

# IMPACTS OF FREQUENT LEADERSHIP CHANGES AS PERCEIVED BY EMPLOYEES

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## Abstract

Whenever there is a change in leadership in any type of organization, it has an impact on employees. The purpose of this study was to find out the perception of employees towards the frequency of leadership changes, as well as the resulting impacts made on their individual lives and organizations. A total of 28 respondents participated in a semi-structured questionnaire that was administered electronically through the use of social network. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The study indicated that although changes in leadership were acceptable, they should be kept to a minimum. Results also showed that the majority of the respondents were contented with changes, and up to 77.8% were satisfied with their leaders' styles of leadership, particularly democratic, and a combination of democratic and autocratic leadership styles. Positive impacts of well-managed leadership changes as perceived by employees resulted in a better working environment, higher profitability, individual growth, better organizations to work in, and new ideas. On the other hand, employees who had encountered negative impacts of leadership changes experienced stress, job and organizational instability, uncertainty, and reduced productivity.

**Key Words:** Frequent Leadership Changes, Employee Perception, Impacts of Change, Leadership Changes, Organization Change

## บทคัดย่อ

เมื่อไรที่มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงตัวผู้นำในองค์กรใด ๆ ก็ตาม จะเกิดผลกระทบต่อตัวพนักงานลูกจ้าง วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษานี้ก็เพื่อจะทราบความรู้สึกของพนักงานลูกจ้างที่มีต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงดังกล่าว และผลกระทบที่มีต่อชีวิตส่วนตัวของลูกจ้างแต่ละคนและต่อองค์กรโดยรวม การศึกษานี้ใช้แบบสอบถามกึ่งสำเร็จรูปผ่านทางอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ด้วยสื่อเครือข่ายทางสังคม โดยมีผู้เข้าร่วมตอบ 28 ราย มีการประมวลผลข้อมูลทั้งเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพ ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าแม้การเปลี่ยนแปลงของตัวผู้นำองค์กรจะเป็นที่ยอมรับให้เกิดขึ้นได้ แต่ควรจำกัดให้เกิดขึ้นน้อยที่สุด ผลการศึกษายังระบุอีกว่า ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามส่วนใหญ่รู้สึกพอใจกับการมีการเปลี่ยนแปลง และมีจำนวนร้อยละ 77.8 ที่พอใจกับวิธีการบริหารของผู้นำองค์กร โดยเฉพาะวิธีการบริหารแบบประชาธิปไตยและวิธีผสมกันระหว่างแบบประชาธิปไตยและรวมอำนาจ ความพอใจที่เกิดขึ้นจากการเปลี่ยนแปลงในตัวผู้นำที่ทำงานอย่างมีระบบก่อให้เกิดบรรยากาศการทำงานที่ดีขึ้น ผลกำไรที่มากขึ้น การพัฒนาของพนักงาน องค์กรที่นำทำงานด้วยมากขึ้น และแนวความคิดใหม่ๆ ในทางกลับกันพนักงานที่ได้รับผลกระทบในทางลบจากการเปลี่ยนแปลงผู้บริหารต้องประสบกับปัญหาเรื่องความกดดัน ความไม่มั่นคงในงานและในตัวเอง ความไม่แน่นอน และผลการทำงานที่ลดลง

**คำสำคัญ:** การเปลี่ยนผู้นำบ่อย ๆ, การรับรู้ของลูกจ้าง, ผลกระทบของการเปลี่ยนแปลง, การเปลี่ยนผู้นำ, การเปลี่ยนแปลงขององค์กร

## INTRODUCTION

In response to increasing levels of challenges and pressures, existing leaders bring about inevitable changes in an organization in order to survive (Daft, 2010; deKlerk, 2007; Hansson, Vingard, Arnetz, & Anderzen, 2008; Noblet, Rodwell, & McWilliams, 2006; Phipps, Prieto, & Ndinguri, 2013; van Knippenberg, Martin, & Tyler, 2006) and to gain a competitive edge in response to “globalization, new technologies, demographic shifts, emerging markets, and new alliances” (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2009; Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2008, p. 514; Phipps et al., 2013). Despite efforts made by leaders in bringing about changes to organizations, not all changes have been successful (Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008; Umble & Umble, 2014). Many research studies have been conducted on change leadership, but there is minimal research on the impacts of frequent changes in leadership on employees (Bernerth, Walker, & Harris, 2011). This article presents research that has been designed to study the perception of employees on frequent changes in organizational leadership, and how these changes have had an impact on them as individuals, and on their organizations.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Organizational Change

When challenged with the need to survive, organizations find it compulsory to introduce consistent strategic changes (deKlerk, 2007; Lamberg, Tikkanen, Nokelainen, & Suur-Inkeroinen, 2009; Phipps et al., 2013) and the task of leading these changes has been cited as one of leaders' most significant and complicated leadership responsibilities despite the uncertainties, complexities, volatility, and ambiguity involved (Chisholm & Martell, 2013; Morrissey, 2013). A key element to successful organizational change is the effort made by leaders in understanding the thought processes of its organizational members; why changes are accepted or resisted, the change process, types of change, and using the relevant models in comprehending organizational problems (Koury, 2013; Stanleigh, 2013; Umble & Umble, 2014).

### Frequency of Change

The speed at which change should be intro-

duced has been widely debated. Should change be quickly implemented to avoid resistance to change, or should they be gradual? (Yukl, 2010). Although there is no distinct indication as to which is better, some evidence has favored the slow and gradual approach in the successful implementation of major organizational changes (Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2004, as cited in Yukl, 2010). Although there is still limited research on the cumulative effects of intense and repeated organizational changes by employees, the common effects include burnout, job anxiety, lowered job satisfaction, increased frustration and stress levels, strain, signs of withdrawal, lower organizational commitment, higher turnover, demotivation, lowered employees' confidence in handling changes, and other potentially negative effects (Bryson, Barth, & Dale-Olsen, 2013; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006; Tvedt, Saksvik, & Nytro, 2009). When too many change initiatives are introduced, they are detrimental to not only individual employees, but also, ultimately to the organizations in which they are employed (Bernerth et al., 2011). On a much more positive side, organizational change, if implemented successfully, stand to benefit in numerous ways such as increases in employee morale, performance, and saves money for the organization (Stanleigh, 2013).

### Effective Leadership

Effective leaders are needed to breed success, and a leader is also said to be effective when there is an appropriate match between the leader's leadership style to the organization's setting and his or her followers (Lussier & Achua, 2007; Malos, 2012; Northouse, 2010). Any successful organizational change effort is therefore heavily reliant on leaders who are not only ethical (Kelly, 2013), but practice a good combination of both leadership and management skills (Anca, & Dumitru, 2012; Hughes et al., 2009).

According to Malos (2012), “Leadership is less about your needs, and more about the needs of the people and the organization you are leading” (p. 421). Three main leadership styles briefly discussed in this literature review include the ones that have been included in the study: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Autocratic leaders, also known as authoritarian leaders are very strict and dominating leaders who believe in maintaining a tight rein over their lazy, unproductive,

and incapable subordinates. The downsides of this leadership style result in low morale, fear, poor solutions for organizational problems, and job dissatisfaction (Malos, 2012; Taylor, 2006). Democratic leaders, on the other hand, have faith and trust in their subordinates' ability, and this is clearly reflected in the high subordinate involvement in decision making, the promotion of social equality, and employee encouragement. The positive impacts of this leadership style include high productivity, increased morale, better ideas and solutions to problems, and this leadership style is known as one of the most effective leadership styles (Malos, 2012; Taylor, 2006; Yukongdi, 2010). The laissez faire leadership style, also known as the "hands off" leadership style, involves almost complete task delegation to its followers without providing much or any direction. An abundant amount of freedom is granted, where followers have access to making their own decisions in work completion with a high degree of autonomy and self-rule. Research has also indicated that this is the least effective style of leadership (Malos, 2012).

### **The Challenges of Introducing Organizational Changes**

Reported failures of organizational changes are as high as 60% to 70% because of complicated change implementations and initiatives, highly attributed to employees' resistance to change (Morrissey, 2013; Stanleigh, 2013; Trignano, 2010). Resistance to change is typical for individuals and organizations (Loesch, 2010; Mariana, Daniela, & Nadina, 2013; McShane & Von Glinow, 2010; Stanleigh, 2013) and is said to be complicated (Loesch, 2010; Umble, & Umble, 2014) despite the benefits to the recipient (Loesch, 2010; Stanleigh, 2013). As change agents, leaders "need to realize that resistance is a common and natural human response" (Mariana et al., 2013; McShane & Von Glinow, 2010, p.447; Trignano, 2010) and they need to move forward in overcoming it as change is a significant component for the organization's future (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Stanleigh, 2013; Zimmerman, 2006).

To successfully manage resistance to change, leaders need to understand the factors behind the resistance, and investigate the challenges and impacts that organizational changes have on their employees. Not only will these leaders gain the trust

of their employees but it would also create an appreciation on the part of employees for the need for change (Carr, 2009; Daft, 2010; Pritchard, 2014).

A mistake made by most managers is the assumption that they have successfully implemented a change after delivering a change awareness speech during a one-time conference meeting. A plan should be made to create high employment involvement through their participation throughout the entire planning for change implementation in the form of effective communication, employee support prior to, during, and after the change, and training. This involvement breeds commitment and ownership to change implementation (Carr, 2009; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Lim & Daft, 2004; Pihlak, & Alas, 2012; Trignano, 2010; Wittig, 2012).

Looking from a different perspective, some change management experts stated that "resistance to change needs to be seen as a resource, rather than an impediment to change" (McShane & Glinow, 2010, p. 447). When rightly managed, this resistance can be manipulated by managers in turning it around to attain organizational goals (Jick, 1993; Maurer, 1996, as cited in Yukl, 2010; McShane & Glinow, 2010).

### **Managing Change**

As change agents, managers need to understand the significance of open channels of communication between top management and employees. Change leaders also need to be educated, trained, and prepared to bring about change (Koury, 2013; Trignano, 2010), and as role models, they will also need to work on change on a daily basis in word and action (Keim, 2011; Schaffer, 2010). Changes communicated by top management should not only result in specific, realistic, and attainable expectations, but also involve those directly affected by it to make it successful (Schaffer, 2010). New management, in particular, "must stop, look, listen, and learn before acting" (Feuer, 2008, p. 30) and be very cautious in bringing about any changes that affect the organization's culture as they usually have the tendency to backfire and fail (Katzenback, Steffen, & Kronley, 2012). Educating employees about how changes would have an impact on them, and particularly how they would benefit from the changes, reduces resistance, uncertainty, and fear (Keim, 2011; Koury, 2013; Trignano, 2010). An-

other critical point is the necessity of ensuring some stability for employees in the midst of new changes to maintain a sense of understanding” (Huy, 1999 as cited in Bernerth et al., 2011, p.321) as it is part of human nature to possess the need for order and predictability (Hogan, 2007; Ullrich, Wieseke, & van Dick, 2005). A big mistake made by change leaders is the misconception that change is easily embraced by employees and that they are capable of moving forward rapidly with the flow of change. Organizational changes are usually accompanied by organizational traumas that are experienced by employees, and change agents need to pay attention to and help employees through this difficult emotional period (deKlerk, 2007).

Therefore, despite the norm of change policies, to grow, and to remain competitive, change agents need to carefully reflect on their change initiatives prior to initiating them as constant change is harmful to not only individuals but to the organization as well (Bernerth et al., 2011).

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study (Figure 1) was developed based on a slight conceptual framework adaptation from de Poel, Stoker, & van der Zee (2012), the literature review, and on the results from the study. Starting out with the changes in leadership, that is broken down into the frequency in changes in leaders, the leadership style that is used by the change agent, and methodology in bringing about changes in the organization, these together, have an impact on individuals and organizations. The impacts can be either positive or

negative, on job satisfaction, productivity, harmful potential conflicts, and on the future direction of the organization as a whole, and that of employees.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was accomplished by asking three of the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency of leadership changes in an organization?
2. How do employees feel about the frequency of leadership changes?
3. To what degree has the change of leadership impacted employees and the organization as a whole?

### METHODOLOGY

The convenience sample was used in the selection of 28 participants and since this study was more exploratory and qualitative in nature, only a small number of subjects was required. Electronic mail was chosen as the preferred social network through which electronic questionnaires were administered to sample respondents (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010). A semi-structured questionnaire entitled “*Impacts of Frequent Leadership Changes: As Perceived by Employees*” was designed to serve the purpose of the study. Combining quantitative (closed-ended questions) and qualitative (open-ended questions) research designs, the questionnaire consisted of three sections and a total of 13 questions. The questions used in the pro-

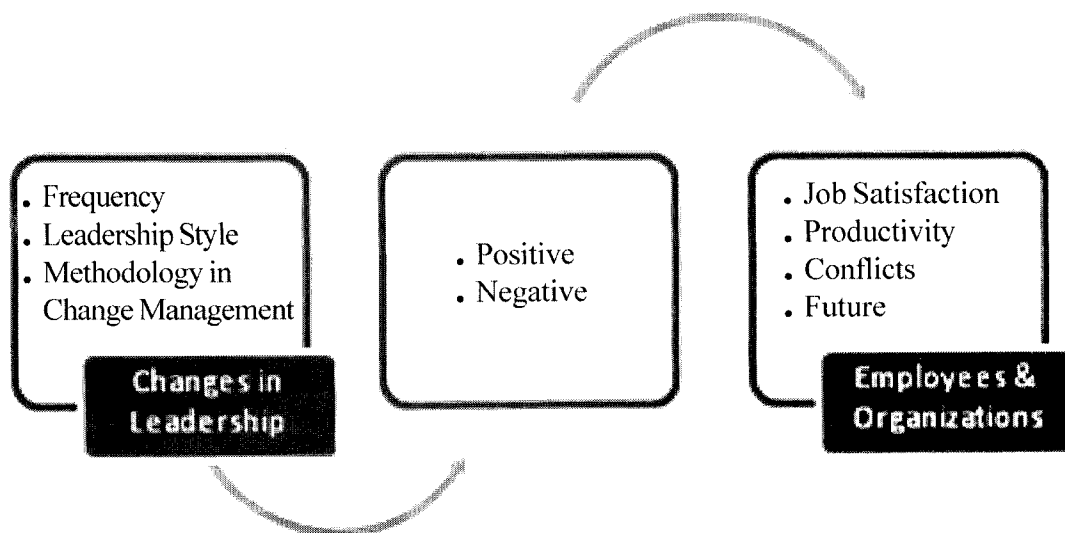


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

file were mainly obtained from the public school teachers' questionnaire called Schools and Staffing Survey (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) while qualitative questions were created by the researcher to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability through an online focus group, recommendations were noted, and questionnaire revised prior to administration.

and highest educational degree achieved, as illustrated in Table 1.

### Professional Information

Figures and tables have been chosen to display the respondents' professional information: (a) the respondents' place of employment (Figure 2); (b)

## FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics were used in reporting the frequency findings for quantitative data, and when appropriate, cross-tabulation tables have been employed to address research questions. Qualitative data are presented in tables, in text form.

### Respondents' Profile

Out of the total of 28 respondents who had participated in the study, the more dominant gender was female (64%), while only 36% represented the male gender. The results of the respondents' demographics in terms of age, ethnic background,

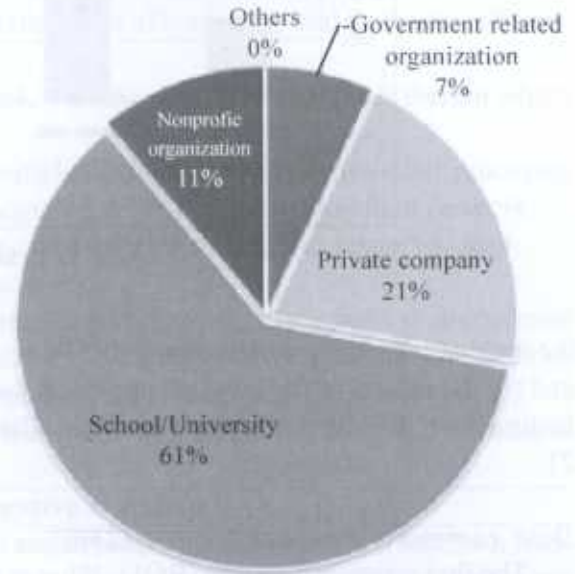


Figure 2: Place of Employment

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

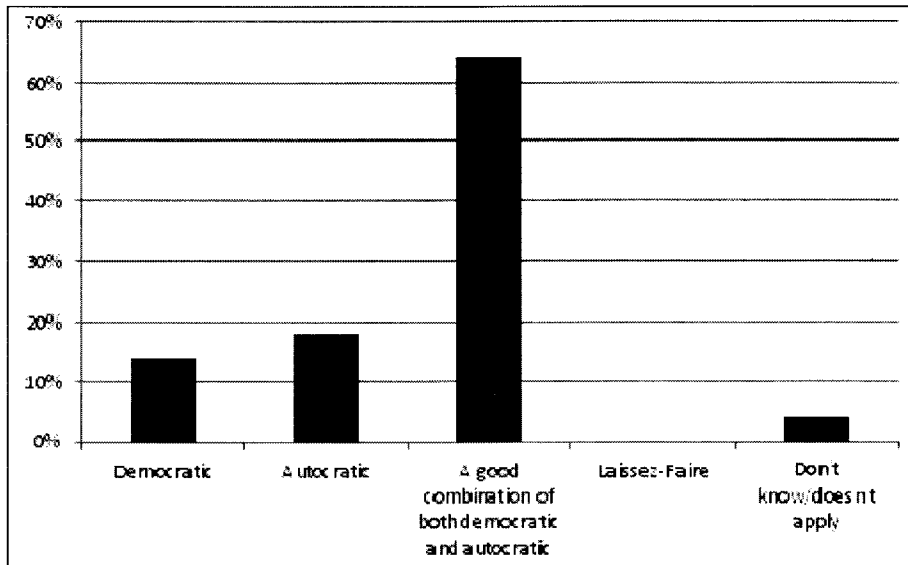
Age	Gender		
	Total	Female	Male
29 or lower	7.1%	11.1%	0.0%
30-39	35.7%	3.3%	40.0%
40-49	32.1%	27.8%	40.0%
50-59	21.4%	22.2%	20.0%
60 or higher	3.6%	5.6%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Ethnic Background	Gender		
	Total	Female	Male
Asian or Pacific Islander	25.0%	16.7%	40.0%
Caucasian	28.6%	22.2%	40.0%
Thai	35.7%	44.4%	20.0%
Others	10.7%	16.7%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Degree	Gender		
	Total	Female	Male
Bachelor Degree	21.4%	33.3%	0.0%
Educational Specialist or Professional Diploma	7.1%	5.6%	10.0%
Master Degree	50.0%	33.3%	80.0%
Doctorate Degree	17.9%	22.2%	10.0%
Others	3.6%	5.6%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**Figure 3: Practiced Leadership Style**

the type of leadership style practiced (Figure 3); and (c) the results of the level of employee satisfaction with the various leadership styles (Table 2).

*Data Analysis of Research Question One*

The first research question (RQ1): *What is the frequency of leadership changes in an organization?* was answered with the question, “In the years that I have worked in my organization, the number of changes in leadership has been”, was a closed-ended item and Table 3 shows frequency

of leadership changes by the organizations they represent, and the time period at the organization.

*Data Analysis of Research Question Two*

The second open-ended question: *What is your opinion regarding the frequency in the change in leadership?* addressed RQ2: *How do employees feel about the frequency of leadership changes?* As this question was qualitative and data in text format, the findings are classified into positive and negative opinions, and are outlined in Table 4.

**Table 2: The Level of Employee Satisfaction with Various Leadership Styles**

Level of Satisfaction	Total	Leadership Style				
		A good combination of democratic & autocratic	Democratic	Autocratic	Laissez Faire	Don't know/ Doesn't apply
Agree	67.9%	77.8%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Disagree	21.4%	16.7%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Maybe	7.1%	5.6%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not sure	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know/ Doesn't apply	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 3: The Number of Leadership Changes by Organization and Employment Period**

Number of changes	Total	Current Organization				Employment period			
		Government related organization	Private company	School or University	Nonprofit organiza-	Less than 2 10 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	More than
No change at all	21.4%	0%	17%	24%	33%	25.0%	33.3%	28.6%	0.0%
Two-three changes	25.0%	50%	33%	24%	0%	75.0%	33.3%	0.0%	12.5%
More than three changes	32.1%	50%	17%	35%	33%	0.0%	22.2%	28.6%	62.5%
Don't know/doesn't apply	21.4%	0%	33%	18%	33%	0.0%	11.1%	42.9%	25.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4: Opinions Regarding the Frequency in the Change in Leadership**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Positive Opinions</b>
1	It is good to have a change every five years.
2	We benefit in some ways (e.g. more convenient operations, and a nicer environment).
3	Healthy! It brings about new ideas.
4	There is a need to have change and frequency depending on the result as a whole.
5	Acceptable frequency should be after a few years.
6	Management by succession is the way forward for the organization to nurture and develop its leadership personnel.
7	My organization follows the policies of specific terms of leadership and that seems to work well.
8	Our NGO uses the Policy Governance model, with the checks and balances therein which are very effective.
9	I don't mind as long as it isn't abrupt and with little transition, otherwise other processes slow down. On the other hand, keeping leadership is the key to development network.
10	Good if it's not too often. It's good to set a certain period of time for leaders to lead.
11	I think our organization doesn't change much.
12	The changes are related to the company's benefit and the growth of the individuals because my company moves the leader to different teams to challenge him more and it would not be boring to be in the same place for a long time.
13	Stability is always good when it comes to leadership of a school, as long as the leader is leading the school in the right direction.
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Negative Opinions</b>
1	Change in leadership causes uncertainty and tentativeness in the followers. Therefore, leadership should not be changed too often because it tends to make subordinates feel uncertain about the future and uneasy about the leadership.
2	New leadership teams always implement a lot of changes initially but people have the tendency to resort to their old normal ways eventually.
3	Shouldn't be too frequent as the policy will change when leadership changes.
4	More changes, more learning curve, less productivity and increased stress for employees who have to coach bosses, particularly those who are slow learners
5	There is corruption from the top: the leader of the organization and his team. Whenever there is a change in the top of the organization, there is a change in the organizational leadership.
6	The change in leadership is indicative of the challenges the organization faces – good employees tend to leave after a few years, because they are increasingly frustrated by the autocratic, if not totalitarian “regime” coming from the company's headquarters.
7	It isn't good. No continuity and stability.
8	Change was necessary, but has caused lots of hard feelings this last time.
9	There are difficulties involved in learning to adjust when leadership changes frequently (I've been here for 4 1/2 years and have worked for 3 different bosses).
10	The leadership position should not be changed so often as it will curtail its progress and sustainability.
11	Change is inevitable, and even though I am used to it, there can be quite dramatic shifts in an organization's climate with the change of just one leader. It makes people nervous when changes take place.
12	The Board of Directors does not understand the importance of consistency and long-term work in leadership.
13	If there is a high turnover of leadership, it doesn't help with turnover of teachers; usually the two go hand in hand.

*Data Analysis for Research Question Three*

RQ3: *To what degree has the change of leadership impacted employees and the organization as a whole? was answered by two qualitative questions: (a) How has a change of leadership im-*

*acted you as an employee? and (b) Has a change in leadership been positive or negative on the organization? Text comments for these two questions are found in Tables 5 and 6 respectively.*

**Table 5: Impacts of Leadership Changes On An Employee’s Life**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Positive Impacts</b>
1	A change in leadership has made me what I am today and I am more confident in making decisions.
2	I have only worked under one leader at my current school and it’s been great.
3	I have no problem working with any leader as long as that person does the right thing and has a good vision.
4	Not much impact on my personal life.
5	It has helped me grow and mature, it stretches me so I learn to keep myself flexible.
6	Just keep adjusting to a different management style or personality, but this is normal and has not been a problem.
7	I was reassigned to teaching different grade levels, which suited me just fine. It teaches me to adapt and to find out what they are expecting and adjust accordingly.
8	Being able to keep jobs.
9	Not impacted me except for a few changes which were adjustable.
10	Leadership change in the past was part of continuous growth and development that has helped me to grow and develop as an employee as I’ve seen the need for change.
11	Professional growth and challenge for the good.
12	There are minor changes that did not impact me.
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Negative Impacts</b>
1	New leadership saw me as a threat due to the connection I had with the previous leadership and was cut out of the loop on things (since I was not one of them).
2	Forced to make adjustments whether an individual was willing or not.
3	Stress and tension.
4	It is a bit unsettling if the transition is too sudden.
5	It has made my job more difficult and resulted in rising levels of stress, not only as an employee, but also in my life in general, as I have to mull things over at home, after work.
6	It makes me feel disheartened that reduces my efforts at work.
7	Failure to comply means the risk of losing my job.
8	I began work with little training, and was immediately asked to fill the highest position in my department with no workflow transition. I had to work overtime (and still do) to fix and maintain the leadership transition.



**Table 6: The Impacts of Leadership Changes on an Organization**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Positive Impacts</b>
1	A new leader, who is good, has a positive impact on the organization.
2	New ideas to the team.
3	An adjustment to a senior leadership about a year ago has had positive results as the profitability of the company has improved significantly.
4	Overall, it has a positive impact in the organization to carry forward the mission and its objectives where new ideas and processes are needed to translate its goals into many action plans.
5	Most changes are positive as a whole
6	The change in leadership needed to be made because he/she was having a negative effect on the company as a whole.
7	Teachers tend to stay longer when there are fewer turnovers at the top.
8	Not much impact as this is a Japanese style organization.
9	Yes, it has been usually good, but there is always a transitional period that can be hard for everyone.
10	As a whole, positive.
<b>Comment</b>	<b>Negative Impacts</b>
1	Negative, new things are always taken with much negativity, and not much cooperation.
2	I'm afraid to say that the organization as a whole is run tightly by the company's CEO abroad, where criticism, or attempts to create a dialogue, has not been tolerated, let alone appreciated, leading to a general feeling of "fatalism" and demotivation.
3	According to what I have observed, the change in leadership in the present has built up a kind of distrust among the teachers, no openness among the teachers, and teachers can no longer express their own feelings to other colleagues for fear of severe consequences they may face in the case the complaint reaches the school's leadership team.
4	Yes, it has been usually good, but there is always a transitional period that can be hard for everyone.

## DISCUSSION

The respondents of this study are well-educated, and highly represented by the female gender. The ethnic diversity provided a more well-rounded study as the focus was not just from a local point of view but from multi-racial perspectives. Moreover, as most are middle aged, they have behind them, many years of working experience.

Information pertaining to the respondents' professional profile sheds valuable light into their professional backgrounds and the organizations which they represent. It can be concluded that it is very much dominated by the education industry. The majority of the respondents have been in their organizations for a relatively long period of time. This has probably enabled them to witness the changes of leadership and experience the impacts that come along with leadership changes. Most of the organizations in which the respondents worked at, practiced good leadership by either being democratic

or a combination of both democratic and autocratic styles.

More than half of the respondents experienced at least two changes of leadership in their current employment, and up to 32% have experienced more than three changes. They were accepting of infrequent leadership changes that brought benefits to the organization but changes made by new leaders should be gradual. It was suggested that management by succession would be a good option in nurturing and developing its new leaders. Other benefits gained through leadership changes included: (a) nicer working environment; (b) more convenient operations; (c) a better organization when a good leader is in place; (d) leading the organization in the right direction, (e) individual growth as employees are promoted, and (f) new ideas.

The drawbacks of frequent leadership changes, included uncertainty, instability, hard feelings, nervousness, the lack of continuity, tentativeness, un-

easiness, and inconsistency, policy changes, less productivity, stress, and the departure of good employees.

The impacts of a change in leadership that were experienced by employees had more favorable comments than unfavorable ones. For the most part, employees have realized the need for change, and have made the adjustments to the changes that were necessary. Others felt that they had developed professionally, matured, became more confident, and were able to make better decisions. Those with positive experiences with changes in leadership felt that though the impacts were eminent, they were minor, and did not have a big impact on their lives. Others were not as fortunate as they experienced job insecurity, stress, coercion to adapt, tension, reduced productivity, and were disheartened. It can be deduced that despite the bad experiences by some employees, the majority were in favor of the positive impacts of changes in leadership.

The impacts of leadership changes were positive on organizations when a good leader brings to it, new ideas, increased profitability, positive changes, and when replacing a previously bad leader. Changes in leadership though accepted as being positive, also had drawbacks such as the difficult transitions by employees to the new leadership style, demotivation, and "fatalism". Frequent changes in leadership has also created distrust amongst employees within the organization, and seen as negative, with resistance to changes made by new leaders. It can be concluded that the type of leader determines the impacts he or she has on an organization, and special caution should be exercised when selecting a new leader.

## CONCLUSION

The study provided invaluable insights from employees who had experienced, first-hand, the impacts of frequent leadership changes. Comments made by respondents not only confirmed what had been stated in the literature regarding changes brought about by leaders, but also act as new contributions to current literature. Infrequent leadership changes are acceptable and special care should be taken in minimizing changes in organizational leadership at all levels. New leaders should introduce change gradually, maintain some stability, be more sympathetic and understanding of those

exposed to change, and remember to involve personnel from all levels in the change process. The results of the study indicated that positive impacts outweighed negative ones, possibility highly attributed to the low levels of autocratic leadership practiced in organizations in which the respondents were represented in.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

One limitation in this study was the minimal amount of information that was provided by respondents as the tendency was to make short comments, rather than longer, more detailed ones.

As there is scant literature available on the frequency in changes of leadership, it is recommended that further research be conducted on this topic to contribute to existing literature. The results obtained from this study can also be used as variables for further research on the topic in the form of a quantitative study.

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