

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS PURSUING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Łukasz Skiba¹

¹Czestochowa University of Technology, 69 Dabrowskiego street, Czestochowa, Poland

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1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations are increasingly implementing sustainable development strategies, which results from growing social, environmental, and regulatory pressures [1]. However, this process requires not only technological or structural changes, but above all, a cultural transformation and a shift in employee attitudes [2]. Change management in such a context necessitates consideration of the psychological determinants of individual responses to change, such as resistance, fear of the unknown, or a sense of loss of control [3]. Therefore, it becomes essential to apply organizational psychology and motivation theory to foster a positive attitude toward change and strengthen identification with organizational values [4].

2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

A qualitative literature review was used as the primary research method. Fifteen scientific and expert publications from 2011–2024 were purposefully selected for their relevance to the psychological aspects of change management, organizational psychology, and sustainable development strategies, covering both theoretical and empirical studies [5, 6]. The analysis followed an interpretative approach, incorporating content analysis and symbolic-interpretative models rooted in organizational anthropology [3], and referenced the concept of integrating research with managerial practice through parallel analysis [7, 11].

The study drew on Van de Ven's classification of change models and K. Lewin's three-phase framework [3, 6]. It also identified practical tools supporting change implementation, including human resource assessments, leadership mapping, and cascading strategies [1]. Special attention was given to the role of internal communication in supporting value integration and resistance reduction, as well as HRM strategies focused on environmental and social sustainability [5, 8].

3 RESULTS

The analysis indicates that the greatest obstacle to implementing sustainable development strategies lies in psychosocial barriers, particularly emotional and rational resistance to change [9]. Change effectiveness is strengthened through employee engagement in the planning phase, enhancing the sense of meaning and purpose, and creating a safe environment for experimentation and learning [6]. Transformational leaders play a key role, as their attitudes and ability to build trust influence the team's readiness for change [3].

Additionally, literature findings highlight the importance of emotional safety, readiness for change, and the 'unfreezing' stage as a prerequisite for entering the adaptation phase [3]. The inclusion of a participatory approach and conscious communication with stakeholders helps reduce resistance and improve the effectiveness of implemented changes [10].

4 CONCLUSIONS

Change management in organizations pursuing sustainable development requires an integrated approach that takes into account individuals' psychological responses, needs, concerns, and values. Only when an ESG strategy is met with genuine engagement from employees and leaders can lasting outcomes be achieved. Therefore, further interdisciplinary research and the development of practices based on positive psychology, emotional safety, and participatory communication are recommended.

An important aspect is also the role of HR in integrating environmental strategies with organizational goals, which can be implemented through so-called Green HRM and Sustainable HRM. Future research should also address the evaluation of the impact of such initiatives on organizational culture, employee identification, and their long-term commitment to the change process.

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Contact information

Corresponding author's e-mail: lukasz.skiba@pcz.pl