adding new ideas, the ways of working, connections with different departments, etc. The aim of this study is to get an understanding of how the implemented HR transformation affected Volvo Car Group as an organization and how the employees reacted to it. The empirical data that has been collected is about the consequences and employees resistance in HR staffs and HR managers.

4.1 The HR transformation and new Service Delivery Model

4.1.1 HR transformation

An international company like Volvo Cars that is becoming more global in everything they do and with a HR function becoming more global with the company, many different needs and perspectives need to be balanced in order to make sure to invest effort and money in the right HR activities and support. Otherwise, HR will never be able to support each and every manager's unique business needs. It is vital that, as a company, Volvo Cars is succeeding in reaching a prioritized and mutual global HR agenda. As a result, Volvo Cars developed a new HR service delivery model trying to standardize the way of work to improve the quality and quantity of HR's deliveries (Carlsson, 2013). The goal of the new-implemented model is to remain the right competence and assist the business in the right place at the right time. The company had three main functional area of HR department: HR business partner, HR operations and Center of Expertise. The concept of the HR transformation is to divide the HR work into more strategic and more service delivery focused. They divided the old HRBP role into HR manager (strategic) and HR SDP (operational).

HR Business Partner
- Dividing HRBP in two roles:
  One more strategic – HR Managers, and one more service delivery focused – Service Delivery Local (see below)
- Building up capability of HR Managers

Center of Expertise
- Making CoEs responsible for developing global strategies, policies and processes
- Focusing on business performance enhancing processes
- Creating new CoE "SWAT" teams

HR Operations
- Enhancing HR Portal, HR Service Center and HR Service Delivery
- Focusing service efficiency
- New roles: HR Service Delivery Local and HR Service Delivery Central

Diagram 2: The changes at Volvo cars (Tengelin, 2013)

4.1.2 HR Service Delivery Model

The overarching theme of HR's new Service Delivery Model is "HR at Volvo Cars is all about driving business performance in people areas".

The HR's new Service Delivery Model at Volvo Cars consists of three components. The first component - HR Foundation Services. As a cross-functional business enabler, HR staffs should take the responsibility of providing a number of foundation services equally important and rightly taken for granted as a tarmac road for a driver. As described by HR transformation manager, the transformation road needs to be reliable and efficient. Potholes or inefficiencies may well be showstoppers but not performance drivers. The foundation service at Volvo Cars includes Health and safety, Labor affairs, IS services, Learning services, payroll services, personnel services and recruitment services.

The second component – HR Performance Drivers. They are vehicle, Volvo Car, in the journey towards Volvo Cars 2020' objectives. HR Performance Drivers are Career planning, change management, compensation and benefits, competence development, leadership development, organizational development, recruitment and workforce planning.

The third component - HR Managers. The role of an HR Manager to a business lead is that of a co-driver to a driver in a race to perform and win. The co-driver should have an intrinsic understanding of driving conditions, i.e. the business, in order to support the business lead in effectively implementing performance drivers in her/him or his organization. The co-driver is the thought leader in people areas drawing up and supporting the driver deliver the people strategy to reach the organization's business objectives.
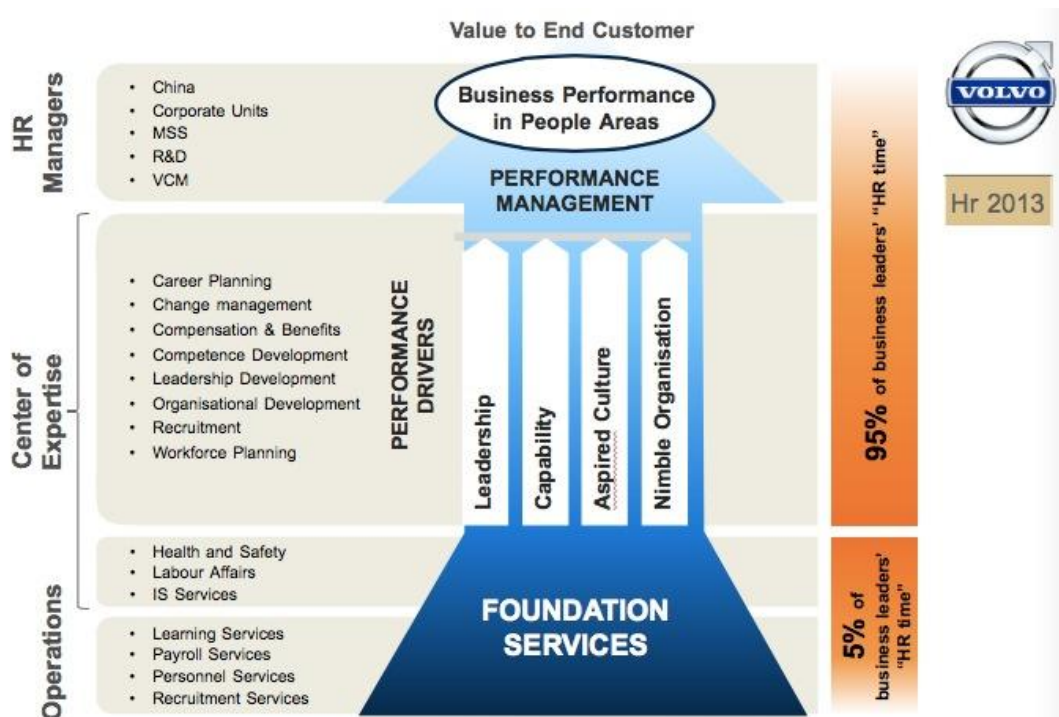

Diagram 3: HR Service Delivery Model (Tengelin, 2013)

In order to fulfil the goal of the HR transformation, the foundation of services needs to be firm and smooth to secure a successful rocket launch. However, the foundation is not the factor to drive performance. The foundation is merely a hygiene factor,

albeit a critical hygiene factor and this is HR's transactional service. The performance drivers are the rocket's engines that will propel the rocket towards the target of business performance in people areas and value to the end customer. The top of the rocket is the cockpit where business leaders and HR Managers are the pilots in charge of managing performance and steering the rocket towards business performance in people areas.

The HR Operations team in the diagram is responsible for HR Foundation Services. Centers of Expertise are responsible for developing and maintaining the performance drivers. HRBP are responsible for managing performance and driving business performance in people areas.

The orange bar on the right is where the future for Volvo cars and they are not there yet. They have a wish those business leaders to be spending 95% of their HR time on performance drivers and performance management and as little as 5% of their HR time on transactional HR activities (Carlsson, 2013).

4.1.3 HR before the transformation

Volvo Cars had a hint of its structure in the HR department before the HR transformation, as one interviewee mentioned:

> *"The old HRBP role had a broader scope, both had a focus on strategic and operational tasks, together working with line managers, but there is not really enough time to be strategic".*

Some other interviewees also comment that:

> "*The old HR structure for HRBP work, they have to do a lot in their own area, almost everything from a business perspective, sometimes we want line managers to take over some responsibilities, but they already have too much to do".*

The goals, policies and strategies for the new HR work were prepared before the HR transformation process started. One overall HR change is that the individual employee became an area of focus for the new practices: operational and strategic.

4.1.4 HR after the transformation

After the HR transformation, Volvo Cars started to use the model of HR Service Delivery Model which creating a new role called HR service professionals Local & Central. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the model has guiding principles in the transformation to collaborate to deliver high performance culture, business case and KPI oriented, work together with line management to drive business results, focus on business performance enhancing activities, act global where needed and local where needed, be change management experts and drive change in the business, leverage technology to deliver efficient and effective HR and integrate innovative HR practices into unified business solutions, etc., according to HR transformation project manager.

When asked about the general view after the transformation, Participant C mentioned,

> *"After the HR transformation, HR managers are able to drive strategic items, to maintain the basics and improve it and get time to drive strategic issues. You have more deep knowledge to guide leaders and have a good support to bring up challenging questions".*

The new role of HR SDP now just focus on the operational tasks like salary setting, re-habitation, welfares, benefits, IS contracts, recruitments, updating personal systems and so on, supporting the line managers with daily work. One of the participants mentioned:

> *"The HR SDP role is similar with the previous HRBP role but without strategic part, the HR manager role now has a narrow focus, like 30% of the previous HRBP role task".*

To sum up, the new HR Service Delivery Model divided HR work into more specific area and the working system within HR is more separated and defined.

4.2 Consequences of the HR transformation

The newly implemented HR at Volvo Cars did not seem to result as expected according to most of the respondents and it is still on its way to reach the goal. The reason can be concluded by the lack of communication, resources, planning, and leadership. These factors made the collaboration between everybody that got affected by HR transformation unclear according to respondents' own experience.

"The HR transformation is good, but I think we need the right person in the right position with the right leadership, when the roles are split, we need to find the right person that fits the profile".

When asked about the consequences from the HR transformation, one of the participants replied:

"After the HR transformation, our work has a focus but narrower than before, SDP just focus on operation task, but in reality it not clear, what supposed to do is still changing all the time".

Role description and responsibilities of the two different positions were unclear and the expectations from employees in relation to the organization and themselves were blurry. The existing HR Service delivery model helps the organization to split the job tasks but from HR SDP's point of view, they are still lacking of resources.

"Now we don't divide the resources in the right ways. if you look at bench mark, the organization needs a lot of operational resource, we are still less people in the operational part than we are in the strategic parts. "

These findings also pointed out that the HR service delivery model was not well planned and this contributed the gap between HR managers, HR SDPs and line managers. One of the HR SDP mentioned:

"Sometimes it creates confusion to line managers because they don't know who to turn to, sometimes the HR manager is doing operational work and sometimes it is me, at the end it ends up with I get an email said help me. And it doesn't fit the goal of HR transformation which to make work more efficient"

4.3 Employee resistance

According to literature study, when change happens, resistance comes along. Sometimes employees need to accept the change, it does not mean that they are satisfied with it or resist the change process. Even it is not easy to get rid of resistance, it is still the right direction to recognize the resistance in the first step (Armentrout, 1996). After interviewing some of the HR staff some indications of resistance could be recognized. Quite a few of the respondents believe that the HR transformation

increased their workload because now they have "*all the operational tasks to be done*" and "*lots of task creates stresses and overtime work needed to meet deadlines and requirements*" which requires them to be even more focused on their current jobs. Some of them that have experienced the increasing workload and lack of time mentioned that "*Sometimes I cannot reply email in three days*".

One of the respondents expressed their frustration regarding the lack of resources:

> "*As a HR SDP, we are working a lot, because we don't have enough resources, the information is there, it is the way to act matters, we get info and we are agree that we need more people in the HR SDP, the management team knows what we want, but they don't have an answer. At least we should start the journey; I have not even seen the start of the journey. This makes me frustrated*".

The lack of explanation creates employees frustration in this transformation as well. One HR SDP mentioned:

> "*During the Transformation process, I got a chance to choose what I want to be, a HR manager or HR SDP, but later I didn't get what I wanted and no explanation*".

Overall, most of the employees agree that they have a positive attitude towards change, but what is interesting is that they can always give an example that represents resistance. Many respondents expressed the view of the HR transformation as creating confusion.

> "*I have heard about HR transformation for 2.5 years that they want to do something with the roles in order to be more strategic and I don't think we are moving towards the same goal*".

Respondent E gives an example:

> "*When dividing two roles into strategic and operational roles, I am talking about the role, the outcome the tasks you do, but in another department, they are talking about activities, if you need to do the paperwork in order to reach the goal, then you need to do that no matter you are strategic or operational, this has been a very clear confusement for me*".

The role changing from HRBP to HR manager is also a big step for HR employees. It requires the old HRBP to only do the strategic work, which means 70 percent of their old job are taken away in order to just focus on strategic ones. One of the HR managers mentioned that:

> "*I don't feel I have enough to do every day compared to my previous job and I am not prepared for it to act strategically. I cannot see my value in the current job. I would like to change to another area in the future.*"

There were also respondents that referred to the kind of resistance that they feel unfair after the HR transformation. One HR SDP mentioned that:

> "*Most of the operational work is done by HR SDPs and it was the 70 percent of the old HRBP tasks, the new role of HR manager, they are doing the 30 percent of strategic work with a much higher salary, I cannot understand why this happen.*"

Even though there is a lot of resistance existing along with the HR transformation, it seems that most of people choose to move on with the new jobs, but the resistance does cause employees retention or rotate to another new area.

4.4 Communication within the change process

Some employees at Volvo Cars have experienced that communication within the company as insufficient while others are satisfied with it. One HR manager believe that they have a lot of information about the HR transformation. It has not been easy for HR employees at Volvo Cars to understand their new roles in the organization. They have felt their roles have been undefined and this created some confusion among them. How do employees perceive communication has had an impact on how they react to the overall changes?

> "*Since I joined the company, HR transformation was a hot topic, we bring up to our meetings, town hall meeting, HR MTs and it was such a big thing, but now we seldom get any update information regarding to this topic*".

Information delivery is important to lower the level of rumors, worries, doubts and feelings of uncertainty about individual's future or career path in the organization. For some of the respondents, there have been "*very little information*" about the HR

transformation, when will it be done? They think it would be more reliable if everyone exchanged the information once they get to make sure the message is reliable. "*It would be nice to get regular updated information about the organization projects*", one of the respondents replied. Employees should know what is really going on before they are affected by the confusing negative information.

Some respondents mentioned that the HR transformation was just being communicated and informed, and then it suddenly just happened, but they cannot see that it is practical, from some HR SDPs*:*

> "*The workings tasks are similar as the old HRBPs, but just focusing on the operational ones, the tasks are the same and I do not think the change is there yet,*"

Many respondents agreed with that statement. Some mentioned that the outcome from HR transformation will come in time but it is still too early to say, right now the whole process is still very slow and they expect to get more updated information.

All the participants did not agree during the interviews, but some of the employees mentioned how their working situations felt more insecure and confused due to lack of communication. They felt that a lot of information that they have got are too late for them to really understand the situation and the goal for the changes. Some respondents mentioned that the information to employees travels and get lost on the way somehow. They know the information is there, but for some reason it just does not reach them.

To sum up, employees are expecting more and clearer information regarding HR transformation as well as better communication. Meanwhile they think it will be better if the information can be sent out earlier. It would be better if the affected employees can be informed and involved in the change process with updated information and the project status.

5. Discussion

In this section, I will present my personal reflections regarding this study, connecting both theory and empirical findings about Volvo Cars HR transformations. Additionally, explanations about the empirical findings based on theory will be given in the following chapter regarding employee's reaction to change, consequences to change after the implemented HR transformation.

5.1 The consequences of the HR transformation

The HR transformation at Volvo Cars aims to create a better connection and right support to business area, by a restructuring of the HR roles from HRBP to HR manager and HR SDP which aimed to have a clear focus on the specific tasks, strategic and operational. The overall goal at Volvo cars was to make the organization more efficient, specialized and more global. The analysis in this part is to discuss if Volvo Cars as an international organization during HR transformation has reached its goals, and has the new structure aligned with the business needs after the HR transformation.

5.1.1 Efficiency and flexibility

Taking efficiency into consideration in the organization, it can be mentioned that Volvo cars have a communication problem where they have troubles with seeking the right person for help. This could be one efficiency issue that matters, which does not fulfill the goal to increase in terms of efficiency. For instance, the unclearness of the job definition makes employees confused about they should do and not do. The importance for an organization is everyone moving to the same goal, but it does not seem to be the case according to the study, as some respondents think they should do the things no matter operational or strategic in order to reach the goals instead of giving it to others.

The HR transformation has not reached the goals as expected in daily working life, most of the respondents have the knowledge of what the change will affect to their work, the HR managers stated that their work tasks become more focused on strategic level with a direct discussion with management team while HR SDPs focusing on the operational tasks. This kind of job dividing gives the old HRBP more flexible time to

focus on one specific task. This requires the whole HR transformation process not only focus on the efficiency and flexibility, but also a more customer focused.

5.1.2 Specialization

The role splitting at Volvo Cars can be representative to be a more specialized focus in the company's overall objectives. The HR managers and HR SDPs from different business units at Volvo Cars have more possible time and easier focus on what delivery they can offer to their key customers. There are problems after the HR transformation with the new-implemented structure. The communication might be one of the factors that results to lack of information, right resources and such. Moreover, it is hard time for each individual to find their values and the right place in the organization.

To assume the organization is specialized or not, it could be a good comparison with the previous model. Before HR transformation, the managers from business area have one-to-one directly support from HRBP and they can get all the help they want. But what is different today is that line managers have to know who to contact regarding their questions. This means a clear distribution of HR tasks is specialized in their specific area, with the aim to reach efficiency.

5.1.3 The Ulrich Model

The HR Service Delivery Model at Volvo Cars is similar to Ulrich Triangle Model. Ulrich Model concerns when, how, why transforming HR has seemed to be useful for many companies. The model needs to be tested by each individual company if it is worth to use and as a result, Ulrich's model has made a big contribution to HR work and the organization. The HR Service Delivery Model separates the work into strategic and operational which in Ulrich's model stated as "business partner and shared service center". The new-implemented model aimed to clarify how HR strategies should be implemented and find a specific approach to define responsibilities. The consequences from the new model has been on the right by dividing work tasks, but a lack of resources on doing operational work and find the right leadership to the managerial position still has a long way to go.

5.2 Employees resistance

5.2.1 Frustration

The HR transformation did not quite meet employees' expectations when it was introduced. The employees' lack of satisfaction could create frustration according to several respondents at Volvo Cars. Some of the employees mentioned they do not feel involved in the transformation process, since no one has asked their opinions, what they expect, all of these were not considered, and such feelings were one of the reason that why people resist to change (Gianereeo & Peccei, 2005). But misunderstanding might exist between the employees and management team at Volvo Cars, since some of the respondents were asked about which role they want to be, but it turns out to be another role instead. As a result, the misunderstanding from each individual is also a cause of employee resistance (Dent & Goldberg, 1999), and it is therefore the argument to explain why some employees react to change negatively.

For the case at Volvo Cars, employees react to change in different ways by expressing their emotions. Some of employees feel frustrated because they cannot do the same work tasks as before, since the jobs are divided in operational and strategic. For HR managers, the change from both operational and strategic to only focusing on strategic work, it caused the unknown outcomes since they do not have a clear definition what they can achieve after they do all the work. Strategic jobs are long term tasks which takes long time to see the result. According to the findings from semi-structured interviews, employees express their emotions with impatience, confusion, anger and anxiety. From some HR SDPs points of view, the existing job tasks did not meet their expectations as the jobs are just focusing on the operational task and according to them, they cannot see a clear future and self-development in doing the operational tasks, which created frustration. All these negative feelings may lead to individuals not performing as good as before. But in the case of Volvo Cars employees, they try to find their way to adapt to the new structure and how to collaborate with each other, trying to get questions answered by them, in case they have more time to focus on the new job. The kind of behavior is argued by Giangrecco and Peccei (2005) that resistance can stop individual from being active and passive in social activities.

5.2.2 Confusion

Frustration was not the only negative emotion that expressed by the employees at Volvo Cars.

Involvement in the change process is argued as something has to do with their attitudes, emotions and behaviors according to Thomas and Hardy (2011). Some others stated that why people have negative feelings or resist change has something to do with the personal perceptions and involvement in the process (Giangreco & Peccei, 2005). It is shown in the empirical findings that employees have negative feelings or emotions from the change of HR transformation when there is a lack of communication, information and involvement. The consequences from this can be creating confusion among employees, which is an emotional factor to resistance to change (Piderit, 2000).

The HR transformation at Volvo Cars causes confusion because some of the employees feel unclear about their future jobs at the company. Some respondents stated that they feel forgotten during the change process and they are not sure what will be in the new role and what will happen in the future. This can be explained with Dent's & Goldberg's (1999) study that the threat of insecurity of job status is another cause of employee resistance. There are several ways that employees express their resistance. By expressing their emotions and being negative is the most common ways to resist change (Smollan, Sayers & Mathenys, 2010). The data from interviews at Volvo Cars among HR staffs showed that confusion is the most common mentioned word when they talked about their own perceptions of their new job tasks. This emotion of confusion for the change process and work status can result employees to be passive and not engaged to the new work with the implemented change. Employees cannot do many things than exploring the information by themselves and waiting for the right answers when they do not understand their new role and contribution in the new structures. According to Giangreco & Peccei (2005), employee resistance can be recognized in non-violent, passive and indifferent behaviors, which management should be aware of.

It has been argued by many researchers that communication, participation and information delivery are important to be engaged in the change process, it doesn't

matter if the change is individual or organizational, and they are vital factors to keep in mind in order to cope with employee resistance (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Giangreco & Peccei, 2005). For the case at Volvo Cars, the goal to engage the strategies and business has not been fully successful or implemented.

5.3 Communication

It is found that some respondents tend to use expressions like "I guess" or "Maybe" when they describe the use of communication when implementing the HR transformation. As reflected by translation theory, it is important to create the stability and establish the relationship between human and ideas, human and objectives in order to understand organizational change. Ideas travel all the time, it is crucial to pack the ideas into a package for both managers and employees to understand and accept it, which is communication (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996).

From the results of the interviews, it is obvious that the employees were not well informed about the company's status, including the on-going projects. The lack of information caused employees' feeling uncertain and confused about the reason why the company is doing HR transformation, as described by interviewees. Most of the employees understand the need for organizational change; however, there is a difference between how the communication with the first management levels is and how the communication with employees on the lower levels is. The managers are most informed about the change though meetings, but the quantity and quality of information received decreases with every level of the organizations structure.

Numerous researchers have emphasized the importance of communication in overcoming and managing resistance. They argue that communication is one of the most essential measures to prevent resistance. If managers communicate successfully and the communication is both downward and upward, they will become aware of how their employees feel, being able to take their opinions into consideration when implementing change and decreasing the risk of resistance.

As reflected in Gilegeous and Chambers (1999), it is necessary that all employees are aware of the change and agree with how it will influence them. Although, Volvo Cars is communicating effectively at present, there are still a lot of improvements that can

be made. Today the communication within the HR function is getting better across all divisions and departments; the use of intranet, telephone, emails, and town hall meetings makes it easier and easier to communicate. What creates the most value is that the company has to send out the information that everyone can understand in order to reach the same goal. Due to some respondents, they stated that the information is there, but they don't know why it is like that. There is always a gap between the management team and employees when talking about communication. Management believes that employees are informed about the change, but this does not mean that they communicate. Communication implies that the information, feelings and opinions run both ways, from managers to employees and vice versa. Most of the respondents stated that there is not a dialog between all levels in the company regarding change.

In short, the communication at Volvo Cars is better at present since the management team has realized the importance of it. According to respondents, they can express their feelings freely to their managers, but nothing happen and no feedback is received. This could be a serious problem, which causes more resistance and frustration. It is important for managers to know how to communicate and build the relationship between them and their employees in order to have a successful implemented change.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Recap of the research

The study aimed to investigate the consequences of HR transformation and the impact on individuals with a single case study at Volvo Cars Corporation. In order to answer the research questions from Chapter one, the study was designed to conduct interviews as data collection method and empirical findings were based on company's material and interviews recordings.

6.1.1 Main objectives and consequences of the HR transformation

With regards to research question number one and two, with the empirical data and findings, it is true that many organizations implement the change in HR functions to restructure the department in order to be more focused in a specific area. Most of the companies use the Triangle model as Ulrich described as a base. As a case company, Volvo developed its own model called Service Delivery model in order to deliver professional services and divide the job tasks into operational and strategic. Many different needs and perspectives must be balanced in order to make sure to invest effort and money in the right HR activities and support. HR will never be able to support each and every manager's unique business needs. A conclusion that can be drawn is that, when dividing job tasks or setting new roles, it is important to have a clear boundary between each role, and what is expected from whom. The links between HR SDPs and HR managers regarding HR transformation did not work quite well after the HR transformation as expected. The job tasks were not clearly defined which led to poor operating HR and tasks that could not be done properly. This is one of the main consequences from HR transformation, which can be discussed more in the future. When splitting the roles, the management team should have a well-planned resource on each position and an analysis on each individual's strengths and weaknesses in order to make a fair distribution. What is more, doing strategic and operational tasks, individuals have different perception on their own future. When describing job contents, it is crucial to have a clear vision of the future position in order to motivate employees to be in the right position and this is another consequence from the implemented change.

6.1.2 Employee reaction and resistance to change

With regards to research question number three, the study confirms similar findings that employees have different levels of resistance based on the information and education they get before change happens from management team. It is common that different people have different opinions based on their own values and personalities, but it is obvious that employee resistance can lead to the failure of the change. Vital tools to lower employee resistance can be more employee involvement and using effective communication. Negative feelings can be recognized when the goal is not fulfilled, such as frustration and confusion. Whether employees react to change negatively or positively depend on their own personality, perceptions as the study shows, and to what extent it affects their daily work varies in each individual. The study also reflects that employee resistance has connections with motivational problems. The management team should motive their employees alongside with the change process, in case they become passive and not engaged with the active behavior. These theories can have a good explanation about how employees' daily work has been affected by resistance to change. Employees at Volvo Cars react to change differently and resistance exists in the people that are not engaged with the change. They did not get the clear view of why the change happens, but they spent time to understand their new roles and the new structure. They want to have values in their work life and have a contribution to the organization. If the change is too fast and they do not have enough time to prepare for it, it would not turn into a good result. The HR transformation Project at Volvo Cars got employees resistance from different perspectives but everyone in the change process tried to let the negative emotions go and work in a new more efficient and flexible way in order to reach the company's goal, which is good for the company.

6.1.3 Information delivery

With regards to research question number four, the use of communication is discussed in the study. There are problems with the communication during the HR transformation and the influence on individuals. Employees care about the involvement and information during the change process. The implemented change could cause negative resistance and emotions, such as worries and anxiety, insecurity about the job status among employees, which may create bad working environment

and affect efficiency. The unclear information can also be the reason why employees are dissatisfied with the ongoing change project and thus rumors and gossips are spread among employees, which lead to a negative impact on each individual. It is crucial for managers to step out of their offices and listen to their employees' opinions in order to nurture a better relationship and collaboration with them. Furthermore, employees need information about changes at the earliest stage in order to prepare themselves. By listening to employees' opinions before a decision taken, employees will feel more involved in the change process and commit to the implemented change process.

6.2 Study contribution and limitations

This research contributes to the literature in HRM field regarding job changes and personal reactions. The topic of HR transformation is newly established and still has a lack of literature related to it. I believe the research and studies regarding HR transformations and its effects to individuals will increase in the future due to the fact that more and more organizations choose to implement HR reconstructions. The study is not only representative for the change in HR transformation, but also applies to other job changes for individuals. What is more, a new perspective of the effects on employees regarding job change and the use of communication was brought up by this study. The study inspires researchers as well as companies to notice the importance of communication when implementing change process.

Limitations also exist in the study due to the fact that this is a single case study with a certain organization. It might be difficult to say the result can be applied to all organizations in different places. The culture differences may also lead to different results. Moreover, I did not have enough time to interview more people from the management level in order to get a better view from a more strategic angle. Lastly, the interview questions were based on researcher's own interpretation where subjectivity should be part of the things that should be aware of.

6.3 Further research

Since the study is done three years after the HR transformation, the consequences of HR transformation cannot be recognized a lot in this short time. Also, employees'

resistance can be recognized in all kinds of changes, a study showing what managers can do in order to overcome or lower employees' resistance would be relevant. It would also be interesting to investigate how HR transformations have been accepted over a long time, has it reached its goals in the long term? With more time the management might be able to accomplish more in regards to reactions to change.

6.4 Managerial implications

Companies should abandon the old stereotype when talking about changes. The changes are not always negative, according to the findings of this study. Regarding the existing implemented HR transformation project, a few implications on the project and suggestions regarding HR transformation on how to close down this process and what can be done will be given in this part.

First of all, the current service delivery model is a well-defined model with a clear definition on how the new role of HR Service Delivery Professionals should do and what service they should deliver. The management team should notice the target group that would be affected by the change process, for example, line managers. The existing two groups of people (HR SDPs and HR managers) having specific focus on operational and strategic tasks may confuse the line managers because it would be hard for them to notice from whom they can find support. In order to avoid this kind of problems in the future, not only is it necessary to prepare the information for the HR staff, but also to prepare the line managers for the transformation.

Secondly, regarding employees' resistance during the change in HR transformation, many employees felt unfairly treated in the selection process, since some of them got no chance to state their own wishes but others did. A possible way to cope with employees resistance could be an open application on the transformed position, employees should have an equal chance to get what they want instead of being pointed to another position without preparation.

Thirdly, the communication with the management team and employees are not frequent and information gets delayed sometime which has a negative impact on employees' resistance. A suggestions from the employees' perspective was that they would appreciate having access to updated information about the new project a longer

time beforehand, so they can prepare for- and understand it better. The management team should take advantage of organizational change and use communication to deliver information in order to lower employees' resistance.

Fourthly, when splitting job tasks, it is crucial to have clear definitions and boundaries in order to draw a line in case there will be a clash with the two roles. The existing HR SDPs and HR manager roles are almost clearly defined, but not quite there yet. Different departments should have their own solutions when they find that the tasks clash and define the job responsibilities themselves. The HR transformation should also focus on the right resources, in the case of the HR SDPs case; there is still a lack of resources in doing operational work regarding most of the HR SDPs view.

Fifthly, the management team should put more attention on employees' future career paths and use the right people in the right positions. For instance, many HR SDPs cannot see themselves doing something challenging, but operational tasks may bore them in a long term, which may cause retention or losing resources in the positions. It is good to have a better career path in each position that employees can clearly see in order to make a plan for their next job position and get to know what suits them the best.

Lastly, employees' resistance develops alongside with organizational change, especially in the case of role changes. Individuals have their own views or personalities on what they want to do, but most people aim to a higher position, even if they are not suitable for it. A suggestion is to have role exchanging workshops in order to help individuals find their own strengths and weaknesses and thus help them to fit better in the organization.

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8.Appendix

Interview Guideline

General questions

1. How long have you been working at Volvo? What is your education background?

2. How long have you worked as HR SDP? HR manager? What did you do before HR transformation?

HR transformation

1. What are the main and overall objectives of the HR transformation according to you?

2. Describe your HR tasks in the organization? How has your work been changed since the transformation?

3. Explain how you perceive the new role after the transformation? what are the changes connected to you?

4. What is your opinion, has the HR transformation until today resulted in a more efficient HR work?

Employee resistance

1. Was it hard for you to accept the new role after HR transformation? What did you expect from it? Has your expectation been met?
2. What is your role during this transformation process? Are you involved in the process? How much did you involved in? What was your expectation?
3. How did this transformation affect you and your colleagues? Are there any obvious actions from you or from others? How did you overcome the resistance?
4. What were the main barriers in the change of the role? How did you overcome it? Any examples?

5. What is your future plan? Do you think you will change job?

Communication

1. How did you experience the communication process during the HR transformation? Do you have any examples? With the HR organizations? Line managers?
2. What are the differences in communication before and after the transformation process? Any examples?
3. What is your evaluation of the communication process? How did it help you in understanding the change in order to adapt it?