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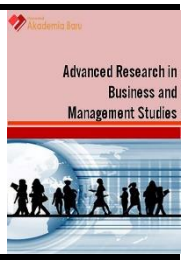

Managing Organisational Change: The Role of Polyphony and Emotional Reflexivity

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ABSTRACT

Despite the profound impact of polyphonic practices in helping leaders and organisational members to achieve a successful organisational change effort, many organisations are still unable to engage in excellent change communication activities. As such, the organisations will face difficulties in achieving their short and long-term goals, create more misunderstandings among employees, and diminish both employees and customers' trusts. Previous research studies have also progressively highlighted cultural factors has been one of the influential factors that affect the communication behaviours of organisational members and leaders during change. Since research that focuses on middle managers' polyphony practices especially those in a collectivistic society has been minimal, this research was conducted to examine how polyphonism is practiced by the studied organisation during organisational change. Using middle managers' conversations on emotional reflexivity during change, this research was conducted to obtain a rich understanding on the studied phenomenon. Communicative Constitution of Organisations the Montreal School (CCO TMS) theory was used to guide the present research and semi-structured in-depth interviews with thirty middle managers of a Malaysian (aerospace component manufacturing) organisation were carried out. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. The data revealed polyphony are strongly enforced by the respondents and their leaders through five steps of practice: mutual recognition, mutual trust, dialogic sessions, mutual understanding, and mutual agreement. The respondents also acted as polyphonous leaders: leader and decision maker of subordinates' interactions, and leader for ideas' diversity. The themes also reflected the emotional reflexivity practiced by the respondents which are self-consciousness, empathy, self-control, motivation and social skills. This research helped to contribute new traits to the unique face of Malaysians' identities. It also shows the importance in attending to middle managers' conversations on change since middle managers' acceptance towards change are being influenced from their emotional reflexivity and organisation's polyphony practice.

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1. Introduction

Organisational change is a deliberate creative destruction aiming for a better living and future in the organisational life [1]. It is a tool to transform one or more areas inside an organisation such as adoption of innovative technology or new job roles, qualifications, and responsibilities. Organisational change occurs because the organisations need to increase its productivities and efficiencies. It helps the organisation to move from its current condition toward some anticipated future state to increase organisation's effectiveness [2]. However, regardless of its purposes, studies have proven that one common effect from organisational change is it causes its participants to face negative emotions which cause them to resist change initiatives [3]. Change affects middle managers the most [4], they are feeling stress, worried and uncertain about the new environment, but they have to execute their leaders' change plans. Middle managers have to put aside their conflicting emotions and be rational. They must improve their adaptability, and a key to break this problem is by practicing emotional reflexivity [5,6].

Holmes [7] defines emotional reflexivity as "the practices of altering one's life as a response to feelings, and to interpretations of one's own and other's feelings about one's circumstances" (p.61). Emotional reflexivity can be understood as a process of being aware on the ways a person feels about a particular event and how those feelings later on influence the intentions of his or her actions when with others. Emotional reflexivity helps individuals to build positive self-identities during crisis because it makes people to be honest and acknowledge their emotions, makes them to be empathic [8] and free from being judgemental [9]. Emotional reflexivity gives participants the chance to deal with conflicts rise from organisational change rationally. Albrecht [10] highlights emotional reflexivity is an important skill during a crisis because it guides members to rationalise their emotions, influences their ability to act upon the event they encounter. The work of Jena *et al.* [11], also mentions emotional reflexivity during crisis is important because it increases change participants' moral and courage to adhere the new workplace environment, increase employees' happiness and help them to tackle conflicts in their workplace amidst their chaotic and unending job pressure. Other studies also have highlighted on the benefits of conducting emotional reflexivity where it reduces stresses [12], increase happiness, build positive mindsets [13] be more caring and attentive, open minded, respectful [14,15], improves creativity and decision makings quality [16,17].

Cunliffe and Ivaldi [18], as well as Osbaldiston *et al.* [19], suggest researchers should use dialogues and conversational styles to study participants' emotional reflexivity. Hence, this research chooses to use conversations to help study the selected phenomenon for two reasons. First, their conversations have all verbal and nonverbal information that are useful to describe their work experiences [20,21]. Most importantly, conversations of the middle managers expose the polyphony experiences and practices in their organisation [22,23]. Second, conversations are happening around middle managers all the time [24,25], they are familiar with the concept so it would not be a hassle for the respondents to discuss about it in this research. It can be summarised that conversations have a valuable role in providing ample information about the present research area. Whether the conversations are small talk on their workspace's issue or a serious discussion on bringing the organisation to move forward, they are all important as their conversations shape their identity.

To relate to the present study, this research uses middle managers' conversations on emotional reflexivity during change to identify their polyphony practices at their organisation. When middle managers produce their conversations on organisational change, multiple voices reside in those

conversations. This is known as polyphony, where poly means 'many' and phonic means 'voice' [26]. Polyphony in organisational context refers to the various voices of organisation members and how their voices are present, disclosed and used in an organisation's management. Previous literature on polyphony has highlighted the need to cater to the multiplicity of voices in organisations [27,28], especially during an enforced change since it allows successful change implementation [29]. A polyphonic organisation can be identified when communication exchanges of the internal stakeholders have five elements which are first, mutual recognition; second, reciprocal trust; third, mutual enabling; fourth, mutual understanding, and lastly, practice multiloguing [30]. In other words, if the middle managers' visible, hidden, obscured, and previously ignored voices during a crisis are heard and attended to by the management, it means the organisation practises polyphonism at their workplace.

Up to this date, limited studies have been done to search how emotional reflexivity during organisational change is usually practised, especially in Malaysians organisations and what polyphony practices during organisational change period are conducted by those middle managers. The lack of awareness on this area can cause organisations to face difficulties in achieving their short and long-term goals, create more misunderstandings among employees, and diminish both employees and customers' trusts. The present study focuses on the manufacturing industry because it is one of the sectors that face continuous and difficult change due to the rise and fall of market demands [31,32]. Since manufacturing industry is always in a volatile condition, the organisations face continuous change to allow them to adapt to the surrounding environment, and this series of changes has affected organisational stakeholders' emotions. Hence it is important for them to embed emotional reflexivity in their work life. Besides, this industry is the second-largest contributor to Malaysia's income [33,34] and it can be inferred that the manufacturing industry has a high impact on Malaysia' economy. Increasing the awareness on this area can help to drive organisational progress and improve middle managers' quality of life and professional living standards.

This research also seeks to explore how polyphony exists in their workplace, and being Malaysians, to what extent their collectivist culture influences them to practice polyphony at their organisation. If the introduced changes are not practical and affect their daily operations, the research interested to find out are their voices silent or are they being silenced from speaking up. After all, research has proved that in a highly active and open communication setting, middle managers' resistance to change was descending [35,36]. If the top management discourages their middle managers from involving in polyphonic activities during change, it can lead them to detest new norms, poor engagement and feel unappreciated and demotivated. Based on all of the earlier statements, the overall aim of this research is to explore middle managers' conversations; to study the ways polyphony being practiced in their organisation during organisational change period. By listening to middle managers' conversations (polyphony) on emotional reflexivity during organisational change, it clarifies how change processes could be improved to meet middle managers' well-being better and it offers leaders the opportunities to listen to new and diverse ideas that may be useful to smoothen change implementations.

2. Methodology

Qualitative methodology with in-depth interviews approach was employed in this study. In-depth interviews were being utilised as it is one of the best qualitative approaches to study organisation and its life-beings [37]. The interview questions were in semi-structured forms because it helped the research to get full elaborated answers from the respondents on the

discussed topics, without being afraid of judgment and influenced by others, minimised the respondents' tendency to omit any sort of information and confidentiality as well as privacy of the respondents were secured [38].

This study was conducted at an aerospace component manufacturing organisation located in Malaysia named as XYZ, a pseudonym. The selection of XYZ was due to the nature of the organisation. Encik Mohd (research informant, 7 years' experience as middle manager at XYZ) narrated XYZ has gone through a series of planned and unplanned organisational change and those change efforts cause XYZ middle managers to have positive and negative emotions where they were happy, grateful and excited since it ensures the survival of XYZ organisation, but at same time they were also feeling anxious, stress and scared. Due to this factor, XYZ was being selected to be the population of the study. To select the respondents, purposive sapling was being used and the research constructed two criteria. First, the respondents must have worked at XYZ for more than four years regardless of their positions. Second, they must work as middle managers for at least one year. These conditions ensured they can share rich information on the series of changes, the impact of the changes towards their emotions, and the influences of their emotions towards their work life. There were 30 middle managers altogether and the data collection periods were started from November 2021 until May 2022. Once the interview sessions ended, the researcher transcribed the interview verbatim and later, they were being returned to the respondents for member checking process.

The research instrument has 25 items altogether. 11 items adapted from Edgren's Commando interview guideline [39], and another 14 questions were developed based on the literature reviews and theory of the current study, Communicative Constitution of Organisations the Montreal School (CCO TMS) theory. In general, the research instrument focused on areas such as XYZ organisation's history, planned and unplanned organisational change, emotions rise during change, emotional reflexivity skills, work routines, work qualities, workplace relationships and many others (see Table 1). To analyse the data, thematic analysis was being used since they are practical to analyse organisational member's conversations of their organisations [40-42].

Table 1
Research instrument items

Sections	Items
Organisation's background	1. Will you please share with me any stories that you have about the history of XYZ organisation? 2. What stories do you have about the current management's skills in handling employees' well-beings during change? How does it differ from the previous one?
Organisational change and progress	3. What stories do you have about your organisation's planned and unplanned change initiatives from the last ten years until present? 4. What activities do you conduct in order to understand the change purposes, benefits and impacts at your workplace? 5. In your opinion, do the top management explain about the change purposes, benefits and impacts clearly? Why do you think so? 6. Can you please share a story whether the imposed changes have helped the organisation to be successful in achieving its goals? 7. What stories do you have about the way organisational change efforts at your company meet the goals of XYZ members?
Organisational change and emotions	8. Throughout this time, how does the changes affect your feeling towards your job and the top management?. Can you please tell me your stories about it? 9. Have you been given a chance to voice out your opinions after the changes being implemented in your organisation? a. What are the channels that you use? b. Were your opinions being acknowledged?

	c. Do the leaders give their feedback? 10. What emotions that best describes your feelings during change. Describe why do you feel that way: a. When you are working with your colleagues, how do you feel? Why? Are there any examples that can illustrate this story? b. Can you tell any stories that reflect how you feel when you are communicating with the top management members. How does it impact you? c. When you are thinking about the future of your career at your current workplace, how do you feel? What stories do you have about your future in this place? 11. With regards to the changes implemented in your organisation, do you have any situations where you had satisfactory/ unsatisfactory interactions with the top management members? a. What happened? What did you/ others say or do? b. Can you please include in this story about your feelings at that time? c. Will you please elaborate in your stories on how and what you do to control your emotions as well as others? 12. What are the strategies that your leaders do to help you make sense change? How do you help your colleagues and team members to go through change period? 13. What do you say to your own self or do to increase your work motivation during change? 14. What do you say or do to motivate your colleague or subordinate's emotions during change?
Working rituals	15. Will you share in your stories whether the new policies and rules applicable to all members and leaders at XYZ? 16. Can you tell me how you and your subordinates get your job done during XYZ organisational change? 17. How does decisions are made to solve issues or problems occur during change? a. Do ideas to improve the change efforts being welcomed by the leaders? b. Does your team and you work together to adapt to change? 18. When your leaders impose change, do you feel comfortable to do your work? In your stories, a. What are the emotions that best describe your situation before and during change*?* b. How do you help your colleagues and subordinates to handle the effects of change? 19. This is a metaphorical question. In regard to work rituals, what areas of change that are positive to you? Does your colleague and subordinate feel the same was? a. How do you feel? b. How do you think others might have feel? 20. If the impact of this change to your job is not positive, explain why, and how critical your emotions affect your current job duties. a. How do you feel? 21. Tell me about the special time, ceremonies and events happening at this organisation
Organisational environment	22. This is the second metaphorical question. When dealing with emotions that arise from the change, who is the most special and important person in the organisation to you? a. Can he or she be considered as heroes? In what way(s) have the heroes influenced or guide you to cope with the change? 23. This is the third metaphorical question. To be successful in this organisation, especially during change period, what are the behaviours a person should do or not do? a. What should the leaders do? 24. This is the last metaphorical question. If we talk about the general atmosphere within the organisation, how would you describe your organisation's change efforts? Examples: a. Reborn/New day has come b. From caterpillar to butterfly c. Going from darkness to light d. Journey towards success e. Window of opportunity and growth f. Angry, denial and acceptance g. Moving like a snail h. Powerless and loss control i. Positive and negative experience over time 25. Do you have anything else that you would like to add or amend?

3. Findings

3.1 Respondents' Demographic Background

A total of 30 middle managers from 12 different departments at XYZ organisation have participated in this study. There are eight female respondents and 22 male respondents. The shortest years of experience working at XYZ organisation are four years and the longest are 25 years. Meanwhile, the shortest work experiences as middle managers are three years and the longest are 15 years. 29 respondents are Malay middle managers, and there is one Indian middle manager. Lastly, this research had 23 male middle managers and seven respondents' female middle managers. The demographic backgrounds of the 30 respondents are being summarised in Table 2:

Table 2
Respondents' demographic information

ID (Pseudonym)	Gender	Years of working at XYZ	Years of being middle manager	Middle manager's position	Division
Luq	Male	4	3	Junior	Business Performance Management
Athi	Female	5	4	Senior	Engineering and Technology
Mad	Male	7	6	Senior	Risk, Insurance and Compliance
Zuh	Female	8	3	Junior	Engineering and Technology
Izza	Female	9	4	Junior	Quality
Zul	Male	9	4	Junior	Engineering and Technology
Wan	Male	9	7	Senior	Finance
Ami	Female	9	8	Senior	Quality
Mus	Male	9	5	Senior	Quality
Fu	Male	9	5	Senior	Supplier Management
Isma	Female	10	4	Junior	Engineering and Technology
Man	Male	10	6	Senior	Production
Haz	Male	10	8	Senior	Programme Management
Saf	Male	10	7	Senior	Quality
Tafa	Male	10	6	Senior	Risk, Insurance and Compliance
Hila	Male	11	10	Senior	Engineering and Technology
Wana	Female	12	8	Senior	Programme Management
Fara	Female	14	5	Senior	Commercial
Han	Male	15	10	Senior	Mechanical Assembly
Abdul	Male	17	15	Senior	Production
Jas	Male	18	10	Senior	Information and Technology
Wahub	Male	19	12	Senior	Production
Elmy	Male	19	15	Senior	Programme Management
Zah	Female	19	15	Senior	Supplier Management
Affan	Male	20	11	Senior	Core Processing
Hed	Male	20	15	Senior	Production
Hak	Male	20	13	Senior	Production
Sheikh	Male	20	10	Senior	Programme Management
Zain	Male	20	12	Senior	Quality
Siv	Male	25	15	Senior	Quality

The conversations of the respondents were examined from polyphony aspect, specifically from the work of Pless [30]. At first, XYZ middle managers did not recognise the polyphony term itself, but when the respondents were given the explanations on the meaning and its content, the practice of polyphony is common to all of them. This research divides the findings for this section into two parts. The first part focuses on the polyphony practices between the respondents and

their leaders which are mutual recognition, mutual trust, dialogic sessions, mutual understanding, and mutual agreement. Meanwhile, the second part of this section is on the two dimensions of middle managers as polyphonous leaders, where they act as a leader and decision maker of subordinates' interactions and leader for ideas' diversity.

3.2 Polyphony Practices at XYZ Organisation

3.2.1 Mutual recognition between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

The first step of polyphonism practice at XYZ organisation is acknowledging mutual recognition between the change participants, XYZ middle managers, and XYZ top management. Majority of the respondents mentioned XYZ's current workplace relationships as good and positive. They feel their presence, worth, and dignity are acknowledged and respected by the top management. They believe they are being treated humanely and fairly by XYZ leaders and they have also given the same treatment to their leaders. The respondents' experiences are as described in Table 3:

Table 3
Mutual recognition between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Elmy	Pleased with the company's new business culture and benefits, they involve us in the change process and find ways to boost our morale during adjustment period…current environment is good since our presences are acknowledged and respected by our boss. I can also see that they go out of their way to help us if we need it.
Zah	One leader whose mood sometimes okay sometimes not, it is not a big deal, since they are other bosses who we can talk to or maybe just find other time to talk to him, if one person is not available to entertain us, just find someone else who you are comfortable with, and share any issues or that we have…though the leaders have different personalities, but they still care for each one of the employees at XYZ.
Isma	The current management treats us fairly…the leaders show their sensitivity to our beliefs and needs, they value the rights of having different opinions even if they may not agree to it and value employees' strength…I believed they have tried their best to accommodate all employees' needs given the unstable situation of our industry right now, so we should also be nice to them.

3.2.2 Mutual trust between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

The next finding on polyphonism at XYZ shows mutual trust between the majority of the XYZ middle managers and their leaders. The middle managers trust their leaders' actions since they know that their leaders are doing what is best for their organisation's growth and they also believe that the changes made by their leaders are to assure that everyone's jobs are secured. The managers also believe that their leaders have faith in their ability to get their job done and are also satisfied with their leaders' treatment to all organisational members. The respondents' experiences are as described in Table 4:

Table 4
Mutual trust between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Fad	They trust and respect us to do our jobs, we have less interferences from the bosses, I am happy with the current leaders' personalities, for me, they are better than the previous management…they do not bully us by giving unnecessary or excessive workloads, and if they scold a person, it is not to humiliate him or her, there must be a reason behind it… have been here for nine

	years but, they are strict, but never intentionally mistreating an employee in the hopes they will quit or fail to take care of employee's health and safety.
Wahub	I always trust their decisions because we have been through a difficult time, they did what they think the best for everyone at XYZ…as a staff, we need to trust our leaders' decisions because they are the captain in this journey…the leaders also showed that they believed in our capabilities, give us the power to make decisions without having us to check in with them…we can have an open communication with them…they make change processes fair and transparent, treat everyone here equally and allocate company's resources in a fair way.
Amani	I trust whatever they decided to do, this is their company, they know what they are doing… they treat us humanely not as robots… followed fair processes, and ask for our feedback and opinion…we can see that our bosses genuinely care about us, changes are made for both sides' benefits…This is one of the reasons that makes my colleagues and me to always trust their decision.

3.2.3 Dialogic sessions between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

Efforts in terms of communication about organisational change programmes are continuously made by the top management to encourage middle managers' acceptance. Majority of the middle managers shared that they are being offered many opportunities to communicate with their leaders on the issues related to change, impacts of change, or things they should do to better deal with change programmes using oral communication, written communication, electronic and non-electronic communication channels. The middle managers' experiences are as presented in Table 5:

Table 5
Dialogic sessions between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Tiana	Lots of chances to ask and speak out on matters related to change…WhatsApp, Telegram, intranet, email…face-to-face communication sessions, they organise programme like HR Open Day or during DOMAL meetings.
Elmy	General and simple information, we use email to communicate with our bosses but for complex and important information, we will talk face to face with our COO or CEO in Company Business Performance Review, morning assembly and Townhall.
Jas	Emails, meetings, e-channel portal which the HR issued officially to the middle management, telegram group to communicate with all employees directly...Company's intranet e-grievance portal which can be used by any staff to express our emotions, comments, complaints.

All communication is done two-way; the leaders listen, understand and respect their managers' voices, and the manager also acknowledges their leaders' opinions and holds their judgements and prejudices towards organisational change programmes. The respondents' narratives on this are as displayed in Table 6:

Table 6
Communication activities between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Bobby	Talk about the impact of change on our work, what we have done and how we can better deal with these issues, they respect our views and we also do our best to respect their decisions.
Zizie	Lots of efforts has been put by the management to ease the hindrances, where from time to time, they improve the quality of communication on change…they do the best to give clear communication to explain the current nature of everyone's work.
Hael	The way my leaders communicate and prepare us for organisational changes make us to face less difficulties in aligning our thoughts, feelings and behaviours with what our boss expects us to have.

3.2.4 Mutual understanding on XYZ middle managers' voices

The middle managers' remarks throughout the change period were that their leaders recognise and understand their opinions and ideas. They are also comfortable sharing their thoughts and sensitive information during their meet-ups or through the written communication channels provided by their leaders. The majority of the middle managers share that their leaders note the issues and problems raised by them. The leaders also put efforts into finding out middle managers' expectations and conduct regular check-ins with the managers to ensure both parties share the same level of understanding of an issue. The excerpts that indicate this theme are as presented in Table 7:

Table 7
Mutual understanding on XYZ middle managers' voices

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Affan	I feel comfortable to share my opinion during our meet-ups or any other channels provided by my boss, a lot of good inputs being shared to the leaders…they give attention to what we share and they thank us for giving such feedbacks…have a common understanding of the things we are talking about, we have the same connection and understanding, I felt our voices are heard, valued.
Isma	We can sit together and speak on issues resulting from the change, because by doing so they know what had happened here and they can help decide on what to do to solve the raised problems….We need to clearly understand what our boss expected from us and we must perform well. We cannot just expect them to give what we need; both parties must support one another. I feel content because they ask questions, listen, understand and take note on the issues and problems raised by us.
Elhan	I can say that they value our opinions, though it is up to them to accept our ideas or not…my bosses also continuously put effort to find out what XYZ members expected from the top management. When we are not meeting in person, the management schedule regular check-ins with the managers to make sure everyone shares similar understanding about an issue or situation. Both sides communicate clearly about our expectations and give feedback when expectations are not met.

3.2.5 Mutual agreement on XYZ middle managers' voices

The last finding that indicates polyphonic activities at XYZ organisation is the existence of the mutual agreement on XYZ middle managers' opinions by XYZ leaders. The middle managers said their stories on the efforts, struggles, and losses they faced during change are being acknowledged by their leaders. Besides, the leaders also listen attentively to their sharing, showing compassion and understanding towards the middle managers. Majority of the middle managers also agreed that almost all of their concerns are already acknowledged and taken seriously by their leaders. Examples of the dialogues are as displayed in Table 8:

Table 8
Mutual agreement on XYZ middle managers' voices

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Fara	Almost all of our concerns related to transformation of XYZ and its impacts are already being acknowledged, solved or currently on its way to be solved.
Wahub	The bosses acknowledged our feedback on the struggles and loss we face during period of change.

	They listen and be attentive towards our feelings…understand our requests and they are not defensive when communicating with us.
Iwan	We are at the same page with the boss about our objectives, goals and career path …everything is changing but our well-beings are being taken care of, if we have questions, they provide the answers…they also give direct and constructive performance feedback that help us to grow.

3.3 Middle Managers as Polyphonous Leaders

3.3.1 Leader and decision maker of subordinates' interactions

The first role of polyphonous leadership upheld by XYZ middle managers during XYZ change is that they are the leaders and decision makers of their subordinates' interactions during XYZ change. Middle managers pointed out that it is part of their responsibility to speak on behalf of their subordinates upon any issues, needs and concerns about XYZ change to the top management. This is because sometimes their staff was not confident to voice out to their top management members directly. Therefore, the managers help to voice out their opinions and ideas. However, the respondents remarked that not all of their subordinate's concerns were being considered as the polyphonous discussion is an investment of time and energy. If the issues were found to be insignificant and irrelevant from the point of view of all XYZ operations, the respondents said that they have provided rational explanations on why the issue would not be presented to the XYZ top management. The respondents' experiences are as presented in Table 9:

Table 9
Leader and decision maker of subordinates' interactions

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Musa	Speak on behalf of my subordinates upon any issues, needs and concerns. Besides my on emotional needs, I also have to stay attuned to my team members' moods and emotional needs…several things that I ensured myself to do as a leader…my staff are comfortable with me and also when they are around with one another. The closer the relationship, the more confident they will be in voicing out opinions and accepting other new ideas…encourage my team members to speak up since they may have ideas and inputs that are useful to our work…they have better knowledge on certain area than others…Everyone has participated in deciding how can we do things better, if their ideas are out of scope, I would not include it and give explanations for such rejection…
Saif	Our responsibility to share to our boss what our team members' think about the current situation… I realised although they know that they are free to give their input directly to our bosses, some people do not easily volunteer to speak up…go around the room, talk about a lot of things that have not come up before, gathered all good ideas, and share their concerns and things that are going on…good practice that helps in building our team performance because they know their input is important in guiding this company's productivities.
Bobby	I make sure my team members are fully involved with this. Good participation from all employees is a prerequisite for embracing change smoothly. I asked them to share their opinions because everyone has something they can contribute, when their ideas are being included, it encourages the team to work effectively to achieve the goals. Although some ideas are not accepted, I provide reasons why it will not work and praise their efforts. By doing this, the next time we found issues that need improvements, they work harder to brainstorm lots of good opinions and ideas.

3.3.2 Leader for ideas' diversity

The second polyphonous leadership role of XYZ middle managers is that they act as a leader for ideas' diversity. This role is related to XYZ middle managers discussing with their subordinates of different skills and backgrounds, and brainstorming for ideas that can benefit the whole XYZ organisation members during the change period. The middle managers begin their day by

conducting daily morning meetings with their team members, and during that time, the managers encourage their subordinates to share their points of view and expertise on the discussed matters. The middle managers emphasise listening to their subordinates' opinions because participating in the discussion makes all of the employees reduce misunderstanding and mistakes as well as to build and develop support for change. Examples of the dialogues are as displayed in Table 10:

Table 10
Leader for ideas' diversity

Respondent's ID (Pseudonym)	Interview Excerpts
Wana	I stimulate my staff to do the same, can share their opinion if they have better ideas and give evaluations on our current work practices, I build an open and transparent communication and give supportive feedback during our discussion. By working together, we can produce lots of opinions to improve change programmes, when we do it right, we will get people who are excited enough to follow the change which later will take our company to another level of efficiency.
Sheikh	In our morning meeting, we sit together and talk about work progress and issues. I always support, be there for those who need to talk or bounce ideas. We worked together, they share their thoughts and any comments and ideas related to our company's priorities and goals or anything that can increase successful implementation of change will be bring forward.
Hak	Motivate my subordinates by asking them to share their experiences with change, how it benefits and affects them, and what can company do to solve it. When we have discussions, it is messy, everyone has their own ideas…we can examine the issues from many different angles…they shared plenty of ideas as they are also eager to make improvements and together, we selected ideas that are good match to our work problems and opportunities.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that polyphonism is apparent at XYZ organisation in two dimensions. The first dimension consists of the five steps of polyphony practice at the studied organisation. XYZ organisation resides in Malaysia, a collectivist country, and majority of the members, including the top management, are Malaysians and it is a well-known fact that Malaysians are prone to be courteous in words, polite in actions and values relationship with other members than the task in order to maintain harmonious relationships. In this study, it is found that polyphony practice during change at XYZ organisation is strong. Majority of the middle managers have engaged in direct communication actively. Conflicts of opinion are handled openly, and direct statements with reasoned arguments are given straightforwardly when they see XYZ change efforts lead them or other organisational members to complete work incorrectly. This expands the literature on polyphony practice in Malaysian organisational studies. The researcher believes this finding has given new traits to the unique face of "Malaysians identity." This means Malaysian middle managers respect their leaders but are not afraid to voice out ideas and opinions that are different from their leaders when those ideas give greater advantages to the whole organisation.

This research also challenges the opinions of earlier researchers [43-46] who claimed cultural backgrounds influence organisational members' behaviour in the workplace. As proven in this study, being a collectivistic society does not influence organisational members to stay silent when disagreements arise. At XYZ, workplace harmony and good interpersonal relationship between XYZ internal stakeholders are being put aside when they have to ensure their assigned tasks can be accomplished successfully. At XYZ, middle managers' opinions are important. The top management allows the respondents to share their opinions and encourage interactions between those with a differing viewpoint. Due to frequent open communication practices with the top management, majority of the respondents agreed that it makes them have a closer relationship with the top

management compared to the previous one. This research finding supports the work of Andersson *et al.* [47], who claim organisational members who can voice their picture of their work contribute to closer relationships with their stakeholders. However, this study shows that by practicing polyphony, it also opens the door for the middle managers to speak up their opinions and feelings openly even though their ideas and emotions are different from other members.

Polyphonism practice was enhanced at XYZ organisation by the top management that make room for the middle managers to speak up. During those sessions, the leaders do not claim the conversation space through monologue or other dominating styles. The top management's choice of words to communicate with the middle managers is clear and the feedback collected are received and processed. There are numerous platforms prepared for the middle managers and other members to share their voices, such as meetings, company survey or through social media applications. The top management did not monopolize the platforms; instead, the forums are being made available to everyone. Providing lots of channels for critical, silent or unheard voices shows XYZ's top management is aware of the importance of polyphonism practice at the workplace. It should also be noted that polyphony at XYZ is not about satisfying middle managers' voices. Their voices are heard but the management may not solve the conflict of interests. Although this situation happens, most middle managers take it openly since they already voiced their true feelings about their workplace. Through polyphonic practice, the authority distance between top and middle managers is neutralised. They feel free and unconstrained at their workplace as their leaders do not dominate them. This finding supports Kraft *et al.* [48], who observe that strategic communication enhances employees' relationship with their leaders, but this study clearly shows that when polyphony is in practice, not only middle managers-leaders' relationship is being strengthened, but it also encourages the managers to support and trust their leaders constantly.

Contradict to the work of Shamin *et al.* [49], this research found XYZ middle managers are not reluctant to participate in an open discussion when making decisions or solving problems. They do not avoid or run away from their workplace conflicts. The middle managers are being professional when they want to talk about their opinions and feelings. Although they are being direct in their communication, it is done in a respectful manner. The researcher argues that being direct in workplace communication is a good practice to be conducted by XYZ middle managers because it helps them to be heard. Besides, if they are not being direct in communicating their expectations and queries, it results in confusion and the leaders will not be able to fulfil the middle managers' expectations. In addition to that, XYZ middle managers have to deal with customers, leaders and employees from individualistic countries such as United Kingdom and United States of America. Polyphony practice helps them to easily remove the cross cultural communication barriers between the two parties. Although XYZ middle managers frame themselves to other collectivistic norms, when they are working, their cultural beliefs and values are being adjusted according to the situations, they know how to positively integrate between being collectivistic members and polyphony practices. This practice successfully helped them to improve the quality of life at their workplace. It helps them to build and maintain harmony and collaboration between middle managers and leaders and it helps everyone to reach their individual and/or group goals. Besides, from the researcher's point of view, since XYZ organisation deals with customers, leaders and employees from other parts of the world, their unique working practices also helps to build and represent the good image of Malaysia in the world. If Malaysia's national image becomes positive, more foreign investors will come in to make direct investments thus boosting the overall economy of Malaysia [50,51].

This research also found that most XYZ middle managers practice polyphony with their subordinates. During change, XYZ middle managers do their work seriously, they do their best to

understand the new information, and then deliver it to their staff. They communicate about change clearly and consistently otherwise; their staff could not meet the expectations of their immediate supervisors and customers. The middle managers also encourage their staff to be opened minded and honest when expressing their ideas. This practice increases their staff's support, encouraging their efforts and reducing misunderstandings and stopping rumours on change. This finding contributes to a clearer understanding of the practice of polyphonism in an organisation where it can occur at all levels, between the middle and top management and between the middle and lower-level employees.

Middle managers at XYZ organisation encourage their subordinates to feel committed to their organisation by asking them to give proactive involvement during XYZ's organisational change. When the middle managers bring different expertise into the managed matters, they can ensure that all XYZ members able to participate in discussions no matter their capability. This will determine the silent or smaller voices is heard because if the opinions of loud XYZ members continuously monopolise the ideas during the discussion, true polyphony practice will be unattainable and the discussion will be in monophonic state. XYZ middle managers and those at the bottom level have more profound knowledge of the XYZ operational reality than those at the top of XYZ hierarchies. By modulating the different opinions and aims to the operational reality of XYZ organisation, the middle managers help lower their subordinates' resistance to change, enabling the organisation to pursue their targets. In addition to that, the top management can facilitate XYZ organisational change from the perspective of the employees through the collected ideas and standpoints. The top management will have an idea of what change is practical and why certain things at their organisation need to be changed again.

4.2 Dimensions of XYZ Middle Managers' Emotional Reflexivity during Change

Earlier studies using middle managers' conversations to analyse their emotional reflexivity during change has been limited. Therefore, this study is being conducted in an attempt to fill this gap. In studying conversations as emotional reflexivity, this study has successfully identified polyphonism practices during change are being actively conducted, and it occurs between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management and between XYZ middle managers and their subordinates.

From the middle managers' polyphony practices, there are five emotional reflexivity dimensions which are self-consciousness, empathy, self-control, motivation, and social skills. During change, the respondents practiced self-consciousness to understand their current emotions and monitor how it influences their behaviours when they are with others. They understand their own emotional strengths and weaknesses, and by doing, it makes them to better understand the intentions behind their actions. Once they better understand their own self, they help their colleagues and subordinates who are facing difficulties accepting the imposed change to do the same.

Next, almost all of the respondents are being empathic towards their leaders and other organisational members during change period. Instead of focusing only on their individual needs, they put themselves in their leaders' situation and understand their leader's actions. Those middle managers feel that when their organisation is facing hard times, they believe they should support their leaders' actions as the changes are being done to help move their organisation forward and stay relevant in their environment. Next, self-control illuminates the capability of the XYZ middle managers to control or reconfigure their emotional moods. Even though at the beginning of

change, most middle managers tend to react irrationally, they later organise their minds and regulate their behaviours.

The fourth dimension is XYZ middle managers' motivation. Those managers are motivated to learn something new and accept the challenges that come with the organisational change. The respondents are highly interested to learn new things and enjoy the new challenges as it helps to increase their passion, desire, and aspirations to work and it gives them satisfactions that are beyond money or job status. The last dimension is XYZ middle managers' social skills. The findings demonstrate that during organisational change, almost all respondents use their social skills to handle their leaders, colleagues and/or subordinates' emotional behaviours. For examples, the practice conflict resolution. Increase cooperation, build and maintain positive relationship, listen to others' problems, practice two way-communications, be emphatic, encourage teamwork and many others. With those skills, it helps the middle managers to successfully complete their responsibilities during change. It also helps them to communicate efficiently and effectively with their leaders, colleagues and customers.

From the discussion earlier, it is clear that emotional reflexivity during organisational change provides opportunities for middle managers to react suitably when facing complicated challenges. Middle managers with high emotional reflexivity also tend to be successful in their workplace. They are the ones that other people want on their team. They make others feel good, and go through changes in their organisation much more easily than people who are easily angered or upset. Emotional reflexivity makes them to feel less scared and burdened to adapt their organisation's change plans, improves their work performance, makes progress in their career, increases their capabilities in managing conflict, and fosters their moods to accomplish their desired goals. In line with Groth *et al.* [52], who assert emotions experienced by human beings at workplace reflect the real situations they are in with. This study also reports that the feelings experienced XYZ middle managers constitute the total realm of their situations and their emotional reflexivity has helped them to alter their responses towards change professionally. The works of Hamilton [53], have explained the importance of emotional but this research expands the literature by introducing the dimensions of emotional reflexivity which can be practiced the all organisational members during organisational change or other workplace crisis.

From the Islamic perspective, polyphony practices and emotional reflexivity dimensions introduced in this research aligns with Maqasid Shariah. Islam requires Muslims to ensure their intellectual mind (Al- 'Aql), specifically emotional, psychological and social well-being mental health, to be in the best possible condition so that they will be wiser, skilful, and rational in handling any situations in their work life [54]. As proven in this research, conducting emotional reflexivity helps its users to live a calmer life, better communicators, optimistic and respectful towards others. Thus, this research helps to heighten the importance for all Muslim leaders, middle managers and other organisational members to value the roles of conversations (polyphony) on emotional reflexivity during change as well as to practice emotional reflexivity dimensions at their workplace. These actions will encourage all Muslims to do good things and to stop from doing bad things at their workplace [55], fulfil the needs of Muslim individuals and the people surrounding them, promote ummah's competence as well as preserve Muslim society's social order.

The central idea of CCO TMS theory, specifically the argument that individuals' conversations at work, both leaders and employees, constitute the true environment of their organisation's practices, is align with the current research findings. This research found the conversations (polyphony) of XYZ middle managers on emotional reflexivity during change constitute the practices and regimes of XYZ organisation. By mapping all of the middle managers' verbal and nonverbal conversations on the studied phenomenon, it also furnishes a composite image of middle

managers' practices to stay above messy and complex organisational change which is the emotional reflexivity dimensions. This is in line with Ernst and Schleiter [56] as well as Zumaeta [57] who reported the text and conversations of organisational members allow researchers and practitioners to observe and analyse change participants' emotional vulnerabilities. As proven in the current research, when XYZ middle managers join a conversation with the researcher, they bring their own previous work experiences, prejudices, values, beliefs, norms, interests, ideologies and many other aspects of themselves. Hence, the present research helps to affirm the work of Mazza *et al.* [58], who mentioned that conversations constitute by the organisational members allow researchers and practitioners to have a rich understanding about how an organisation is being perceived by its members and they can also learn the ways organisational members accomplish their work responsibilities and goals. The choice of CCO TMS theory to guide the present research is justified by its contributions in filling the present gap of the study. Through CCO TMS theory, this research has able to successfully use conversations (polyphony) to explore the emotional minds of the middle managers, see the truth about their organisation's practices, the approaches they conduct to complete their roles and responsibilities, and most importantly to learn the emotional reflexivity of the middle managers during organisational change while adhering to their cultural collectivism values.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this research is to find out the ways polyphony being practiced in the studied organisation during organisational change. With the help of CCO TMS theory, the present research has able to fills in the gaps of knowledge of the present study. XYZ middle managers' conversations on emotional reflexivity during change have exposed the five steps of polyphony practice in XYZ organisation (mutual recognition between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management, mutual trust between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management, dialogic sessions between XYZ middle managers and XYZ top management, mutual understanding on XYZ middle managers' voices & mutual agreement on XYZ middle managers' voices) as well as the two roles of XYZ middle managers as polyphonous leaders (leader and decision maker for their subordinates' interactions & leader for ideas' diversity).

This research concludes that polyphony helps to reduce the resistance towards organisational change. Polyphonism helps the top management to welcome and hear middle managers' voices while also allowing the middle managers to listen to their subordinates' opinions. Another conclusion that can be made from the polyphonism practice at XYZ organisation suggest that being part of the collectivistic culture does not necessarily stop Malaysian middle managers and employees from speaking up about their opinions and feelings. Last but not least, this research concludes that emotional reflexivity during organisational change is important since it helps middle managers, regardless of their gender and work experiences, to recognise, understand and manage the impacts of their emotions, moods, and actions when they are with their organisation's internal and external stakeholders.

This research offers three implications. First, this research increases the literatures on emotional reflexivity by introducing practical guidelines for middle managers and other organisational members to practice emotional reflexivity at their workplace. Emotional reflexivity dimensions can be used to decode the ways change programmes affect the participants' quality of life, to anticipate what kind of behaviours that will occur among change participants and to identify ways to increase positive interactions between change participants and organisational leaders. Secondly, the current research expands and validates the role of CCO TMS theory into new areas

which are organisational change, emotional reflexivity and polyphony areas. Middle managers' texts and conversations give accurate and rich explanations about their organisation and they act as evidences of what has happened and not happened in the past and present times, as well as what will happen in the future. Lastly, this study also expands the current knowledge in the context of the manufacturing industry in general and aerospace component organisations in particular. Findings of this study are hoped to help promote emotional reflexivity initiatives and training to middle managers for the purpose of enhancing employee, leadership and organisational performances. By incorporating those dimensions, they can improve their physical and psychological health, social and professional relations at workplace as well as their organisation's surrounding environment.

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