# AI:s impact on Management Consultants

## A Qualitative Study on how Management Consultants´ Experience of Artificial Intelligence shape their receptivity to change

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**AI:s impact on management consultants**

Abstract:

Artificial intelligence is on the rise in every industry worldwide, invoking billions of dollars in investments and it is predicted to change the world drastically. Looking at the management consulting industry that is used to facilitate these kinds of changes in companies, gives indications on how the workers might be affected by the implementations of non-human intelligence. Differentiating from the digitalization and other revolutions, as it mimics human intelligence, it is not only about replication skills, but enhancing competency, adds a new dimension and changes how workers perceive themselves. Examining "how management consultants might react toward their industry adapting to utilizing AI" by looking at their sensemaking process, reveals that receptivity to change can be explained through expectations and identity construction. Interviewing management consultants on their experience with AI uncovers insights on how to more effectively drive the change of implementing AI tools into their work.

Keywords:

AI, Change management, Resistance, Sensemaking, Digital revolutions

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The fourth industrial revolution is unfolding rapidly and transforming industries across various dimensions. It can draw parallel to the industrial revolution that occurred in the mid-18th century to mid-19th century which revolutionised manufacturing and increased productivity and output (Allen, 2017). However, as the revolution created a new system it destroyed the existing system which Schumpeter (1943) referred to as "the perennial gale of creative destruction". This paved the way to a darker side of the revolution where technological disruption outcompeted traditional labour and led to unemployment. The authors of this thesis do not necessarily believe that the consequences of the fourth industrial revolution will be a historical repetition of the industrial revolution with the downsides of increased poverty and unemployment (Allen, 2017). They do however believe it serves as an important lesson of the consequences that such technological shift may have and the severe impact that it may have on different stakeholder groups.

Management consulting is one of the industries that is fundamentally disrupted by the emergence of AI. Firms have over a century operated under a traditional business model where consultants diagnose and find solutions to clients problems. This approach has remained largely unchanged which has allowed consulting firms to maintain a consistent approach to delivering value to clients. However, today both small and large consulting firms are forced to reconsider their conventional framework and practices and instead pushed towards data-driven decision making (Sayyadi & Provitera, 2023).

Data-intensive tasks are now being automated with enhanced productivity. Processes such as data analytics, model training and feature engineering have become more efficient with AI tools. These tools also allow consultants to generate reports, proposals, and recommendations quickly using pre-built templates and past knowledge (Mohan, 2024). Operational processes are also becoming more efficient where AI assists in diagnosing client problems (Mohan, 2024; Sayyadi & Provitera, 2023) summarizing documents, and identifying operational risks (Mohan, 2024). For consulting firms, this may shift the industry towards a data-oriented approach, allowing consultants to benefit from large data sets, potentially replacing and enhancing some traditional consultancy functions (Sayyadi & Provitera, 2023).

However, as (Mohan, 2024; Sayyadi & Provitera, 2023) highlight, AI integration has certain challenges. The reliance on AI introduces challenges such as becoming vulnerable to "hallucinations," where it may produce inaccurate or misleading information, which poses risks for the reliability of content that is AI-generated (Mohan, 2024). There is also the challenge of data privacy and compliance issues which complicate the implementation of these tools, as consultants must navigate increasingly strict regulations on data residency and usage. AI is not replacing consultants but act as an augmenting of their ability to deliver faster, becoming more innovative, and providing solutions that are based on data (Mohan, 2024). From a capability perspective Sayyadi and Provitera (2023) argue that an effective knowledge management system is necessary and the need for evaluation of both human and technological capacities within organizations. Firms must be able to understand and effectively handle the resistance to AI that may arise from consultants who have relied on established processes for decades. This resistance, rooted in fear of job displacement and the disruption of traditional workflows, presents a critical barrier to the adoption of AI. The increasing adoption of AI also leads to a revaluation of workforce roles, requiring consultants to shift towards roles that enhance and complement AI, rather than competing with it (Sayyadi & Provitera, 2023).

The sensemaking framework provides a valuable lens for understanding consultants' perspectives as they attempt to interpret and respond to these shifts. AI demands that consultants not only understand but also convey the strategic advantages of AI to clients and potentially colleagues, reframing AI as an augmentation rather than a replacement of human expertise. Concurrently, resistance to change serves as an essential framework to analyze the barriers that consultants face when integrating AI into their practices. The frameworks of sensemaking and resistance to change will thus help understanding the evolving landscape of management consulting, where adaptation is essential for continued relevance and client success.

## 1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

The study aims to answer the research question:

*How might management consultants react toward their industry adapting to utilizing AI?*

The core focus will be on how management consultants perceive and react towards the implementation of AI-driven tools and processes. Additionally, this study seeks to examine the challenges that consultants face in integrating AI into their reality and work identity, particularly the resistance to change. Through the frameworks of sensemaking and resistance to change, this research aims to provide insights into and explain management consultants´ receptivity towards AI implementation.

## 1.3 Definitions, Scope, and Delimitations

AI, will in the study not be limited to any specific tools, but be based on whatever AI capabilities the company of the interviewee has access to. Generally speaking however, the umbrella term of AI will in this study be limited to narrow AI, where it is defined as “the imitations of all human intellectual abilities by computers” and “the imitation of various complex human skills by machines” (Sheikh eh al., 2023). Additionally, the research will be limited to the management consulting industry, only looking at consultants from the main firms. As the study is more targeted towards understanding how individuals process and perceive AI tools, this should not delineate the possibilities for practical implications. The study does not take seniority or experience into consideration, as we deem these factors less important to the sensemaking process and not an element we want to argue for being the reason for resistance.

# 2. Previous research

## 2.1 Resistance

According to (Omol, 2023) there are several pivotal factors to organizational resistance towards digital transformation. Firstly, there is a cultural resistance to change, arguing for the necessity of changing the organizational culture that leads to a limiting digital mindset, affecting behaviors, attitudes, and approaches. This cultural change is often met with resistance and fear of the technology that is changing the established routines. Secondly, there is also the issue of legacy system and integration complexities where the legacy systems may not align with the digital solutions. The pre-existing infrastructure may require both consumption of resources and time to integrate with emergent technologies. Implementation of digital transformation also results in a skill gap where organizations need to bridge the skill gaps within the current workforce for successful transformation. Possible resistance to digital revolutions as "a collection of interrelated technologies used to solve problems that would otherwise require human cognition" (Walsh et. al., 2019) can be argued to be different fundamentally from other digital revolutions, as it can operate and learn with the interference of humans. Consequently, the enhanced predicting and forecasting abilities of machine learning through unsupervised learning extend the capabilities of AI. Additionally, implications on workers´ privacy and autonomy, influencing decision-making, accountability, and transparency, as well as workers´ self-understanding, make the case for AI being of a different nature (Brunn et al., 2020; Endacott, 2021).

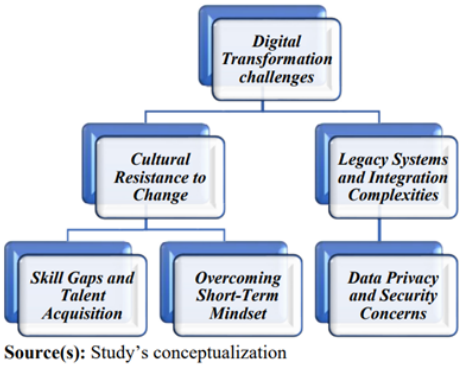


*Figure 1: Digital Transformation challenges (Omol, 2023)*

Like most technological advancements, AI implementations have both benefits and challenges. To understand these, Palos-Sánchez et al. (2022) chose to analyze them from three different dimensions namely the employee, company and social perspective. From the employees' perspective, AI can automate repetitive tasks and leave more time for activities that require more skill and expertise. For companies, AI brings increased effectiveness and efficiency by streamlining processes and reducing associated costs. Lastly, society benefits due to the creation of new professions linked to AI. In their comprehensive review of current research on the implementation of AI, Lee et al. (2023) take a similar approach as Palos-Sánchez et al. (2022),

by focusing on the organizational and people dimension when trying to understand the consequences of AI implementation. They both agree that AI significantly alters the nature of work by reducing repetitive and routine tasks, enabling employees to focus more on creative and complex activities. Their literature review suggests that AI will lead to a more flexible and productive workplace, where human-machine collaboration becomes more common. AI systems are designed to augment human capabilities, often changing roles and shifting responsibilities (Lee et al., 2023).

The literature highlights the people dimension as a key point when implementing AI (Lee et al., 2023) and suggests that employee resistance should be expected which is supported by Omol (2023). Given that staff are likely to resist changes brought by AI, it's important for a successful implementation that management provide comprehensive support through training, clear guidelines, incentives, and buy-in programs. Engaging staff in the implementation process is crucial for a smooth implementation. This includes involving them in decision-making and giving them opportunities to provide feedback. Building employee capabilities and monitoring their engagement can help ease the transition and create a positive attitude toward the new technology (Lee et al., 2023). Additionally, it is argued that organizations must focus on upskilling their workforce (Lee et al., 2023). This involves training data scientists and subject matter experts who possess in-depth knowledge of markets, products, and customer needs. Retraining existing employees and updating career development programs to incorporate AI-related skills are essential steps in ensuring a skilled and adaptable workforce. Externally, companies need to prepare customers for the integration of AI. This includes developing personalized services, creating customer feedback policies, and addressing the needs of any customer groups excluded from the AI system (Palos-Sánchez et al., 2022).

There is an agreement between and that implementation of AI comes with several challenges (Lee et al., 2023; Palos-Sánchez et al., 2022). For the employee dimension it is pointed out that the increased automation can also reduce human involvement in decision-making processes, which may lead to confusing or unpredictable outcomes for employees (Lee et al., 2023). From a well-being perspective the adverse effects include heightened stress levels, psychological strain, and a decline in morale (Lee et al., 2023). The concept of technostress is also introduced as a challenge that is a direct consequence of any technology that is used continuously and excessively (Palos-Sánchez et al., 2022). Employees might also feel a loss of competence and reputation, especially as knowledge and decision-making are increasingly outsourced to AI systems (Lee et al, 2023). This shift may cause workers to lose critical reflection skills, potentially reducing their capacity to perform their jobs effectively (Lee et al., 2023). The relationship between well-being and resistance indicates that when employees perceive high levels of transformative change or frequent organizational changes, the affective resistance will increase which is linked to a reduced psychological well-being where affective resistance acts as a mediating variable (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Furthermore, employee well-being and resistance has a negative relationship which suggests increased levels of resistance from employees when their well-being decreases (Zehra & Siddiqui, 2019).

From the company’s perspective a key challenge is the costs of implementing AI, which may require high implementation costs and time. Of course, at the same time it may reduce costs in different processes and make it a profitable investment, but it is vital that the necessary

resources and time is available for successfully implementing it. Another challenge is the lack of data which paves the way for potential biases. At the same time companies will also struggle with an increased potential of data security breaches (Palos-Sánchez et al., 2022).

When analyzing the resistance towards implementation of AI, the tension between the perspectives of craftwork and mechanical work is identified as a key reason (Hopf et al. 2023). The mechanical perspective views AI projects as structured, predictable, and efficient, often leading to inflated expectations about their simplicity and ease of deployment. In contrast, the craftwork perspective emphasizes the creativity, experimentation, and mastery required for AI development. AI projects, from this viewpoint, are iterative and adaptive, evolving based on feedback and ongoing discoveries. The tension between these perspectives results in several challenges.

Firstly, managers often hold unrealistic expectations, viewing AI as a quick, standardized solution, which leads to disappointment and resistance when projects require longer timelines and iterative development. Secondly, AI is frequently treated like a traditional IT project with linear and predictable outcomes, an approach that clashes with the exploratory and collaborative nature of AI development. Another challenge is the dependency on high-quality, integrated data; poor data quality and system incompatibilities can hinder progress, causing frustration and resistance. Additionally, the lack of explainability in AI systems, particularly with machine learning models that operate as "black boxes," undermines trust among decision-makers who demand transparency. Finally, the dynamic nature of AI models, which degrade over time and require ongoing retraining and adjustments, presents a significant obstacle. Unlike static IT systems, AI necessitates continuous resource allocation, which organizations may resist. These challenges provide a foundation for understanding the resistance that change management practitioners may face or perceive when implementing AI in organizations (Hopf et al. 2023).

## 2.2 Sensemaking

As part of sensemaking, looking at the general stance of AI and human cognition may be of help to create some fundamental assumptions and underline why it is important to discuss sensemaking. It is clear that AI affects different aspects of work, shifting the necessary skills required in existing practices (Duică, 2024). AI:s strong predictive capabilities have helped workers make informed decisions while increasing efficiency. As AI is constantly evolving, it is argued that workers instead have a greater need for emotional intelligence and communication skills (Duică, 2024). This creates a gap in current and aspired practices. By contrasting how AI and human intuition differ in the role of decision-making, research suggesting that AI is highly effective in environments with clear patterns, human intuition complements this aspect in complex, ill-structured tasks (Vincent, 2021). Thus making a clear case for the need of individuals to make sense of complex situations in dynamic environments. Ducică (2024) draws up a model that suggests two different methods when combining AI and intuition:

1. *Conformity Method:* The decision maker first uses intuition to identify options, then employs AI to confirm or challenge those decisions.
2. *Exploratory Method:* AI analyzes data and recommends potential options, which are then evaluated by the decision maker's intuition.

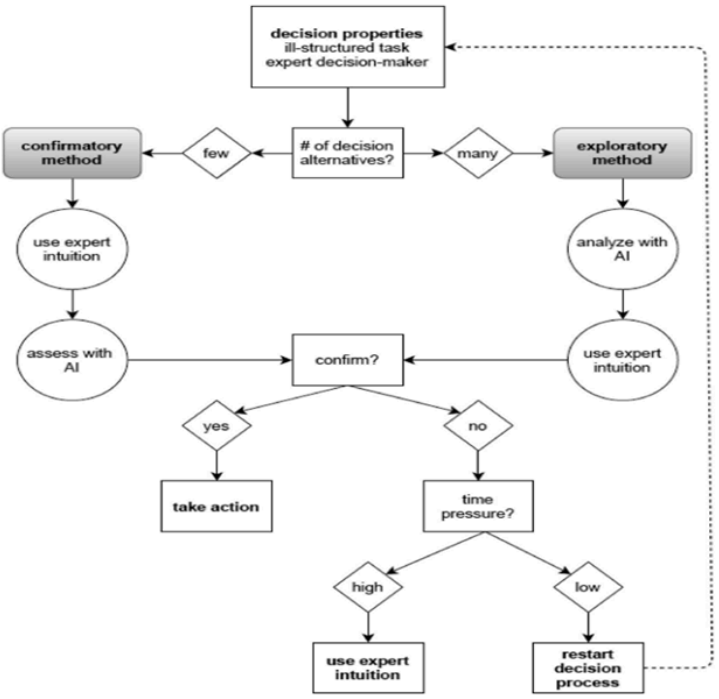


*Figure 2: Decision Properties (*Ducică*, 2024)*

The difference between the exploratory and confirmatory methods can be further highlighted by looking at the wording of sensemaking in research. While "interpretation" and "sensemaking" are observed to be used unanimously (Weick, 1995), the meanings of the words differ. Sutcliffe (2013) characterizes sensemaking as "the ways people construct what they interpret". In contrast, interpretation presumes meaning and the act of integrating a new cue into an existing framework; no frame or obvious connection between cues calls for sensemaking (Weick al., 2005). However, the definition of sensemaking diverges between researchers (Turner et al., 2023). In summary, it remains around a conceptual definition of grasping and explaining reality, attributing meanings to events, and looking at appropriate actions.

The Multifaceted Sensemaking Theory (MSM) (Turner et al., 2023) looks at five main sensemaking methods currently in research; (1) Hoffman, Klein, and Moon, (2) Dervin, (3) Russel, (4) Snowden, and (5) Weick. Combining them all, a merged theory is developed to cover the whole research spectrum. The model states nine identified stages of the sensemaking process; the first one examines the nature and determines points of surprise of inflection ("sensing"), storytelling is then used to solidify patterns in the second stage, whereas the third stage remains toward contextualizing and ordering the information ("sensegiving"). Followingly, the later stages; becoming, agency, counterfactuals, and future-scoping, deal with and compare the newly retrieved information with the old knowledge of reality. Lastly, the two end stages focus on the appropriate action and the impact of the disruption. However, Maitlis and Christianson (2014) integrated definition of the sensemaking process, based on 14 different definitions, concludes three stages of perceiving and noticing cues, creating interpretation, and taking action. Instead, they break down different forms of sensemaking and sensemaking-related constructs such as sensebreaking, sensehiding, and sense specification. Events triggering the need for sensemaking can be divided into environmental disruption, such as organizational crises, and threats to identity (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014).

Another definition uses knowledge structures to explain sensemaking. In this case, knowledge structures change during the act of sensemaking, as people adjust based on how they notice and interpret events and clarify their meaning (Holt & Cornelissen, 2014; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Weick et al., 2005). Sensemaking can also be seen as an identity construction since an individual´s responses to events determine who they are and how they interact with their environment. The past plays an additional role, as individuals draw back on it and interpret the disruptions. The key output of the process is hence to create a new, more orderly knowledge structure that has been embedded with the interpretations from the new events. The interpretations are considered to be social structures as they are negotiated in social interactions in a perpetually ongoing process. Cues extracted from the environment cause disruption that calls for sensemaking, which is characterized by plausibility rather than accuracy.

While sensemaking can be seen as a perspective and a process, Kusedia (2017) defines the process of noticing and interpreting events and coordinating the means of the event into the narrative; creating an understanding of the environment, people, and behavior. He underlines sensemaking´s fundamentally subjective and disruptive nature and highlights the continuously ongoing process of navigating and translating events into meaning. The sensemaking perspective on the other hand assumes that environments are characterized by chaos and flux and that "people develop plausible and tentative interpretations of their environments by noticing and bracketing out certain pieces of information", bridging rational and human behavior. Based on these principles people can make their environments more comprehensive (Weick et al., 2005).

It can be argued that "sensemaking is not a singular process but rather happens in a social context that offers validation for new behaviors and new definitions of identity that will make identity changes stick or unstick" (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). As AI impacts main tasks, the "social fabric of work" is changed (Craig et al., 2019) and the overall, broader social context shifts. This shift indicates a change for norms and expectations that are used when anchoring the identity changes, creating reference points (Endacott, 2021). While identity construction is not the main concept of this paper, understanding how identity construction changes in the age of intelligent machines and AI can be helpful when examining sensemaking and how it leads to resistance, as new inputs challenge old knowledge structures and identities. As the identity motives and cognitive maps are the baselines to sensemaking, sensebreaking describes the disruptions in the current reality construction. Together with sensebreaking, sensegiving sets the stages for identity construction, here in an organizational space (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). Hence, these elements are important to understand as they are the pre-stages for the sensemaking of management consultants in organizations. Even if there seems to be a division among workers either in favor or not of AI (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021), collective and communal sensemaking and redefinition of professional roles can aid in the "gradual identity development" (Chen & Reay, 2021).

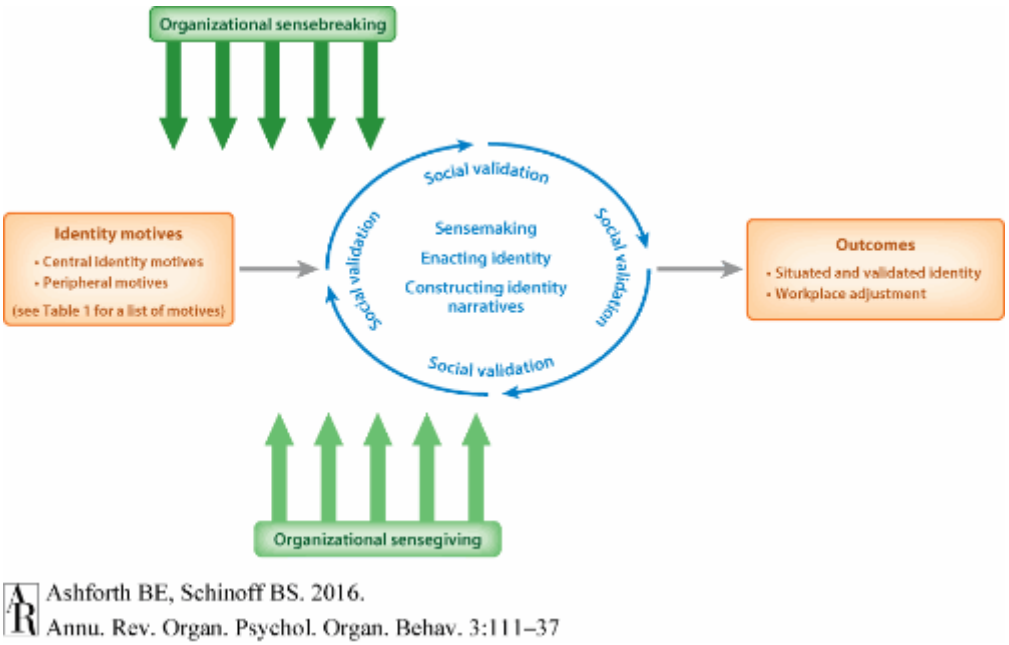


*Figure 3: The Identity Construction Process in Organizations (Ashforth&Binoff,2016)*

## 2.3 Research gap

The current research on how resistance towards AI implementation is based in the foundation of change management, looking at how organizations transform and adapt to change. Looking at other digital revolutions through this lens can explain lags and push backs from workers. However, as argued previously, the AI revolution should not be seen through this frame; the mimicking of human intelligence demands to see the transformation from another angle. Looking at how consultants make sense of AI presents a knowledge gap in the research; today the research focuses on either how the work identity is created or how individuals make sense of technology. However, explaining the challenges of change management through a problem in the sensemaking of reality instead of inertia or organizational resistance, offers a new angle on understanding how resistance of workers is created in the first place and how it impacts their reciprocity to change, in this case by looking at the example of implementation of AI tools. Furthermore, the constant change of AI and integration and adaptation into organization invites the use of sensemaking as individuals on a daily try to comprehend the technical aspects as well as the implications of security and capability of the tool and how it relates to them and their work. By looking at how management consultants experience the interaction with and how they make sense of AI, we hope to help shed new light on how and why resistance might emerge.

# 3. Theoretical framework

## 3.1 Resistance to Change

Digitalization and AI represent radical changes that disrupt traditional ways of working and hence require new approaches to manage their impact. Unlike many past technological shifts, AI and digitalization fundamentally alter decision-making, workflows, and even job roles, making traditional frameworks for change management insufficient. Since resistance should be expected in the process of AI implementation (Lee et al., 2023), it is relevant to dive deeper into this concept to get a better understanding of what is to be expected . According to del Val (2003) concept can be divided into two dimensions where firstly resistance affects the change process and slows it down, obstructs its implementation, and leads to increased costs. The second dimension of resistance is defined by actions that aim at keeping the status quo, and any persistence towards avoiding changes. This second dimension is equivalent to inertia (del Val, 2003). It is argued that inertia is not inherently a negative concept, but depends on if the organizational change is beneficial (del Val, 2003) and if the current form and processes of the organization are efficient (Rumelt, 1995). In this paper both dimensions of resistance defined by del Val (2003) will be used.

Technostress, which was mentioned by Palos-Sánchez et al. (2022) as a source of resistance towards AI is further discussed by (Kumar, 2024) in his extensive literature review of the concept. He refers to the five technostress creators that were identified by (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008), namely techno-overload which forces employees to work faster, longer and hand unmanageable workloads; techno-invasion where the technology blurs the boundaries between work and personal life and create a sense of intrusion; techno-complexity where the complexity of the technology require significant effort to learn and adapt which leaves users feeling inadequate; techno-insecurity where employees feel threatened about job security due to automation or colleagues that have superior skill in using the technology; lastly techno-uncertainty were frequent changes and updates create ongoing uncertainty and require constant learning (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). The literature reviewed by Kumar (2024) reveals that technostress has a negative effect on well-being and engagement where the effect is both immediate and cumulative hence, it . As mentioned earlier, this negative effect on well-being may lead to increased levels of resistance since they share a negative relationship (Zehra & Siddiqui, 2019). As a framework, technostress can provide a structured way to analyze how employees respond to technological changes within organizations, especially in the context of AI technologies which fundamentally transforms practices. By categorizing responses into the different dimensions of technostress creators, this framework helps clarify the sources of stress employees experience.

When looking at different change models, the earliest model chronologically that they included was Lewin's Three Phase Process from 1948 (Stouten et al., 2018). While there are more modern models that are more adaptable to describing AI and its change process, this model's simplicity in terms of steps gives the reader an understanding of where in the process the implementation currently is at.

One key issue according to research is that the different change models disagree on is the initial step where several models advise for a diagnosis (Stouten et al, 2018). Some models, however, do not include any discussion of it, while others assume that the top management diagnosis of the situation is the real cause of the problem. Stouten et al. (2018) uses Kotter's eight-step model as an example of a popular model that instead of initializing the process with diagnostics of stakeholders, choses to start with creating a sense of urgency and accepting the top management diagnostics, Lewin's model highlights the importance of questioning existing views but does not develop further in explaining how this process should unfold (Stouten et al, 2018).

Another disagreement in literature revolves around whether to either create a sense of urgency or using diagnostics to initiate the change process (Stouten et al, 2018). When viewing these approaches from a scientific evidence-based perspective, the conclusion remains that creating a sense of urgency or prioritizing it over performing thorough diagnostics is not supported by research. The literature also showed that change that is viewed as rational due to well-conducted diagnostics is better favored by recipients (Stouten et al, 2018).

Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) provide an approach for understanding the root of resistance that may arise from change recipients in organizations. Their framework consists of four main reasons that resistance to change arises in organizations. Firstly, individuals may resist due to (1) parochial self-interest, where they fear losing something of personal value, such as status, power, or job security. Secondly, resistance can occur from (2) misunderstanding and lack of trust, especially when employees are unclear on the change's purpose or implications and lack confidence in those driving the change. Thirdly, (3) different assessments can lead to resistance, where individuals believe the change is not beneficial or that its costs outweigh the benefits, either for themselves or the organization. Lastly, (4) low tolerance for change contributes to resistance, as some individuals struggle to adapt to new skills, behaviors, or processes required by the change, especially if they feel overwhelmed by the pace or scope of transformation (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

To understand how resistance is built and can appear in the realm of AI tools in management consulting, the approach of sensemaking will be used. As mentioned above, the previous research has focused on how resistance is grounded in inertia, conflicting priorities, or self-interest. While these might be part of resistance, research on sensemaking can give a contrasting reason for why workers might be against the implementation of AI. Hence, the following section will discuss different models and theoretical frameworks to explain and understand sensemaking.

## 3.2 Sensemaking

Introducing artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace requires workers to rethink themselves and their work; by using the functional-identity framework, workers can better make sense of their experience of AI (Selenko et al., 2022). By looking at what challenges might appear with the introduction of AI in the context of work and how this affects the work-related identities, the response to the implementation and the impact on well-being, attitudes, and behaviors can be explained according to the framework. Moreover, it creates opportunities for what the authors call social self-organization, realizing how people see themselves in relation to other people or a group, and how to gain social recognition by following group norms. Furthermore, the functional identity framework can help workers understand how their work provides self-esteem, meaning, a sense of belonging, and competence (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). They argue that it is critical for individuals to have an identity construct for a given social context to function. Depending on if the sensemaking process results in AI implementation being perceived as identity enhancing or threatening (Strich et al., 2021), and the possible correspondence to meet new identity functions, behavior results in identity protecting or shifting responses (Petriglieri, 2011). AI can however also bring people closer to their work-selves, helping them "restructure, adapt, and expand their work identity" (Endacott, 2021). This will influence individuals attitudes and behaviors both for their work organizations and society at large (Craig et. al, 2019).

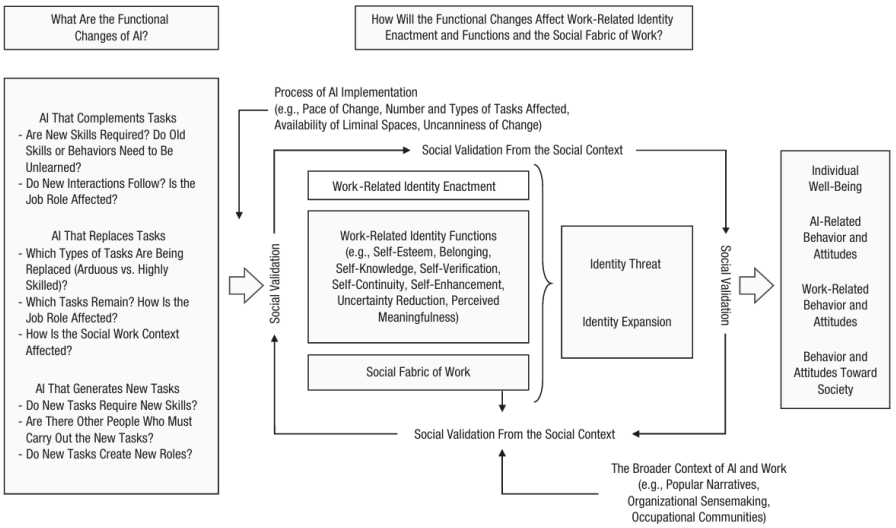


*Figure 4: The functional identity framework (Selenko, et al., 2022)*

The products of the sensemaking process are stable knowledge structures and "momentary and fleeting understanding that stem from selection" (Kusedia, 2017); however, the process of making sense of new impressions can be split into different steps. Sensemaking describes how new impressions follow a schematic when being processed. It seeks to challenge the existing knowledge or explanation of existing knowledge ( Mills et al., 2010). The process is triggered by events that do not fit the current knowledge structure and are unexpected; a disruption in routine caused by ambiguity and or uncertainty (Weick, 1995). This means that the flow of experiences is interrupted, requiring individuals to interpret these interruptions and their meaning (Schutz, 1967). Information that disrupts the flow is often intense, novel, or unpleasant (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), or that confronts expectations about the environment constructed by the current knowledge gap (Weick 1995). This process, also referred to as "noticing and bracketing" by sensemaking scholars, enables cues for cognitive means of interpretation such as frames, cause maps, and schematics (e.g., Bartunek, 1984; Bougon, Weick, & Binkhorst, 1977; Starbuck & Milliken, 1988; Weick, 1969). Labeling these disruptions in the flow of experience through language and metaphors is the next step in the sense-making process. By creating a narrative, events are translated into language. The embodied state, the cognitive map of the events and their actors, and emotions are lenses through which the interpretation occurs (Chia & Holt, 2006; Guiette & Vandenbempt, 2016; Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009). According to Weick and colleagues (2005), the interpretations answer the question about the story at hand and what to do. Elsbach and colleagues (2005) discuss the products of the interpretation model not just as the understanding of the information at hand, as Weick does, but additionally, look at the attractiveness of the options of action following the noticing and bracketing. Moreover, the perceptions of self-identity are put into relation to the information, and they are sorted into the collective mindset, contextualizing the experience.

Retrospection and plausibility are additional properties that drive the process of sensemaking, as individuals interpret current reality through past events, whereas plausibility drives the selection process rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995). Individuals tend to focus on a particular part of a situation filtered through the rules, guidelines, and knowledge structure, whereas other cues are ignored (Colville et al., 1999) In the selection stage, information that increases self-esteem and feelings of control leads the way (Brown et al., 2009). This explains why different understandings can emerge from the same unfolding situation, especially when different levels in hierarchical organizations are involved (Berry, 2001).

The first steps in organizing new information set the stage for enactment, verbal or embodied action. Dissecting the very first steps of ecological change can help understand precisely how management consultants make sense of AI tools, how self-identity might change, how they organize the tool in the collective environment and mindset, and what embodied state shapes the experience and story. Looking at the later stages of the sense-making process can help in understanding the actions that follow. The enactment stage can be compared to the noticing and bracketing, so individuals can interact with the disruptive information, interpret it in the selection stage. After gvigin meaning to the new information, creating "plausable understanding" (Kusedia, 2017). The retention step integrates the information to the existing knowledge structure, overwriting old information or creating a new addition to the existing cognitive map. Furthermore, it is in this stage where the identity adjustment is made, creating an identity narrative.

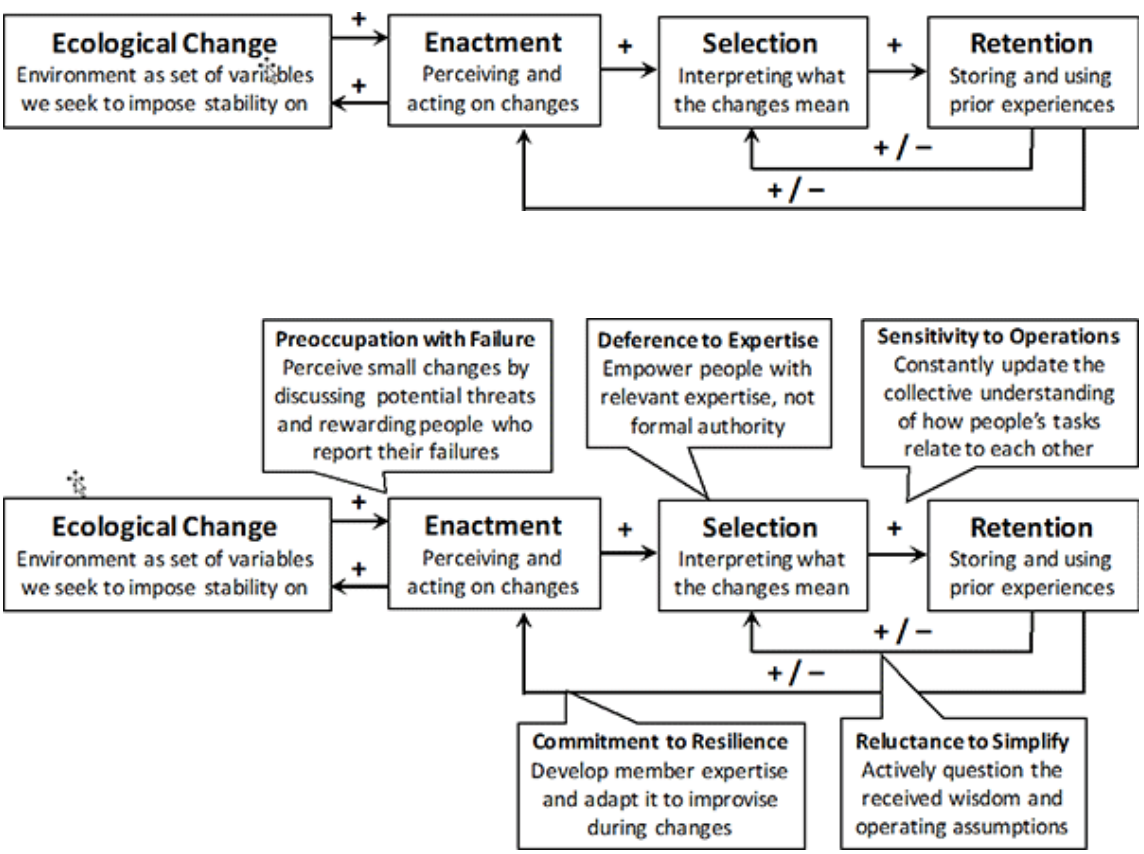


*Figure 5: Processes of mindful organizing (Kusedia, 2017)*

## 3.3 Theory Discussion

While Kotter and Schlesinger's model provides a useful framework for understanding why resistance may arise towards AI implementation, the authors argue that it should not be the sole lens. They argue that when applied on its own it does not provide sufficient explanation and does not capture the context of modern technological changes like digitalization and AI. Kotter and Schlesinger's model lacks consideration for the complexity introduced by modern technological changes. Digitalization and AI represent radical shifts that fundamentally alter decision-making, workflows, and even job roles. These changes require employees to learn new systems and adapt to and understand complex technologies, which can overwhelm individuals and lead to new forms of resistance not captured by the original model. For example, the model does not cover the technical complexity and the learning demands associated with AI, where employees may feel unprepared or unable to keep up with the rapid development of technological advancements. Moreover, the primary focus of the model is on cognitive reasons for resistance, such as self-interest and assessment differences, but does not fully address the emotional, psychological and well-being aspects of technological change. To complement and capture this dimension of resistance the concept of technostress will be used as a framework. It helps explain why modern employees often experience psychological stress when faced with new technologies. The technostress creators contribute to resistance beyond the traditional categories defined by Kotter and Schlesinger, as employees may feel anxious, frustrated, or overwhelmed, which are emotional reactions not necessarily considered in their model.

When management consultants are faced with the implementation of AI, they may encounter disruptions to their workflows and routines that have been already well-established, this triggers the sensemaking process. According to Weick (1995), sensemaking begins when individuals notice events that challenge their current knowledge structures. In this context, the introduction of AI can be viewed as the trigger point because it represents the moment that fundamentally alters traditional consulting practices, decision-making processes, and even the roles consultants play within projects, challenging their work identity (Selenko et al., 2023). This initial phase of sensemaking, where individuals interpret and label disruptions, aligns closely with the first stage of resistance to change identified by Kotter and Schlesinger: parochial self-interest. Consultants may interpret the introduction of AI as a threat or expansion opportunity (Strich et al., 2021).

With each trigger point, individuals face the option to either change their current knowledge structure, adapt it to the new information, or reject the new impressions and keep the old structure, resulting in resistance. What they choose to do can be based on their attitudes and cognitive frames. Depending on if change is processed in the frames of utilitarianism, through cost-benefit analysis, functionality, anthropocentricity and a human-centric viewpoint, traditional framework based on status, or playful perception, individuals approach the changes induced by AI differently (Herrero et al., 2020).

# 4. Methodology

## 4.1 Method of choice

### 4.1.1 Research approach

The research has been done from an interpretivistic approach, building on the understanding that humans have to be studied differently from objects since they are social actors. This builds the foundation for our theoretical framework of using sensemaking to understand the impact. Reflecting an empathic standpoint based on phenomenology, the study aims to understand the world from the different research participants' perspectives, capturing the complexity of AI in social and professional situations. The debate on generalisability appears, however, the study aims to shed light on different unique perspectives, rather than general insights. Moreover, when working with sensemaking from an identity standpoint, the insights can not logically be assumed to be applicable on a general level. Inductive reasoning and logic were used to analyze the data collection and form a theory.

The research is conducted within the subjective ontologic and interpretive research paradigm.

### 4.1.2 Research design

The research was conducted in a mono-method, using a practitioner-research approach on a cross-sectional time horizon. The descriptive study was captured through a qualitative method using semi-structured interviews, both formal and informal.

By using this method, the base of previous research would help us in making sure relevant questions were asked, as well as making room for new themes to arise regarding the impact of AI in change management in the management consulting industry. Interviews were recorded or summarized following the interview.

## 4.2 Data collection

### 4.2.1 Sample

The collection of the data was made through a sample of representatives from the major consulting firms (McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group, and EY). The representatives were predominantly based in the Stockholm offices. The participants were based on the outreach from our personal networks. In total 7 participants were interviewed. An interview was also conducted with a representative from the AI-driven strategy firm Cannuci, who acted as expert comments in this case. The company's product is based on using AI to deliver strategy recommendations for green transition.

#### 4.2.2 Interview Process

Before the interviews, one Swedish and one English interview guide was prepared. The questions in the guides revolved around the impact of AI on the everyday work life of the representatives, their attitude towards AI, and potential resistance towards the tool, both on an individual level but also from an industry perspective, trying to trigger the sensemaking of reality. Follow-up questions and clarifications served as an extensive tool to keep the interview open and flowing, with the potential for the candidate to go in their direction. The interviewees were given the option of an online call or a face-to-face meeting. 5 chose the online call, 2 opted for the in-person meeting. The interviews lasted on average 30 minutes. The flow of the interview was largely guided by the responses of the interviewee.

The interview guidelines were constructed regarding the research questions and the literature review, where roughly half of the questions were related to sensemaking, and half were related to the topic of resistance. There was no hard limit set that divided the interviews in half for the specific questions, but rather following the flow of the interview. This method was used to capture the most holistic and comprehensive part of the interviewee's experiences, letting them lead the way and only acting as guides; in parallel following possible sensemaking that occurs through provoking questions.

## 4.3 Data analysis

The process of thematic approaches built the foundation for the analysis of the data; themes were identified with recurring or similar concepts (Bell et al, 2019). Similarities and differences were established to create first-order concepts. In this first step, the authors worked individually to avoid biases and make sense of the data from different perspectives to capture the whole range of experiences. Initially, the coding of the data yielded first order themes and concepts (see appendix). The theoretical framework narrowed it down to second-order themes, leading to aggregated dimensions being constructed. By using this strategy, all data collected was captured.

## 4.4 Method Discussion

Building an understanding of other people's sense-making will always occur through the interviewer's lens of sense-making, creating subjective empirics. This follows the int loop interpretivistic approach, even if the same interviews might produce different themes, such as bracketing and noticing, is an individual experience in the categorization of data. It is hard to completely calculate out logical leaps and false assumptions, as they are part of human nature, including observer bias. Additionally, investigating information around sense-making relies solely on the self-awareness and capability of self-estimation of the individual interviewee. Lacking the possibility to objectively pinpoint information and the place in the sensemaking process, gives the data less reliability. However, any other way of capturing the data faces similar challenges. The selection of interviewing representatives from the big four consulting firms additionally constraints and limits the study.

# 5. Empirics

The empirics gives an interesting spread of data, ranging from optimistic attitudes towards AI, helping and freeing up more time, to less positive perceptions reluctance to use AI due to safety and lacking understanding of how it would help. In short, the research captures many angles on the perception of AI in various areas and why resistance might arise.

Moreover, the data suggest that AI impacts management consultants differently, depending on which angle the impact is studied. Clusters emerge when obtaining the data, following the construction of themes and aggregate dimensions presented in the method discussion (see appendix).

## 5.1 Perception and Attitude towards AI

Initial questions on how AI impacts management consults reveal empirics around different attitudes and perceptions. These attitudes and perceptions seem to guide the consultants' work with and utilization of AI. Perceptions of the tool were different from other tools, for example, search engines or an intranet. Additionally, the data suggests these perceptions and attitudes impact the way the management consultants interact with AI.

### 5.1.1 Concerns and Limitations

A recurring topic in the interviews revolves around the concerns and real limitations of AI, data privacy, and security being at the top. While technical limitations create a restraining mindset, interviews raised concerns about in which fields AI would not be used; mostly creative tasks were mentioned but there seemed to be a trend of letting AI generate work and then only assess that, creating a bit of a contradiction. The issue of openness was also talked about where consultants often casually brought up how AI is such a useful tool but there was not much talk about how they used it. Interviewee's mentioned that there may be some fear of AI taking the credit for the work which diminishes the consultants contribution.

*"As I work with advising on digital security, I see how fragile the tool can be. I don´t trust to use privileged information from my clients to use with AI or let it learn from it."*

*"I would only let AI take over tasks I know it does well. It is still very limited in what it can and what it cannot do."*

*"Finding insights is still something unique to humans. The final step cannot be replaced. It's that step that determines whether you are a good consultant or not. A very hard-to-replace step."*

### 5.1.2 Explorative and Enhancing

The second cluster of attitudes and perceptions in the data shed light on an explorative and enhancing perspective, where AI is used to explore new ways of working or giving more time and enhancing "human skills". Interviews talked about being able to do more of what they are good at, opening up time to explore creative side quests within their work, or being able to utilize their strengths further by letting AI do the other tasks. This indicates AI being viewed positively, working in symbiosis with the consultant.

*"Suddenly I have more time to spend on analysis and synthesizing information, rather than collective data."*

### 5.1.3 Alternative and Replacing

While overall and general replacement was rejected by interviewees, using AI as an alternative to other tools seemed to be common. Acting as a substitution in tasks or part of workflows gives a perspective of overwriting other tools. Many of the interviewees referred to AI as an efficient version of Google when it came to find analysis and information. Furthermore, they found that coding in programs such as excel and python have become more efficient and simple with AI-tools where they

*"It is almost like I become a manager with an associate under me, whose work I asses and use as my base"*

## 5.2 Interaction with AI

As consultants interact with AI, their perception of it is continuously shaped. They start with a certain perception of it which is then affected by the way they interact with it and the experiences they have during the process of implementation.

### 5.2.1 Efficiency

One common theme in the interviews is the overall increased efficiency that AI enables in the everyday work process of consultants. AI was described as a shortcut or a personal assistant in some cases that enhanced the consultants. Some tasks that were previously time-consuming have now been automated leaving time for other activities that create value for clients. A recurring theme was how AI increases efficiency in standardized analytical tasks which enables consultants to focus more on other tasks that create value for clients and increase productivity.

*"Helpful, it is efficient and does things quickly, produces analyzes about risks, writes emails. Time is money for a consultant and if you use it, you can spend time doing other things that create value."*

*"AI is like a sparring partner when I am stuck and do not know where to start"*

### 5.2.2 Expectations

The expectation of AI was identified as a recurring variable where the interviewees' prior and continuous interactions together with the knowledge of AI shape the expectations they have. A common consensus between the interviewees was the innovative nature of AI and how it differed from previous digital tools due to its complexity. Generally, the interviewees adopted a craftwork perspective, they were well aware of the challenges of implementation and that the process is not linear. Participants also talked about how their expectations and understanding of AI change when they try incorporating it in new ways. Interviewees are in some cases reluctant to use AI and rather want to develop their own skills and abilities to do tasks. They emphasise the fact that AI is more efficient in performing some tasks but feel the element of learning to do these tasks individually is of importance, and that AI may gradually erode some skills.

*"Cyber security thinking is something that has grown during the time of working with AI, it is something that you have been trained in. The awareness has come during this time and led to me only using AI that is approved and it is important to understand how to use it." -*

*"The more usage of AI, the better will future solutions be because of AI training. There are AI solutions available. AI training gives insight into understanding new functions of AI."*

*"AI is used to a higher degree in management consulting than many other industries and it is well developed, the tasks are also very systematic and standardized, some people feel that AI is a threat against their jobs security. There are different perspectives on AI where some people only see positive aspects of it while others are sceptical and almost afraid of where AI might lead us in the future."*

### 5.2.3 Implementation

The interviews revealed that the industry is viewing AI as a competitive advantage and is therefore pushing for it to be used to a greater extent. The foundation for implementing it is growing with educational support being available to the consultants so they effectively can understand it. However, it varied to what degree the interviewees actively took part of the educational support available. The implementation is also pushed for from the bottom up where there is an interest from the consultants to use new technologies. There are cases where the consultants are encouraged to use AI by colleagues if the pace is going to slow with some tasks, since there are faster ways to do standardized tasks with AI there are new expectations of the consultants. Some of the consultants talked about the dependency that AI has created, and the uncertainty of how they would be able to suddenly manage without it. While the interviewees recognised the positive benefits that AI brought they were not entirely sure about which direction it was headed towards but there was a consensus that the input of consultants would still remain necessary for the foreseeable future and that it could not be replaced by AI.

*"Very positive, within the consulting business it is something that will grow. More and more AI is coming in and a lot of research is being done to develop AI that can be used, something that the company and global companies are investing in. "*

*"Doesn't feel that someone pushed, but rather informs about what is available and then it is up to the individual person to use. In projects where someone is inefficient, there may be some pressure from the group or higher up where it is recommended to use AI because it goes faster."*

*"Firm is pushing towards selling more AI projects and increasing AI competence within the firm and using AI tools. Competitive advantage, more efficient and saves time. The whole firm is pushing for more usage of AI. This is pushed both from bottom-up and top-down."*

# 6. Analysis

## 6.1 AI and sensemaking

Analyzing the data through the theoretical lenses yields interesting results about where individuals are in the sensemaking process and what this might mean for resistance. Looking at the attitudes, the perceptions of concern and limitations depict two different stages in the process. The later stages of selection and retention, where the individual draws upon previous experiences can explain why a limiting mindset might emerge in the context. At this point, a stable knowledge structure has been created and new inputs need to re-trigger the sensemaking process from the beginning to challenge the established structure. Consequently, a consultant having used early versions of AI tools might develop resistance due to an intrinsic conceptual map that is not up to date; a case seen in several interviews, where participants told us that they simply do not see the benefits or know where or how much it could aid them in their works. This highlights a very certain aspect of the knowledge structure regarding the expectations that are formed in the early stages of the process when the assessment of the change to the ecosystem is done, creating comparisons to other tools of a similar nature to try to comprehend and integrate AI. Notebly, in some cases, AI was compared to having a more junior individual doing the creation work, putting even the most junior consultants into the position where they evaluate and assess rather than create material. Consequently, AI seems to be viewed as a possibility for identity expansion in these cases. In a few cases the data shows AI being considered an identity threat.

The creation of expectations towards AI is a central part of how the consultants use and interact with the tool. While some individuals express a curious mindset where they play around with the tool and explore it, others expect it to work immediately, integrating smoothly into their existing workflow. From a sensemaking perspective, this all depends on previous interactions with AI. As discussed, an early use might not correspond with the current reality. The expectations towards the AI tools differ greatly in the data, some going as far as expecting AI to be like a more junior colleague. In some cases the input emerged as specific, according to the participants themselves, while in other cases, the prompts were less detailed and full of language mistakes. An ambiguity in the expectations confirms the dynamic relations with the AI, where participants show lacking knowledge on how to scale or rate how good the output might be based on the input. Putting it into the context of sensemaking, the social norms and social validation creates a gap in the crafting of an identity narrative for the AI. In contrast, the participants labeling AI with a human label or view (“sparring partner”, “junior colleague”, "helper") the creation of an identity construct is further in the process. In the interaction, we can see that participants using a less accurate input often fall in the confirmatory method, participants with a clearer construction use AI in explorative measures.

The cluster of data on enhancing or explorative usage of AI can be understood from different angles. The retention stage in the sensemaking process included information on experiences of AI: s development and continuing to update the knowledge structure. This would indicate a lower threshold for the triggering of a new start of the process as there is already a previous cognitive map to follow that states to continue trial and error due to evidence of AI getting better at interacting and helping. However, this could also indicate that the individual is still in the earlier stages of evaluating ecological change and enactment.

From the sensemaking process, the data enhancement of human skills means that the ecological changes have already been categorized and evaluated, where the individual has adapted. It is hard to say if this is due to first-hand experience of AI doing a better job at certain tasks or drawing on expectations and experience that technology will eventually get better, pushing the individual to explore skills AI can not perform at all. Leading into the third category of data, the interviewees proclaimed different levels of assertiveness to what level of degree AI will be able to replace parts of or the whole process. While in some cases there seemed to be a simple change in expectations, more work getting done in a faster period, some interviewees expressed a sudden change in the execution of skillset, whereas discussed above they are put in a more judging and evaluating position instead of creation. On the other hand, some individuals simply rejected the use because of lacking integrational possibility in their work, saying AI simply could not perform their tasks. Their knowledge structure hence labels AI as not usable, either because an early version led them to reject the tool as helpful.

A recurring concern among the consultants interviewed is the issue of cybersecurity and data privacy. This fear represents a key barrier to AI adoption, echoing the technostress dimension of techno-complexity and Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) concept of misunderstanding and mistrust. Consultants' hesitation to fully embrace AI reflects a lack of confidence in the technology's ability to secure sensitive client information. Such concerns also align with sensebreaking, where AI challenges established norms and creates uncertainty about how it can be trusted. In this context, transparent communication and clear guidelines are essential to reduce these fears and build trust in the technology but also to understand it so it can be effectively implemented. As Omol (2023) suggests, addressing these issues requires a cultural shift within organizations to grow a digital mindset that is able to both develop security and innovation.

## 6.2 AI and Practises

Interestingly, the research reveals a divide in how consultants approach and interact with AI. Many are positive and have an explorative mindset, experimenting with AI to integrate it into their practices and workflows. This aligns with the craftwork perspective described by (Hopf et al, 2023), where AI allows consultants to test its capabilities and gradually refine its application. From a sensemaking perspective, this exploration is a vital stage in the process, where consultants use trial and error to assess AI's potential and fit it into their mental models of consulting work. Such iterative learning also aligns with the concept of sense giving, as consultants continuously redefine the role of AI in their work and communicate its usage within their teams. However, the explorative approach is contrasted by other consultants who are more resistant towards interacting with AI. The resistance were in all cases actions that aimed at keeping the status quo which is the second dimension of resistance identified by del Val (2003) that he also referred to as inertia. One common reason for resistance was their concerns about professional identity. For many of the consultants, the use of AI felt like a shortcut that undermined their ability to develop and apply their own expertise. Additionally, there was a concern of AI diminishing and taking credit from their work which could be argued to diminish their status and hence interplay with Kotter and Schlesinger's parochial self-interest. From a sensemaking standpoint, this can be seen as an identity threat, as the introduction of AI disrupts consultants' self-perception as skilled, independent problem-solvers. This resonates with the functional identity framework, which emphasizes the importance of work as a source of meaning and competence. The consultants' resistance, in this case, reflects a need to adapt their professional identity with the increasing reliance on AI. Moreover, this resistance can also be understood through the lens of technostress, specifically the dimensions of techno-insecurity and techno-complexity, as the consultants grapple with learning and integrating AI into their workflows without feeling that it reduces their own value.

A recurring theme that emerged from the interviews was the expectation placed on consultants to use AI for completing tasks at a faster pace. This pressure may create technostress, specifically through dimensions such as techno-overload, where consultants face heightened productivity demands and the new more efficient pace becomes the new standard forcing everyone to use AI technology regardless of preferences. Techno-insecurity is another technostress creator that is at play as they fear that AI might ultimately replace aspects of their work that they view as beneficial from a personal development perspective. As seen in Kumar (2024), technostress can increase anxiety, particularly when consultants feel unprepared for the integration of AI into their workflows that is the result of an external force. As technostress has both an immediate and cumulative negative impact on well-being (Kumar, 2024) these aspects are important to understand when implementing AI since decreased well-being is linked to increased resistance. Furthermore, this also aligns with Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) resistance framework, where change is often met with pushback when stakeholders are not adequately engaged or supported. The implementation of AI technologies within consulting firms is still undergoing and since new technologies are developed at a rapid pace consulting firms are caught in a cycle of unfreezing, transitioning, and refreezing. But when viewing only the implementation of AI as a concept rather than specific technology it can be argued that depending on the degree of AI technology usage firms are in either the unfreezing or transitioning phase due to its constant innovative nature. This may lead to frequent implementations of new practices as AI develops and lead to techno-uncertainty where consultants are forced to constantly update and learn.

# 7. Discussion and conclusion

## 7.1. Answer to Research Question

This study aimed at answering the question "*How might management consultants react toward their industry adapting to utilizing AI?"* by understanding how consultants perceive AI through sensemaking and analyzing it through the lens of resistance to change.

Management consultants generally react to their industry's adaptation to AI with a mix of cautious optimism and active engagement. Rather than actively resisting AI implementation they instead choose to avoid it to certain degrees leading to inertia. Most consultants had a curious attitude towards AI and focused on understanding its potential to enhance their work. Many viewed AI as a complementary tool which they could use with the exploratory method (Duciă 2024), particularly in areas like data analysis, problem-solving, and decision-making, where it can provide deeper insights and streamline standardized processes. This perception aligns with a growing recognition that AI can augment them rather than replacing their roles. A connection is revealed between the adoption of AI in management consulting with individual sensemaking processes and organizational readiness. Consultants show varied responses to AI, shaped by their cognitive frameworks and the broader organizational context. A key finding is that resistance often has roots from rigid knowledge structures that are formed during earlier sensemaking stages that are not challenged . These structures can cause consultants to resist or be cautious towards AI if their initial experiences with the technology were unsatisfactory. For others, resistance may be rooted in perceived threats to professional identity or concerns about AI's integration and cybersecurity issues, reflecting dimensions of technostress while also aligning with Kotter and Schlesinger's framework, emphasizing the role of misunderstanding and mistrust, and poor communication.

## 7.2. Implications for further research and practices

The implications for further research around this topic revolve around creating a better understanding about how forces of organizational resistance are based on individual level. Taking a step away from change management on the organizational level and understanding the human aspects of resistance towards AI on an employee and individual level could unlock new insights to manage the struggle of AI implementation. In the first steps, this paper has done just that. Utilizing the lens of psychological sensemaking to examine individual reasons in the human experience and the meanings for this in a social or organizational context. Putting the data into context of the model of Ashford and Schinoff (2016), it becomes clear that the sensemaking process is only a part of the identity construction that happens in organizations when workers are faced with change. The reason why some people lack interest or do not seem to understand how AI could aid them, could be explained by a gap in the organizational sensemaking and sensegiving. Further research could focus exactly on how organizational sensegiving and sensemaking in practice could speed up change. Setting the stages for sensemaking and social validation is crucial to implement lasting change and if the pre - stages are not in place, asking humans to make sense of new information is challenging. This goes hand in hand with Omol´s (202) implications on legacy thinking as a reason for resistance. Bell & Taylor (2011) discuss how the "grief" of organizational change should not be viewed as a managerial problem, but rather with empathy to understand and give closure. Combining and extending this research could help build more agile organizations that are better equipped to adapt to change, especially since AI is changing so fast. What the implications might be for when AI goes beyond the current narrow scope will likely lead to only bigger changes. Managers could help workers in this sense by creating a dialogue around how they experience AI and how it might affect their work identity and value creation. This holistic approach could aid the smooth transition, creating positive receptivity among management consultants and breaking down resistance.

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# 9. Appendix

## 9.1 Coding of data

First order themes:

Author 1

- Objectification vs human nature of the AI
- Ecosystem mapping toward other similar tools (new Google, new intranet, new internet, new Wikipedia)
- limits of AI
- concerns in trust
- top-down vs bottom-up approach
- the last mile problem, not seeing the possibilities
- enhanced/highlighted human skills
- shift in skill set
- language used in context and around AI
- expectations towards AI, previously made pictures from society through film etc.
- Attitudes towards AI

Author 2

- Independence
- Exploratory framework
- Data privacy/cybersecurity
- Shortcut
- Efficiency
- Gives more time for other value creation
- Alternative for Google
- Resources
- Value Offering
- Disruption

Second order themes

1. Perception and Attitude towards AI
    a. concern&limitations
    b. explorative&enching
    c. alternative and replacing
2. Interaction
    a. efficiency
    b. expectations
    c. implementation

## 9.2 Interview guide

Section 1 on sense-making and perception

- What role does AI play in your everyday work life? Alt questions: How do you position yourself towards AI? How do you make sense out of it?
    - What kind of change do you think AI will have on your professional attitudes as a day-to-day job?

    - Has your view and perception of AI changed? Is the perception fixed or fluid?
    - What is the story you tell yourself about AI?
- How do you perceive AI? What does AI mean to you? (If an explanation is needed, clarify with the following keywords: a tool, a helper, bad, good, helpful, complex to use and understand..)
    - follow up question: speaking as a representative for the industry, can you tell us about the general attitude and perception
- Is AI the change or a part of the change or a process toward the change
    - Do you treat it with curiosity and trial, or rather with skepticism and doubt
    - What seems to be the industry's take on this?

Swedish version

- Vilken roll spelar AI i ditt vardagliga arbetsliv? Alt frågor: Hur positionerar du dig mot AI? Hur gör du förnuft av det?
- Vilken typ av förändring tror du att AI kommer att ha på dina professionella attityder som ett dagligt jobb?
- Har din syn och uppfattning om AI förändrats? Är uppfattningen fixerad eller flytande?
- Vad är historien du berättar om AI?
- Hur uppfattar du AI? Vad betyder AI för dig? (Om en förklaring behövs, förtydliga med följande nyckelord: ett verktyg, en hjälpare, dålig, bra, hjälpsam, komplex att använda och förstå..) följdfråga: som representant för branschen, kan du berätta om den allmänna attityden och uppfattningen
- Är AI förändringen eller en del av förändringen eller en process mot förändringen
- Behandlar du det med nyfikenhet och prövning, eller snarare med skepsis och tvivel
- Vad verkar branschens syn på detta?

Section 2 on resistance

- What do you think of AI projects and the direction of the industry?
- What are some personal and organizational challenges when it comes to AI?
    - Are there different views on AI?
    - Can groups be noticed?
    - What is hindering or accelerating the use of AI in your or others' work beyond technical limitations?
- What tensions are noticed in regard to how AI is used or implemented in the industry
- Is there resistance? What does it look like? What are the reasons?
- What are some elements of consulting that you enjoy, that you think AI will affect?
- What is something we should have asked or taken up in terms of this topic? What surprised you that we asked? What was good? What should we have spoken more about?

Swedish version:

- Vad tycker du om AI-projekt och branschens inriktning?
- Vad finns det för personliga och organisatoriska utmaningar när det kommer till AI?
- Finns det olika syn på AI?
- Kan grupper uppmärksammas?
- Vad hindrar eller påskyndar användningen av AI i ditt eller andras arbete bortom tekniska begränsningar?

- Vilka spänningar uppmärksammas när det gäller hur AI används eller implementeras i branschen
- Finns det motstånd? Hur ser det ut? Vilka är orsakerna?
- Vilka delar av konsultverksamheten tycker du om, som du tror att AI kommer att påverka?
- Vad är något vi borde ha frågat eller tagit upp när det gäller detta ämne? Vad förvånade dig att vi frågade? Vad var bra? Vad borde vi ha pratat mer om?