
Leaders' Coping Mechanisms in Facing Pressure During Organizational Transformation

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Abstract

Organizations must continually evolve to stay competitive during times of change and uncertainty. Leaders need to embrace new strategies, grow the business, and drive innovation while aligning with the company's strategic goals. This study examines the experiences of two leaders who guided their organizations through significant transformations. Through an examination of the challenges faced, perceptions formed, and coping strategies employed, the research highlights the multifaceted nature of organizational change. Using a qualitative case study approach, the study draws on in-depth interviews with the leaders, complemented by manual thematic coding and theoretical analysis. Findings reveal that both leaders experienced initial emotional distress but successfully managed stress through a combination of coping mechanisms—namely, self-regulation, emotion-based coping, and problem-based coping. These mechanisms can help manage disruptive situations, transform work overload into people development, improve productivity, and bring credit to the organization. The study underscores the importance of leadership in navigating organizational change and highlights the positive impact of effective coping strategies on individual and organizational outcomes.

Keywords: *coping mechanism, organizational transformation, leaders*

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations must continuously transform to remain relevant and competitive amidst change and uncertainty (Goronga et al., 2024). Leaders need to adopt new strategies, expand businesses, and enhance innovation while maintaining the company's strategic goals (Zywiólek et al., 2022). Gartner (2018) noted that, on average, companies experienced five changes in the past three years, but only 34% were successful, indicating that transformation is challenging (Wirotama, 2021). Successfully navigating these changes requires visionary leadership, resilience, and the ability to inspire teams through uncertainty.

Organizational transformation has become increasingly common in recent decades due to the need for companies to improve performance, competitiveness, flexibility, and cost efficiency. This transformation involves changes in organizational structure and processes that can be large-scale, such as downsizing, and potentially become sources of work-related stress. Such stress can directly affect mental health, including the risk of depression, due to increased job demands and uncertainty (Niedhammer et al., 2021). These significant changes require leaders to design a clear future vision, develop relevant strategies, and manage human resources effectively, ultimately impacting organizational performance (Mosadeghrad & Ferdosi, 2013; Buil, Martínez & Matute, 2019). In the context of the pandemic, organizational environments have become more complex, demanding leaders to enhance the effectiveness of their relationships with subordinates through appropriate leadership styles, such as transformational leadership (Alhashedi et al., 2021; Wanasida et al., 2021).

However, the transformation process faces significant challenges. Employees often struggle with issues related to communication, change processes, leader-employee relationships, consultation, leadership skills, and motivation for change (Woodward & Hendry, 2004). Poor communication, autocratic leadership styles, or lack of employee engagement can significantly hinder transformation efforts. On the other hand, transformational leadership has proven effective in fostering a shared vision, encouraging collaboration, and empowering employees to take ownership of change initiatives (Duan et al., 2022).

Leadership stress is also a major concern. According to Harms et al. (2016), leader stress influences their behavior, ultimately affecting subordinates' stress levels and job burnout. In a study by Woodward and Hendry (2004), only one in five employees believed their manager was highly capable of driving organizational transformation. Despite this, transformational leaders have been shown to enhance organizational agility and innovation by motivating, supporting, and intellectually stimulating their teams (Berson, Oreg, & Dvir, 2008).

BPS (2024) recorded 2.82 million managers and 56.56 million entrepreneurs in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of leadership in determining organizational success. Strategic leadership involves the ability to map out strategies to achieve specific goals, with the flexibility and vision to anticipate changes (Biwilfa, 2023). The global pandemic and work pressures exacerbated leadership challenges, increasing workplace stress and contributing to long-term health risks such as heart disease and diabetes (Andina, 2023).

Effective change management brings significant benefits to companies, including increased employee support, resource readiness, and achievement of change targets. It can also optimize budgets and ensure projects are completed on time, especially if the applied approach is measurable and aligned with the type of change implemented (Biwilfa, 2023). Harms et al. (2016) emphasized that stress experienced by leaders influences their behavior and the dynamics of leader-follower relationships, which are key factors in determining the stress levels and burnout of subordinates. As a result, the coping mechanisms of leaders are essential for effective change management, which is the central focus of this study.

While existing studies have explored the development, impact mechanisms, and practical applications of transformational leadership across various industries (Antonakis & House, 2014), they largely overlook a crucial dimension—how leaders cope with the pressures of organizational transformation. Understanding these coping mechanisms is essential, as effective leadership during transformation not only relies on strategic vision and influence but also on leaders' ability to manage personal stress. This gap highlights the need for in-depth research to uncover how leaders maintain resilience and well-being amid organizational change, thus complementing and extending current transformational leadership studies (Dong, 2023).

Coping, understood as an individual's response to challenges, has been adopted in various disciplines. In psychology, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as a dynamic cognitive and behavioral process to manage environmental demands that exceed an individual's capacity. In an organizational context, leaders' coping includes their efforts to handle the pressures of meeting change demands (Lazarus, 1999). This study focuses on leaders' coping mechanisms in facing pressures during the organizational transformation process.

Additionally, coping mechanisms are crucial in supporting the success of organizational transformation. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified two main types of coping: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping aims to change or overcome stressful situations, while emotion-focused coping deals with emotional reactions to stressors. Research also introduces the concept of proactive coping, a future-oriented approach to identifying and mitigating stressors before negative impacts occur (Sharma et al., 2022). Proactive coping enables leaders to manage risks and opportunities more effectively, thereby enhancing individual and organizational resilience.

Proactive coping has been proven to improve performance, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior while reducing emotional exhaustion (Sharma et al., 2022). In the context of organizational transformation, leaders who can apply proactive coping can create effective strategies to face work challenges, ensure the success of transformation processes, and maintain employee well-being.

In the educational context, coping has also been a research focus. A study by Sebastian et al. (2024) showed that school principals with adaptive coping mechanisms reported higher job satisfaction and lower stress levels compared to principals with maladaptive coping styles. Teachers working under adaptive principals also demonstrated better coping abilities and health. These findings highlight the importance of adaptive coping in creating a healthy and productive work environment.

This research is expected to contribute significantly to the development of psychological science, particularly social psychology in leadership theory, by enriching the understanding of coping mechanisms in leaders who succeed in organizational transformation. Besides serving as literature for future research, the study's results can strengthen theories on the relationship between coping mechanisms, leadership behavior, and organizational success in facing challenges.

Practically, this research provides broader insights for leaders and organizational members to manage pressures and challenges during transformation processes. It also aims to serve as a practical guide in developing effective coping strategies, thus enhancing individual and organizational resilience. With these insights, leaders and organizational members can successfully navigate difficult situations and create more adaptive and productive work environments.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach to understand leaders' coping mechanisms under pressure during the organizational transformation process, focusing on their subjective experiences. A case study allows for an in-depth analysis of specific phenomena within their context, aiming to provide insights into unique social relationships and processes (Hartley, 2004). The unit of analysis is individuals, specifically leaders who play a role in managing pressure during organizational transformation (Yin, 2014).

The research subjects consist of two-unit leaders, one from the outsourcing sector and the other from the government sector. They were selected through a preliminary study to ensure their relevance to the research topic. Despite differences in social and economic systems, both share similarities in management and organizational goals, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences in Research Subjects

Aspect	Outsourcing Company	Government Institution
Main Objective	Providing Workforce for Third Parties (Clients)	Providing Public and Government Services
Relationship with Clients/Public	Employment Relationship Based on Service Contract	Interacting with Relevant Units and the Public for Public Services
Main Duties	Providing Professional Workforce, Specifically Security Personnel	Providing Public Services

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured approach. The researcher used a prepared interview guide that was detailed yet flexible, allowing for modifications based on the respondents' answers (Table 2).

Table 2. List of Research Questions

No.	List of Research Questions
1.	Company profile of the respondent
2.	Experience in organizational transformation and its elaboration process
3.	Leader's perception of organizational transformation
4.	Challenges faced by leaders during organizational transformation that create substantial burden
5.	Dynamics of the leader's mental process in driving transformation to success
6.	Identification of leader's emotions when problems arise and the actions taken
7.	Symptoms that emerge when severe stressors occur
8.	Identification of problems and the steps taken by leaders to resolve them
9.	Feeling of isolation as a leader
10.	Adequacy of support systems in addressing problems
11.	How memory is utilized in the coping process
12.	The relationship between the leader and team members
13.	How to encourage team members to change for the better
14.	Actions taken to acquire sufficient resources to solve problems
15.	Actions taken to find solutions in the problem-based coping process
16.	The effective process of making organizational changes toward improvement
17.	Actions taken when experiencing the phase of letting go of things that cannot be controlled
18.	Steps taken after defining problems that can and cannot be controlled
19.	Actions taken in seeking feedback and evaluation in coping
20.	Ability to view problems as opportunities for improvement
21.	Discussion with the team about the causes of pressure in organizational transformation and the next action plan
22.	Problem-based coping in handling issues
23.	Emotional-based coping in handling issues
24.	Experience with burnout
25.	Factors that most determine the success of coping
26.	The ideal leader's image and how the leader views themselves as a current leader
27.	Factors that most determine the success of organizational transformation
28.	Achievements attained after the organizational transformation process
29.	Opinion on the success of organizational transformation
30.	Perspective on the respondent's role in the achievement or success of organizational transformation
31.	What is the respondent's greatest goal at the moment?

The questions were open-ended, enabling an in-depth exploration of the subjects' coping experiences in dealing with pressure during the organizational transformation process (Yin, 2014). This technique was designed to allow the researcher to listen empathetically and gather detailed information from the subjects' perspectives.

The organization and analysis of data followed the case study research stages outlined by Hartley (2004), which include selecting relevant participants, ensuring access to key persons, establishing a theoretical framework, posing focused research questions ("how" and "why"), and systematically collecting data. Data analysis was conducted by meticulously describing the data, categorizing them into themes or patterns, and utilizing tools such as tables to identify data relationships. The credibility of the study was maintained through respondent validation, where analyzed data were returned to the subjects for accuracy verification, along with additional interviews for clarification and reinforcement of findings (Creswell, 2007).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings, including an overview of the research location, characteristics of the subjects involved, and thematic analysis based on in-depth interviews. The research location was selected based on the characteristics of organizations undergoing transformation, including the outsourcing company PT GAS and a Regional Government Organization.

The study focuses on leaders in strategic positions who are directly involved in the organizational transformation process, with criteria including openness to sharing experiences and a clear transformation context. The observed transformations include changes in structure, human resources, and organizational culture, with both external and internal pressures as factors contributing to complexity.

The research was conducted in the post-transformation phase to evaluate the outcomes of organizational strategy implementation. Data collection utilized in-depth interviews to explore leaders' subjective experiences regarding their coping mechanisms in handling pressure. Through a phenomenological approach, this study aims to understand leaders' personal experiences in dealing with pressure during the organizational transformation process and its impact on the success of strategies and organizational progress.

The study involved two leaders from different sectors to identify similarities or differences in their coping mechanisms during organizational transformation. Based on in-depth interviews and field notes, this study identified 13 key themes relevant to the research objectives, providing deep insights into the subjects' experiences in handling organizational pressure.

Table 3. Thematic analysis

Description	Subject 1	Subject 2
Initials	AD	AS
Organization	PT G A S	Regional Apparatus Organization
Age	46 Years Old	43 Years Old
Last education	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
Position	Leader PT GAS	Head of Department
Interview date	4 October 2024	11 October 2024
Interview location	Jl K Surabaya	Jl J Surabaya
Organization profile	The company was established in 2012 and operates in the outsourcing field, with 5 office staff members and 170-200 employees deployed.	The organization profile is a government organization, and the subject has been working for 14 years with 20 employees in a unit they lead.

Thematic analysis of transcription data categories:

Organizational Profile of Successfully Transformed Companies

According to Wirotama (2021), a company undergoes up to five changes within three years. The leaders in this study have worked in their respective organizations for over ten years.

“The company was established in 2012 and is engaged in outsourcing. Currently, there are 5 office staff and 170-200 people are distributed.” (P1:2)

Organizational Challenges Leading to Transformation

Various challenges within the organization triggered the need for transformation, including macroeconomic downturns that resulted in decreased business orders and issues related to human resource mismanagement.

" I used to have marketing, the results were thrown to other companies - there was betrayal. So from the marketing side, I do the disassembly. "

"organizational transformation, it can be said that sometimes happens because of several factors, for example that was earlier." (P1:4)

Organizational transformation for Subject 2 involved downsizing, which led to difficulties in maintaining work quality due to the increased workload on leadership.

" The organizational change from 1 work unit of 4 parts was changed to 3 parts. From the elimination of 1 part this causes the merger of functions into one unit of work." (P2:4)

Leaders' Perceptions of Organizational Transformation

Leaders' perceptions play a crucial role in determining the success of transformation efforts. In this study, the two subjects had significantly different views on organizational transformation.

Subject 1 sees transformation as essential for maintaining and improving service quality, especially in the service industry. They believe transformation should be comprehensive, particularly at the employee level, to ensure the company meets business standards.

"I have a lot of transformations in employees, because the service system is alone, our quality must be good." (P1:6)

Subject 2, however, takes a more critical stance, arguing that transformation was not based on proper scientific analysis, leading to increased workload without accurate workload assessment.

"The transformation that I experienced in my perception was not appropriate because the change was not based on scientific studies or studies, so that the goal of organizational transformation that should be able to achieve several positive benefits was not realized, because the accumulation of functions without being preceded by the measurement of existing workloads caused the merged functions to not be handled optimally and reduced the workability in handling other functions." (P2:6)

Strategies for Sustaining and Growing the Organization

Both subjects implemented different strategies to maintain and grow their organizations, yet both aimed at enhancing service quality and competitiveness.

Subject 1 emphasized providing excellent service to clients through a 24-hour monitoring system, employee training, and detailed quality control at the operational level.

"I improve the quality by, among other ways, collaborating with the police to provide training to security, cooperation with psychologists for recruitment. There are also outsourcing companies that are economical, not trained." (P1:10)

Subject 2 focused on improving work quality and continuous employee development. They believed that sustained training, execution, evaluation, and monitoring are crucial for maintaining high-quality work outcomes.

"Of course, the quality of good work results goes through many processes, both training, implementation, evaluation and monitoring. We also focus on continuous improvement of human resource quality." (P2:10)

Challenges in the Organizational Transformation Process

Organizational transformation comes with various challenges that leaders must navigate.

Subject 1 faced human resource and financial challenges, particularly in finding employees aligned with their vision and dealing with delayed client payments while ensuring timely salary disbursement.

"If the challenge is as I mentioned earlier, it is usually due to people problems, or the delayed payment invoice has not been paid, while we have to pay employees. So sometimes you have to pay the cost for employee payroll which is quite large." (P1:12)

Subject 2 struggled to maintain work quality amid increased responsibilities, which made it difficult to sustain high standards.

"In its realization, it causes difficulties in maintaining the quality of work." (P2:8)

Initial Responses to Pressure During Organizational Transformation

The pressures that arise during organizational transformation evoke various negative emotions in both subjects, such as feelings of stress and mental burden, which require immediate solutions.

Subject 1 responds to this pressure with faith and reliance on God (tawakkal):

"The feeling of being depressed, there is a burden that must be found a solution. But I am always confident and reliance on God." (P1:18).

Subject 2, on the other hand, seeks ways to improve their mood and maintain emotional stability. Initially, problems negatively impact their mood, but they have specific ways to cope:

"Usually at the beginning of the problem arises so that you are not in the mood. I usually do things that can restore my mood, usually buy coffee, pray." (P2:14).

Symptoms of Stress When Facing Stressors

Subject 1 does not dwell too much on heavy problems but experiences flu when under severe stress.

"If there is a bill due but the invoice from outside has not been paid. It sometimes becomes a flu " (P1:20).

Subject 2 experiences forgetfulness, mood disturbances, and disconnection from their surroundings.

"Often easy to forget, sometimes not connected because of certain problems." (P2:16).

Reappraisal Response to Pressure in the Transformation Process

Both subjects respond to pressure through religious coping and emotional-based coping strategies:

Subject 1 strengthens their faith and views hard work as devotion and a means of sustenance.

"I surrender my worldly problems to God, I learn to be sincere and patient. Now business is just a path for sustenance from the Unseen God." (P1:14).

Subject 2 builds affirmations emphasizing human adaptability to foster resilience and self-growth.

"I tried to patiently accept by building an affirmation that human beings have the ability to adapt, so my own capacity must bloom." (P2:12).

Self-Regulation

Both subjects apply various self-regulation strategies, including emotion regulation, self-instruction, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation:

Subject 1 relies on tawakkal for emotional regulation and self-instruction to maintain discipline.

"When there is a problem, I always rely on God. then move again. It depends on what action needs to be taken. What is clear is that I am always disciplined every day, I have to contact people, I have to meet people often, make networking." (P1:22).

Subject 2 takes time to analyze the situation before making decisions.

"First of all, I usually need to think about myself before deciding how to act." (P2:18).

Both subjects exhibit high self-motivation and set personal standards:

Subject 1 aims to advance the company and benefit many people.

"An ideal leader... someone who is firm... idu geni, tough when necessary. As for myself, I am definitely firm." (P1:60).

Subject 2 focuses on performing their duties well without grand ambitions. *"Work as best as you can to meet needs and responsibilities, no grandiose desires." (P2:68).*

Both subjects engage in self-monitoring and evaluation:

Subject 1 maximizes problem-solving strategies based on past experiences, modifying them as needed.

"I will use my thinking power as much as possible and sometimes reflect on the experience that I have already experienced how to overcome it, but yeah, it must also be modified according to the problem." (P1:34).

Subject 2 seeks feedback through discussions and evaluations to enhance self-capacity.

"Spiritual, yeah. Worship and reliance on God. Then the awareness of thinking and acting well in facing reality." (P1:54).

Both research subjects demonstrate flexibility in applying various self-regulation strategies. The common strategies they use include:

Emotion regulation: Both subjects use different techniques to manage their emotions, such as surrendering to God (Subject 1) and situation analysis (Subject 2).

Self-instruction: Subject 1 uses self-instruction to maintain discipline and focus on goals, while Subject 2 tends to analyze situations and plan the next steps.

Self-monitoring and self-evaluation: Both actively monitor their performance and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used. Subject 1 focuses more on spiritual and social aspects, while Subject 2 emphasizes self-analysis and seeking feedback.

Proactive Coping

Both subjects proactively anticipate and manage potential stressors:

Subject 1 actively builds professional networks and discusses solutions with managers.

"At most, I talk to God, or with the Manager, the discussion is still carried out, second, what is not good is eliminated and the third is to make innovations, yeah, it can be likened to having to find new people/relationships." (P1:42).

Subject 2 acknowledges responsibilities and mentally prepares for challenges.

"Yeah, it has been. want to let go of things that cannot be controlled. Yeah, see yourself in terms of its role and responsibility and effectiveness. Often I see that by leaving, yeah they are still pursued for responsibility, so yeah, it is best to be prepared." (P2:34).

Both subjects emphasize eliminating unnecessary burdens, creating solutions, and continuously adapting to difficult situations. Their proactive approach demonstrates strong self-awareness and effective stress management capabilities.

Emotional-Based Coping

Positive Reappraisal

Based on the given data, both subjects demonstrate an interesting pattern in applying emotional-based coping strategies, particularly in three main categories: positive reappraisal, accepting responsibility, and sublimation. Both research subjects exhibit the ability to face challenges during the organizational transformation process. They do not merely endure but actively seek positive meaning in every difficult situation.

Religiosity serves as a significant source of strength for both individuals. Through religious practices, they find hope, sincerity, and the belief that there is wisdom behind every trial.

Subject 1, for instance, increases the intensity of worship to attain patience and sincerity in facing various challenges.

"I understand qodho and qodar, I learned about the science of pursuing your hereafter, then the world follows you. So I surrender my worldly problems to God, I learn to be sincere and patient. Now business is just a path for sustenance from the Unseen God, all fortune from God, money can be channeled through the work business. So the important thing for me is to work, to try. In the morning I go to work, come to the office to meet people, I provide information, network." (P1:14)

Subject 2 builds positive affirmations and seeks support from superiors and third parties to find solutions. Both believe that behind every problem lies an opportunity to grow and develop. Thus, religiosity is not only a source of comfort but also a driving force to keep striving and achieving goals.

"Yeah Pray first. Usually it will be very hard, so what I do is ask for help from God. Then consult with the leadership to discuss what efforts can still be made, then involve a third party, bring in resources that are not organic, look for resources too." (P2:28)

Accepting Responsibility by Raising Awareness of One's Role and Adapting

Analysis of the research data indicates that both subjects actively apply the strategy of accepting responsibility in facing various challenges in organizational transformation. This strategy is reflected in their efforts to enhance awareness of their roles and adapt to the given situation.

Subject 1 increases religiosity as a means of self-regulation and acceptance of circumstances. By strengthening faith, Subject 1 feels more capable of being patient and sincere in facing challenges. Additionally, Subject 1 actively seeks knowledge and develops personal capacity as a leader, maintaining religious routines, learning from experienced individuals, and adhering to a growth mindset.

"Tahajjud worship, Fajr at the mosque every day, networking with fellow professionals who have a lot of experience, listening to podcasts sometimes. The point is that we can't stagnate, we have to continue to grow." (P1:62)

Subject 2 builds positive affirmations to help adapt to change. Subject 2 also engages in self-contemplation to understand their role in the organization and accept responsibility for their work.

"I contemplate to myself, that with personal awareness I must be able to go through, live and have to be patient because this work is the source of my livelihood." (P1:48)

Sublimation: Channeling Discomfort into Positive Action to Seek Solutions and Avoid Burnout Both subjects apply sublimation as one of their coping mechanisms. In this context, sublimation is the process of redirecting unpleasant psychological energy or impulses into more socially acceptable activities. Both subjects demonstrate awareness of the importance of preventing burnout. By continuing to move forward and seek solutions, they successfully maintain emotional balance.

Subject 1 engages in sublimation by avoiding prolonged dwelling on problems and instead focusing on work.

"But I'm a person who doesn't think too much, I don't take care of it, I just work, business is just business. I have never been stressed. I don't have money, yeah, but tomorrow, yeah, there is. For example, if there is an employee who breaks the contract, it's just normal, the next months there will be more. Yeah, as long as you move to work, you will definitely be able to do it. If I stay at home, I can't. Everything needs a network, a market, a lobby." (P1:12)

Despite the increasing workload, **Subject 2** does not consider burnout an option and remains focused on completing the pending tasks.

"I don't have time... I want to think about burnout but I can't. Because there is already a lot of work that needs to be done." (P2:50)

Problem-Based Coping

Seeking Social Support

Both subjects demonstrate problem-based coping efforts by seeking social support. This strategy shows that individuals do not solely rely on internal resources to overcome issues but also seek help from their social environment.

Subject 1 relies on dependable employees and receives support from professional relationships.

"If it's the employee support system, yeah when they can be relied on, but if there is a problem with the employee, I don't hesitate to dismiss them. I also have a lot of networks and from this network of relationships, there are many who help me too." (P1:26)

Subject 2 builds social support by discussing matters with superiors and collaborating with the team.

"Yeah there are teams that can be well invited to work together to share roles and burdens." (P2:22)

Planful Problem-Solving

Both subjects engage in problem analysis and take measures to improve situations by implementing coaching and establishing routines for employee development.

Subject 1 demonstrates a focus on human resources, believing that HR quality is key to organizational success. When facing issues, Subject 1 tends to identify the root cause within HR and takes action to improve the situation. This includes recruiting new employees and leveraging professional networks to find solutions, such as acquiring new clients after losing a major one.

"Yeah, of course, we have to find a new way out, for example, if we lose one big customer, I will look for another relationship. Betrayed by employees, yeah I look for more employees, usually yeah from the relationships and communities I join, I screen people who can be cooperated with. From there, find better people, so that the business can grow better." (P1:36)

Subject 2 takes a more holistic approach, focusing not only on individuals but also on team dynamics and work processes. Subject 2 frequently coaches employees to enhance their performance and resolve problems, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships within the team. When facing difficulties, Subject 2 discusses them with others to gain different perspectives. If an immediate solution is unavailable, they focus on controllable aspects and devise ways to address them.

"All employees are 2 layers below me and 1 layer below me, I do all the coaching process one by one. The coaching process is carried out based on mapping needs and priorities based on issues. Some are old and some are short, based on urgency as well. From this process, it has begun to show positive results where employees have shown improvements both measurable through the assessment index and the resolution of arrears of problems.." (P2:44)

Confrontation

Taking risks by confronting employees when there are intolerable problems.

Subject 1: If a problematic employee can be terminated, resolving the issue by replacing the person is an option. Even if there is an intolerable problem, legal action can be taken.

"If it's the employee support system, yeah when they can be relied on, but if there is a problem with the employee, I don't hesitate to dismiss them. I also have a lot of networks and from this network of relationships, there are many who help me too." (P1:26)

The Impact of Organizational Transformation

Factors Determining Organizational Success

Subject 1 believes that the key to an organization's success lies in the quality of its human resources. They emphasize the importance of hiring employees who not only possess the right competencies but also align with the organization's vision and values. In other words, building a solid and professional team with a shared vision serves as a strong foundation for achieving organizational goals. A thorough selection process is crucial to ensuring that each individual who joins can contribute effectively and work harmoniously toward common objectives.

"Solid and professional team. Employees must follow our vision as leaders. If my people are always walking in the field and screening the right people for me to recruit. From there I equalized the vision. The betrayal that occurred is usually because it is just a matter of numbers. I am looking for people who have the same values." (P1:58)

Subject 2 emphasizes the central role of leadership and teamwork in the success of organizational transformation. They believe that a strong commitment from leaders in driving change is the key factor. A visionary and dedicated leader can inspire and motivate the team to overcome various challenges. Additionally, forming a solid team—where each member fosters a sense of camaraderie and mutual support—is crucial. Such a team can work effectively and efficiently to achieve common goals. Subject 2 also highlights the importance of sacrifices from all parties, both leaders and employees, in achieving successful transformation. These sacrifices may involve time, effort, and even personal comfort, but ultimately, they will yield positive outcomes for the organization.

"The commitment of the leadership in rolling out this transformation is crucial. Because behind the commitment there are sacrifices, including being able to face pressure, longer working hours, great responsibility and the ability to overcome challenges. Then we also have to build family relationships with employees because after all, we have to work together solidly." (P2:56)

The Impact of Organizational Transformation is Organizational Success

Subject 1 reports that one of the most evident impacts of the organizational transformation is business growth in line with expectations. Over a certain period, the business they manage has grown fivefold. This growth is reflected in the increasing number of employees successfully placed.

"The increase in business has been 5 times since its inception, currently the number of employees distributed is 170 people, next month it can be 200 people." (P1:64)

Subject 2 emphasizes that organizational transformation has led to improved employee performance. Employees reportedly have better mental health and have even received awards from the government. With improved mental health, productivity and work quality have also increased. The government award serves as concrete proof that the organizational transformation has successfully enhanced both performance and reputation.

"Many improvements from our fellow employees and bureaus have received several awards from the Central Government for work achievements in several performance areas. I evaluate my colleagues working with good mental health, there are no obstacles such as burn out or prolonged stress." (P1:62)

Perceptions of the Ongoing Organizational Transformation

Subject 1 emphasizes that organizational transformation is an ongoing journey with no definitive end. New challenges constantly arise, both internally and externally. While some successes have been achieved, continuous improvement and development remain necessary.

"Success in the sense of company progress is not bad, but it is still in the process because challenges are always there and must always be overcome." (P1:66)

Subject 2 focuses on the importance of human resource development in the context of organizational transformation. They believe that transformation is not only about changing systems or processes but also about enhancing employee competencies and capacities.

"I consider this transformation process to continue, because organizations, especially human resources, must continue to grow." (P2:64)

The Role of Leaders in Organizational Transformation

An analysis of the statements from both research subjects provides an interesting perspective on their views regarding leadership roles in the organizational transformation process. Despite their different backgrounds and experiences, they share common emphasis on humility, spirituality, and collective leadership.

Subject 1 highlights the role of God in the success of organizational transformation. With humility, they acknowledge that the achievements attained are not solely due to personal ability but rather a blessing and grace from God. This perspective demonstrates:

"Alhamdulillah, Allah helped me in managing this company until it continues to grow until now." (P1:68)

Subject 2 emphasizes the importance of teamwork in achieving success. They do not position themselves as a central figure but rather as an integral part of the team, where everyone contributes equally to the transformation process.

"I am only part of the team that carries out changes, achievements and things that are considered success are teamwork." (P2:66)

Organizational transformation is a complex process that requires effective leadership to overcome. This study explores the experiences of two leaders in guiding organizational transformation, the challenges they faced, and the coping strategies implemented to sustain and develop their organizations. The results indicate that the success of the transformation is influenced by the leadership approach, coping abilities, and the quality of human resources within the organization.

Both Subject 1 and Subject 2, with over a decade of experience, faced different challenges in organizational transformation. Subject 1 dealt with pressures from a declining economy, employee violations, and the consolidation of work units, which increased the management burden. On the other hand, Subject 2 faced a transformation process that was perceived as lacking data-based analysis, which resulted in excessive workloads without thorough evaluation. The two leaders have differing perceptions of transformation: Subject 1 views it as a necessity to maintain business quality, while Subject 2 emphasizes the importance of in-depth studies to mitigate negative impacts.

The coping strategies of both subjects also vary. Subject 1 adopts a strategy based on religiosity as a form of self-regulation, while Subject 2 prioritizes self-affirmation to enhance adaptive capacity. These coping strategies, whether emotion-based or problem-solving, help both leaders handle pressure and maintain emotional balance. Subject 1 tends to approach challenges more positively, using *tawakal* (trust in God) as the foundation of their attitude, although the pressure often triggers physical symptoms like the flu. On the other hand, Subject 2 tends to be more open to negative emotions, such as a bad mood, but manages to overcome the pressure through calming activities and contemplation, although they frequently experience psychological symptoms like mood disturbances and forgetfulness.

Self-regulation strategies play a crucial role in the success of coping. Both subjects practice self-instruction, rational thinking, and a spirit of resilience, but with different approaches. Subject 1 relies more on spiritual and social aspects, while Subject 2 takes a more analytical and rational approach. This flexible approach helps both leaders manage the diverse pressures of organizational transformation effectively.

The leadership strategies of both subjects also reflect different areas of focus. Subject 1 emphasizes service intensity and supervision, while Subject 2 prioritizes human resource

development and the quality of work outcomes. Both leaders face unique challenges: Subject 1 has to adapt to business dynamics, including finding like-minded human resources and managing cash flow, while Subject 2 focuses on maintaining the quality of work amidst increasing workloads.

This study confirms that the success of organizational transformation depends not only on its execution but also on strong leadership, teamwork, and a data-driven approach. Successful transformations result in improvements in performance, productivity, and organizational reputation, yet they still require ongoing adaptation. The pressures of transformation trigger a variety of physical and psychological symptoms, highlighting the importance of flexible and adaptive coping strategies. Emotion-based coping strategies, such as positive reappraisal, sublimation, and accepting responsibility, are key in handling pressure, while problem-based coping supports the successful management of challenges.

This study concludes that visionary and dedicated leaders, who are able to foster a positive work culture, are key factors in supporting sustainable transformation. Successful change not only brings positive impacts to the organization but also reflects the leader's ability to guide the team and create an environment conducive to growth.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the experiences of two leaders navigating complex organizational transformation marked by performance decline and increased workload, revealing that successful coping involves both emotional-based strategies—such as positive reappraisal, sublimation, and accepting responsibility—and problem-focused approaches like seeking social support, structured problem-solving, and leveraging team collaboration and social networks. Their flexible use of these strategies, supported by internal factors like human resource quality and teamwork as well as external social networks, enabled effective management of change and psychological adaptation essential for individual resilience. The findings highlight that transformation success depends on visionary leadership, a positive work culture, and organizational adaptability, with appropriate coping reducing stress and fostering proactive internal improvements. Given the importance of these coping mechanisms, future research should explore how tailored leadership development programs that enhance emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, and resilience can systematically improve leaders' capacity to manage organizational transformation across diverse contexts.

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