

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TO CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION AND JOB PERFORMANCE

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### Abstract

Today, it is important for organizations to successfully adapt to ongoing changes, not only domestically but also globally. Successful implementation of change, an advantage over other organizations, and maintaining high job performance become the most important task in the organization (Doll et al., 2017). However, organizational change is not successful for all organizations, and practice shows that in many cases, organizations fail to make changes, leading to declining employee performance or even organizational disruption (Lewis, 2019; Fernandez and Rainey, 2017). Organizations implementing organizational change are often asked what psychosocial factors are important to successful change, to ensuring the quality of the work of employees and to the successful functioning of the organization. Organizational change in organizations often involves reorganizing institutions, reviewing staff structure, resulting in a sense of insecurity for themselves and the future of the organization, and often creating negative employee attitudes toward ongoing organizational change. Employee attitudes toward organizational change are an important psychosocial factor that can determine how successful an organization will be in implementing change (Armenakis et al., 2007). Negative employee attitudes towards change reduce the employee job performance, as employees undergo a lot of stress during change, resulting in worsening relationships with colleagues and interpersonal conflicts (Jaramillo et al., 2013). The purpose of this work is to carry out a review of the literature on the employees' attitudes and the importance of employees' attitudes towards organizational change in the employee job performance. Given the above purpose of this work, literature analysis from electronic databases: SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, APA PsycNET, Google Scholar, and others were performed. These databases were chosen because they contain the most research on organizational psychology. Keywords were used in the research: attitudes, work performance, changes, etc. Based on these criteria, 322 articles were selected in the initial research sample, but after the initial review of the articles, 107 articles were selected and subjected to the following research steps. Practical implication of this research: the results of the research are expected to help better understand employees' attitudes towards organizational change and their significance for the job performance, to understand why attention should be paid to the relationship between these phenomena. This would help organizations to develop more effective plans for implementing organizational change, and to streamline employee communication about ongoing changes. Defining employees' attitudes towards organizational change and their significance for the job performance will allow organizations to work more effectively with employee attitudes and thus be more successful in implementing organizational change.

**Keywords:** *Attitudes, organizational changes, job performance.*

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### 1. Introduction

In organizations today, change is very common and inevitable, driven by business growth, innovation, globalization, various rules, competition and rising consumer expectations (Pasmore 2011). The organizational change began to be explored as early as World War II when Lewin began to do so. His research focus was on the behavior of the individual to change and their process. Lewin's theories inspired research into the role of human behavior in organizational dynamics (Al-Haddad, 2015). Change can be described as covering both internal and external change processes within the organization. These may be changes in the organization aimed at improving or replacing certain elements of the organization (Zakarevicius, 2003). Although changes in the organization are usually associated with positive results and success, they present many challenges to employees. Organizations expect change not only to enable employees to learn new skills or procedures if the change demands it but also to maintain a positive attitude to work and high quality of performance. Technology-based organizations are

undergoing a great deal of change (García-Arca and Prado-Prado 2007), but it is not only these organizations that are undergoing major changes these days. It is important to understand that the success of organizational change depends not only on the actions of the organization but also on the employees. The perception of employees determines the attitude of the employees, which determines their behavior at work and the quality of work performance.

Thus, even when relatively small in an organization, employees who are experienced or aware of uncertainty can form negative attitudes toward change and resist it. Negative employee attitudes towards change can have a profound impact on employee engagement, quality of performance, and relationships with other employees and managers. As a result, change management requires a great deal of effort to manage it, often through structural or leadership interventions using various messages to change employees' beliefs about ongoing organizational change (Armenakis and Harris, 2009). Often, organizational factors, such as communication during change, have a positive impact on employee attitudes and attitudes. It is also important how employees perceive other factors, such as organizational support, organizational justice, which are critical to the quality of their performance and positive attitudes. It is also important to keep in mind that it is the employee who is responsible for making the various changes at work. Employees can help managers create positive experiences in executing change (Cullen, 2014). It can be said that if the employee develops negative attitudes towards organizational changes, which may lead to poor relations with colleagues, the management will be poor and the quality of performance will decrease. However, if employees have the perception that change is positive for or about the organization, they can even help the manager implement it. First and foremost, the employee needs to understand his or her changing environment and determine how certain changes will affect his or her daily life, financial situation, career opportunities, and so on. (Bartunek et al., 2006). Given that employee attitudes are relevant to his or her productive work and the organization, the following work describes these elements in greater detail and their relationship. The purpose of this paper is to conduct a literature analysis of attitudes to change and their implications for work performance in research papers published between 1990 and 2020 and to answer the question of whether attitudes toward change are related to the quality of work performance.

## **2. Methods**

Given the above purpose of this work, literature analysis from electronic databases: SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, APA PsycNET, Google Scholar, and others were performed. These databases were chosen because they contain the most research on organizational psychology. Keywords were used in the research: attitudes, work performance, changes, etc. Based on these criteria, 322 articles were selected in the initial research sample, but after the initial review of the articles, 107 articles were selected and subjected to the following research steps.

Criteria used for literature analysis: 1) research papers should have been written no earlier than 1990, 2) full text of research papers available online, 3) main research topic is related to employee attitude and/or work quality. Criteria for the exclusion of works: 1) works older than 1990, 2) works with repetitive titles.

In the first phase of the study, abstracts were read and entries that did not meet the criteria above or those whose abstracts did not correspond to the research topic were rejected. Then, in the second phase of the research, the full text of the thesis was read to find out the main theme of the study and whether the thesis could be included in the analysis. Finally, the information required by the research topic was selected from the selected articles.

## **3. Attitudes and their significance in the organization**

Everyone is guided by their attitudes when making certain decisions or behaviors. Attitudes are described as favorable or unfavorable, a reaction to the appreciation of a subject or person, often based on beliefs, but expressed in feelings and behavioral intentions (Eagly and Chaiken, 2005). Positive attitudes towards change are important for achieving the goals of the organization because only then can the organization function properly (Eby et al., 2000). Employee attitudes can be affected by a variety of social, economic, political, religious and cultural factors. The employee of the organization acts based on social circumstances and the decision-maker of the organization. It is wise to be aware of preferences because strong attitudes are likely to affect a person's behavior. Attitude towards a manager, salary, benefits, promotion or anything can cause positive or negative reactions. However, while the description of the attitudes seems to be clear, there is some contradiction in the literature regarding the understanding of the attitudes as a construct. It is noticeable that some authors claim that attitudes are a construct of one dimension, while others argue that attitudes consist of a model consisting of three components: cognitive,

emotional, and behavioral. Some authors disagree with this categorization of claims and argue that it is not possible to measure all three components separately, which makes preferences a one-dimensional construct that can be positive or negative. Besides, the authors note that all three components are interrelated and one of them is negative, the other is also negative, indicating that it is a single construct. However, other authors object to this by arguing that attitudes can be formed from any component and it would be difficult to assess how they are formed if we did not have a three-component model (Kwon & Vogt, 2010).

The cognitive component is the thoughts or ideas about the subject of attitudes. These thoughts are often described as beliefs that are formed from the attributes of the subject-matter of the attitudes when relevant links are created. Symptoms can be assessed both positively, negatively, and neutrally (Eagly, Chaiken, 1993).

Affective component - feelings, moods, sympathetic nervous system activity, which is felt when confronted with the object of attitudes. The emotional component is based on emotional experiences or choices and may be expressed in admiration or anger. Thus, the emotional response can be both positive and negative depending on whether the subject of the attitudes is evaluated as liked or not (Eagly, Chaiken, 1993).

Behavioral component - An action that is expressed when confronted with the subject of attitudes. Behavioral reactions may not be expressed immediately upon encountering the subject-matter but also after a while. In this, these reactions are different from the emotional and the sensual. Depending on how the subject-matter of the attitudes is evaluated, attitudes can take the form of positive behavior that is based on and conducive to attitudes, or negative - opposing or disturbing (Eagly, Chaiken, 1993).

This three-component model can be useful in helping to identify and measure different reactions to objects of attitudes and attitudinal change or formation.

#### **4. The relationship between attitudes and job performance**

Of particular importance are not only the individual elements of attitudes towards organizational change and the quality of work performance but also the interrelation between them. Employee attitudes play a particularly important role in the organization as they shape employee behavior and individual elements within the organization (Silverthorne, 2004). Employees who are more committed to the organization make a more significant contribution to the activities of the organization and the quality of their work (Freund and Carmeli, 2003). In research papers, authors describe job performance as the totality of work values that include the behavior that an employee uses to achieve organizational goals (Rich et al., 2010). Usually, the quality of work performance is divided into three parts: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive performance. When an organization implements organizational change, employees experience a great deal of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty. This affects employee satisfaction, commitment, and quality of performance (Buchanan et al., 2006). In the process of change, performance quality is an indicator of whether employees have adapted to change and are performing their tasks properly (Van den Heuvel et al., 2010). To understand whether employees are successfully adapting to ongoing changes and maintaining a high quality of performance, it is important to determine the importance of employees' attitudes to the changes in performance. Positive employee attitudes towards and changes in the organization result in less willingness of employees to leave the workplace and increased employee productivity (Jernigan et al., 2002). It is also noticeable that commitment to the organization is a critical factor that determines the quality of work performance of employees, and therefore positive attitudes towards change make employees feel more committed to their organization (Lee, 2000). It is worth noting that one of the essential factors in change management is employee resistance to change, influencing the success or failure of any change and closely related to positive or negative attitudes toward change (Bouckenooghe, 2009). High levels of employee resistance to change mean that employees are unable to do their job productively, and it is noticeable that organizations' productivity may also decline as a result of the change. Indeed, individuals' attitudes are a good predictor of any organization's willingness to change (Hayes, 2010). This is considered to be one of the most important factors that determine a person's intentions to behave in support of or resistance to change. This resistance can be expressed in many ways and different dimensions, from hesitation about ongoing change to hostility to or attempt to disrupt them (Jones et al., 2008). Positive attitudes toward change can lead to positive behavioral intention and positive subsequent behavior, such as active engagement with change (Oreg, 2003) or a strong commitment to change (Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002). Analyzing employee attitudes toward change and the job performance can be based on Ajzen's theory of planned behavior, which provides a theoretical basis for this relationship. Ajzen's theory of planned behavior is one of the most widely used theories in scholarly work that can explain human behavior. The theory itself is made up of three main components that describe people's behavior: These are attitude

to behavior, subjective norm and behavior control. The combination of these three elements and their combinations results in employee behavioral intention, which shows that the greater the behavioral intention, the more the individual has a certain behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Therefore, it can be seen that positive attitudes and the subsequent job performance of employees are based precisely on this theory. Positive attitudes are noted to play a key role in the innovation process (Thomas, 2003). Conversely, negative attitudes toward change will be a negative factor in trying to successfully implement change, which will lead to lower job performance and lower quality of organization (Vakola and Nikolaou, 2006). Negative attitudes toward change lead to negative behavioral intention and corresponding behaviors, such as absenteeism (Martin et al., 2006) or retirement (Cunningham, 2006). Empirical research also supports the idea that employee attitudes are significantly related to the job performance (Hettiarachchi et al., 2014). It is also worth noting that employee attitudes toward a object, whether positive or negative, are communicated and can easily spread to coworkers (Martin, 2014).

## 5. Conclusions

Summarizing the importance of employee attitudes to change in the employee job performance, we find that these factors are closely related. This results in the positive attitude of employees towards change, the employee has positive intentions towards change and determines the quality of his / her job performance. Because the change process is relevant and active worldwide, regardless of the area in which the organization operates, these changes are essential for organizations to properly prepare for and implement upcoming changes, as this process of change is one of the success factors of the organization. Identifying employees' attitudes as change approaches is also an important process, perhaps as important as planning change itself, as understanding employees' attitudes toward ongoing changes can prevent a collapse of change. Likewise, understanding employees' attitudes toward change may allow organizations to properly plan the work of their employees so that their work is done qualitatively, both during and after the change. Organizational Personnel Management departments can also pay close attention to employee attitudes toward change, as, as stated above, attitudes are a changing factor, and successful changes to these attitudes can bring about both faster and better-quality change.

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