

An Integrative Analysis of Organisational Change Management: A Systematic Literature Review (2000–2025)

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ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced world influenced by digital innovation, globalization, and evolving workforce expectations, organizations must continuously adapt to survive and succeed. Change is no longer a one-time event; it has become a constant feature of organizational life. This study systematically reviews 39 peer-reviewed research papers published between 2000 and 2025 to explore how organizations manage change and, more importantly, how employees respond to it. Using the PRISMA method, the review examines internal factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, employee perspectives on change drivers and personality traits, along with external influences like technological advancements and market dynamics. Findings reveal that supportive leadership, transparent communication, and participative decision-making significantly improve employee acceptance of change and reduce resistance. Leaders who actively involve their teams and build trust create a more positive environment for transformation. The study also highlights that employees react to change differently based on their adaptability and generational background, showing that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. Organizations must adopt flexible and inclusive change strategies that consider the diversity of their workforce. Moreover, the review points out that organizational commitment, peer support, and innovation-friendly cultures play vital roles in successful change implementation. Clear communication and emotional support throughout the process further enhance readiness for change. By synthesizing key insights from two decades of research, the study offers practical guidance for leaders and decision-makers seeking to build resilient, forward-looking organizations. It emphasizes the importance of integrating individual, organizational, and external factors into a cohesive change management strategy that can help organizations navigate ongoing disruption and prepare for future challenges.

Keywords: Organizational Change Management, Employee Resistance, Change Acceptance, Employee Adaptability, change drivers, Systematic Literature Review, PRISMA

INTRODUCTION

Organizational change management (OCM) has increasingly become a central area of focus in both organizational theory and practice. As the pace of change accelerates due to globalization, digital innovation, economic volatility, and shifting workforce demographics, organizations must adapt or risk obsolescence (Obied, 2025). Organizations today operate in dynamic environments where continuous transformation is not a choice but a necessity (Burnes et al., 2021). Effective change management is linked to greater organizational adaptability, higher employee satisfaction, and improved performance outcomes (Santoso & Kusmaryanto, 2025). Yet, despite its importance, the process of change is often disruptive, leading to resistance from employees who may feel a loss of stability or control (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). Numerous studies have investigated the complex web of factors that influence how employees respond to change. Key factors among these are the organizational environment, leadership dynamics, individual personality traits, and external forces (Orabi et al., 2024). For instance, organizational culture, leadership style, and employee perceptions all contribute to the degree of acceptance or resistance to change initiatives (Appelbaum, 2015). While there is a growing body of literature addressing these themes, much of it tends to examine them in isolation. This fragmented approach limits the ability to develop comprehensive change strategies that address the multifaceted nature of employee

responses. To bridge this gap, this study undertakes a systematic literature review (SLR) spanning the period from 2000 to 2025, focusing on the integrated influence of key factors on employee attitudes toward organizational change (Kuenzi, & Schminke, 2009). This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is undertaken with the objective of identifying and synthesizing the key themes and recurring trends across scholarly studies that examine factors influencing change acceptance, commitment, and resistance within organizational settings. By analyzing a broad spectrum of literature, the review seeks to uncover how these themes have evolved and manifested over time. Another core objective is to critically evaluate the methodologies employed in existing research. This involves examining the strengths and limitations of various research designs and analytical approaches used to study change management, thereby shedding light on the robustness and reliability of the findings across the field (Obied, 2025). The review also aims to explore the diverse variables and factors that influence employee responses to organizational change. These include leadership styles, cultural contexts, personality traits, and organizational structures, which collectively shape how individuals engage with or resist change initiatives. In addition to academic synthesis, the study aspires to provide practical implications for change practitioners and organizational leaders. By distilling actionable insights from the literature, it offers recommendations on how to cultivate a supportive environment that promotes successful change adoption. Finally, the review highlights the existing research gaps and proposes avenues for future studies. By identifying underexplored areas and emerging challenges, it contributes to the ongoing development of effective and context-sensitive change management strategies. The two main research questions guiding this review are: "How do organizational environment, leadership dynamics, personality traits, and external factors influence employee attitudes toward change in organizational settings?" "What underlying factors shape employee attitudes toward change in the evolving landscape of organizational life?" Following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, this review synthesizes findings from 39 peer-reviewed studies. It aims to provide a holistic understanding of the dynamics of organizational change and to generate practical recommendations for leaders and policymakers. The review not only consolidates existing evidence but also identifies gaps and suggests future directions for research in change management.

METHODOLOGY

Search Strategy

In alignment with PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, this review employed a structured and transparent search strategy to ensure methodological rigor. Databases used included Scopus and Google Scholar, covering the period from January 2000 to 2025. The search was limited to English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles within the business and management disciplines. Keywords included: "change management," "organizational change," "resistance to change," "leadership and change," and "employee behaviour."

The exact Scopus search string was:

TITLE ("change Management") AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Change Management") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Organizational Change") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Sustainable Development") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Knowledge Management") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Resistance To Change") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Organizational Change Management") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Organization Change") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Organisational Change Management") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Change Leadership") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Change Models") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Change Management Models") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Change Implementation") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , "Change Process"))

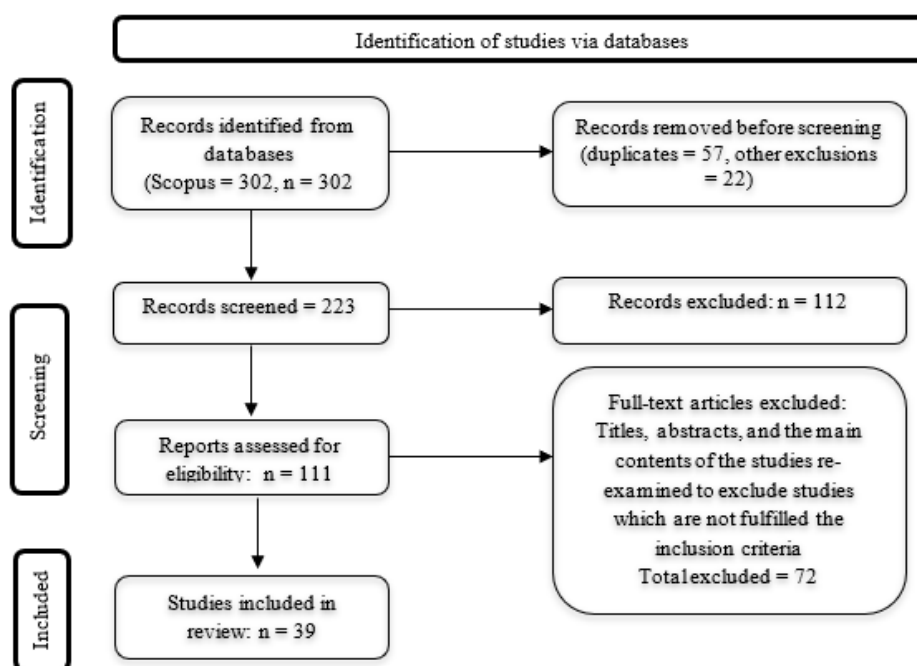
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles that addressed organizational change in work settings and focused on key themes such as leadership dynamics, personality traits, organizational commitment, or external change drivers. Exclusion criteria ruled out articles lacking methodological clarity, not in English, or inaccessible in full-text format.

Data Screening and Cleaning Process

The search initially yielded 302 articles (Scopus = 302). After removing duplicates ($n = 57$) and other exclusions ($n = 22$), 223 records were screened. Title and abstract screening led to the exclusion of 112 records. A full-text review of 111 articles was conducted, titles, abstracts, and the main contents of the studies re-examined to exclude studies which are not fulfilled the inclusion criteria and 72 were excluded for reasons. Ultimately, 39 articles were included in the final synthesis (please see *Figure 1*)

Figure 1 PRISMA flow diagram



RESULTS

Study Characteristics

The 39 studies included in this review offer a comprehensive perspective on organizational change management, covering various themes, designs, and sample populations. Below is a summary of their characteristics:

Study Design

Table 1 Methodology used in studies

Methodology	No. of Studies	Example Studies
Longitudinal Study	4	Predictors and outcomes of openness to changes (Wanberg & Banas, 2000)

Quantitative - Experimental	2	The relationship between job redesigning, reskilling and upskilling on organizational agility (<i>Jamal et al., 2025</i>).
Quantitative - Regression Analysis	13	The relationship between job redesigning, reskilling and upskilling on organizational agility (<i>Jamal et al., 2025</i>)
Qualitative - Interview	3	Understanding the role of social media in organizational change implementation. (<i>Naeem, 2020</i>).
Literature review	11	An Overview of Reviews: Organizational Change Management Architecture. (<i>Da Ros et al., 2023</i>)
Conceptual / Other	6	Yes, we can! A job embeddedness perspective on employee change acceptance (<i>Vardaman et al. 2024</i>).

To better understand the evolving landscape of organizational change, a systematic review of 39 peer-reviewed studies was conducted. The methodological landscape of these studies revealed a strong quantitative inclination, with a notable use of experimental designs (e.g., *Jamal et al., 2025*) and regression analyses (13 studies, e.g., *Jamal et al., 2025*). A smaller subset (4 studies) adopted a longitudinal perspective to capture the dynamic nature of change processes over time (e.g., *Wanberg & Banas, 2000*). Interestingly, only a limited number of studies (3) employed qualitative approaches such as interviews, highlighting a potential gap in capturing the nuanced human experiences during change (e.g., *Naeem, 2020*). Additionally, 11 studies used literature review methods (e.g., *Da Ros et al., 2023*), and 6 were conceptual or theoretical in nature (e.g., *Vardaman et al., 2024*). This methodological mapping provided a foundational lens through which patterns and gaps in the literature were examined and underscored the need for greater methodological diversity and transparency in future research (See *Table 1*).

Sample Size and Demographics

The sample sizes vary considerably across studies. Quantitative studies tend to have larger sample sizes (often between 200 to 500 participants e.g., *Jamal et al., 2025*), typically comprising employees across multiple organizational levels, from entry-level to managerial roles. Qualitative studies tend to have smaller samples (20–50 participants e.g., (*Koll et al., 2024*)), often focused on specific departments or organizational settings. The samples encompass a range of industries, including technology, healthcare, finance, and manufacturing, allowing for a more generalized understanding of how change management strategies function across different contexts.

Key Themes identified

Organizational Environment and Innovation Adoption

Managerial support, perceived control, and effective organizational communication collectively create an environment conducive to successful change implementation. Many studies highlight that managerial support and control play crucial roles in facilitating change by fostering transparent communication, participative decision-making, and a sense of employee agency (*Sagie et al., 1995*; *Sagie & Koslowsky, 1996*). When employees are involved in planning and decision-making, resistance decreases and commitment increases. A supportive organizational infrastructure, including access to resources, training programs, and clear communication strategies, further enhances change acceptance by making employees feel prepared and secure (*Marasini et al., 2023*). In addition, effective communication—marked by clarity and frequency—keeps employees informed and engaged throughout the change process. Team dynamics such as collaboration and peer support play a vital role in how change is received and implemented (*Kotter, 1996*), while an organizational culture that is open to innovation and encourages the acceptance of new ideas is essential for successful adaptation and long-term sustainability of change initiatives (*Rogers, 2003*).

Leadership Dynamics

Participative and Transformational Leadership: Effective leadership styles, particularly participative and transformational leadership, have a substantial impact on employees' attitudes toward change (Boonstra J. 2022). Participative leaders who encourage employee input foster a sense of ownership, while transformational leaders inspire confidence and motivate employees to embrace change. Studies suggest that when leaders communicate a clear vision and demonstrate commitment to the change process, employees are more likely to engage positively with organizational changes. **Social Dynamics and Managerial Self-Efficacy:** Leadership's role extends beyond vision-setting to managing social dynamics within teams. (Grønvad et al., 2023) emphasize the importance of managerial self-efficacy (i.e., a manager's confidence in guiding change) in handling resistance and fostering a cohesive environment. Managers who demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and build trusting relationships with employees can reduce resistance and support a smoother transition.

Employee Perspectives on Change Drivers

Organizational commitment and personality traits are critical individual-level factors that influence employees' responses to change. The reviewed studies reveal that high levels of organizational commitment reduce resistance to change, as committed employees are more willing to align with change initiatives, while lower commitment often correlates with intentions to quit or minimal engagement (Ferrari, F. 2023). Trust in leadership, perceptions of fairness, and job satisfaction are significant variables influencing commitment. Furthermore, employee loyalty and engagement—shaped by a sense of belonging and alignment with organizational goals—enhance commitment and reduce resistance, as loyal employees are more invested in the organization's success (Mathar, D., & Gaur, M. 2020). Personality traits also play a crucial role in change acceptance. Traits like open-mindedness, adaptability, and global-mindedness are positively associated with receptivity to change and proactive engagement in the change process (Fu et al., 2016). Generational differences are notable, with younger employees generally exhibiting greater adaptability, while older employees may need more targeted support. Conversely, traits such as fear of the unknown, low tolerance for ambiguity, and high preference for stability contribute to change aversion, highlighting the need for tailored approaches that account for personality differences (Hubbart, J. A. 2020).

External Factors

Technological Advancements and Market Pressures: External factors, including technological changes and competitive market pressures, create urgency for organizations to adapt. Organizations that successfully integrate new technologies tend to have robust change management practices. Employees' adaptability is influenced by how well the organization communicates the necessity of technological changes and prepares employees for them (Jamal et al., 2025).

Cultural Influence and Generational Differences: The role of cultural influence and generational differences is frequently cited as affecting change acceptance (Fu et al., 2016). Employees from diverse cultural backgrounds may have varying comfort levels with change, depending on cultural norms around hierarchy, authority, and group cohesion. Additionally, generational cohorts display distinct attitudes toward change, suggesting that customization in communication and change strategies can improve outcomes.

Variables and Factors

Participative Decision-Making: Empowering employees to contribute to decision-making processes reduces resistance to change by increasing perceived control and aligning employees' values with organizational goals. (Sagie et al., 1995; Sagie et al., 1996). **Trust and Transparency:** Trust in leadership and transparent communication were frequently mentioned as crucial for fostering a supportive environment. Employees who trust their leaders are more likely to perceive changes as fair and necessary, reducing resistance. (Ferrari, 2023) discusses how managerial support and trust reduce change cynicism, while (Grønvad et al., 2023) elaborate on how trust influences social positioning and openness to change. **Commitment and Engagement:** Organizational commitment, often tied to loyalty and job satisfaction, acts as a buffer against resistance. Committed employees

are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors during change initiatives, such as supporting their peers and showing resilience in the face of challenges (Ferrari, 2023). Team dynamics such as collaboration and peer support significantly influence how change initiatives are received and implemented (Kotter, 1996). Leadership Self-Efficacy: The confidence of leaders in managing change processes impacts employees' acceptance. Leaders who are self-assured and exhibit adaptive leadership styles inspire trust, motivating employees to adopt change (Grønvdal et al., 2023). Cultural Orientation and Generational Influence: Employees' cultural backgrounds and generational identities shape their responses to change, impacting how organizations should communicate and implement changes Boonstra, J. (2022) (Menezes & Malhotra, 2022). Additionally, openness to innovation and employees' acceptance of new ideas are key factors that drive successful adaptation and sustained change (Rogers, 2003).

Integration of Themes

Although the themes—organizational environment, leadership dynamics, employee perspectives, and external factors—appear distinct, the findings suggest that they operate interdependently rather than independently. For example, the positive effects of transformational leadership are amplified when supported by a participative culture and transparent communication mechanisms (Boonstra, 2022; Grønvdal et al., 2023). Similarly, personality traits such as adaptability and openness to change demonstrate stronger influence when employees perceive fairness and trust in leadership processes (Ferrari, 2023). This indicates that an enabling organizational environment mediates the relationship between leadership behaviour and individual responses. External drivers such as technological disruption further intensify the role of leadership and communication by determining urgency and readiness (Jamal et al., 2025). Therefore, rather than functioning in silos, these themes form an interconnected framework in which the success of one factor depends heavily on others.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings

The synthesis of the reviewed studies highlights meaningful consistencies while also exposing methodological and conceptual variations. Most studies agree on the centrality of leadership behaviour and organizational commitment in determining employee responses to change (Burnes et al., 2021; Boonstra, 2022). However, a comparative analysis reveals divergent perspectives regarding personality traits. While Fu et al. (2016) emphasize personality as a dominant determinant of change acceptance, others argue that supportive environments and communication can significantly neutralize personality-driven resistance (Grønvdal et al., 2023). This variation illustrates that context may be more influential than trait-based assumptions, raising important questions about generalizability. The predominance of quantitative designs (13 regression-based studies) limits the depth of experiential understanding, while the small number of qualitative studies (n=3) restricts insight into emotional and behavioural complexity during change. This methodological imbalance suggests potential bias toward measurable outcomes rather than interpretive realities that could refine change theory.

Comparison Across Studies

There is a strong consensus on leadership and commitment across the reviewed studies, with most agreeing that leadership style and organizational commitment are foundational to successful change management. Transformational and participative leadership consistently emerge as effective styles, fostering trust and reducing resistance, while high levels of organizational commitment are uniformly linked to lower resistance to change, reinforcing the idea that employee loyalty can buffer against change-related anxiety. However, there is variability in the role of personality traits, as some studies emphasize their importance in shaping change acceptance, while others suggest that a supportive organizational environment can override these individual differences. For example, even employees with low tolerance for ambiguity have shown improved adaptability in environments characterized by strong managerial support and open communication. This indicates that while personality traits matter, the organizational context can significantly influence their impact. Additionally, there are differing perspectives on external factors; some studies argue that external pressures such as technological

advancements directly influence employee resistance, whereas others highlight the mediating role of internal communication strategies. These differences often stem from variations in industry, organizational culture, and readiness for change, suggesting that the effect of external factors is not uniform but shaped by how organizations internally manage and communicate change. Review revealed both consensus and variation across studies: These contrasts and consistencies emphasize that while certain factors are universally important, the impact of others may be context-dependent, shaped by organizational culture, industry, and workforce composition.

Temporal Evolution of Research (2000–2025)

A temporal examination of the selected publications reveals a notable transition in how organizational change has been conceptualized over the past 25 years. Studies from the early 2000s primarily focused on resistance, employee attitudes, and psychological responses (e.g., Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). Between 2010–2018, research shifted toward leadership influence, communication strategies, and organizational culture. In the post-2020 period, rapid technological shifts such as digital transformation and hybrid work models reshaped research priorities, emphasizing adaptability, agility, and digital leadership (Hasbi & van Marrewijk, 2024; Obied, 2025). This shift reflects the evolving organizational realities influenced by globalization, remote work, and generational diversity. However, few studies compare these shifts systematically, indicating a gap for longitudinal or bibliometric trend analyses.

Policy Implications

The findings from this systematic literature review have significant implications for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and policymakers seeking to improve the success and sustainability of change initiatives. First, the review underscores the need to institutionalize participative decision-making processes within organizational policy frameworks. Involving employees early in the change process—through mechanisms such as change committees, open forums, and feedback loops—not only enhances perceived control but also significantly reduces resistance. Formal policies that ensure employee voice and engagement are critical to creating a climate of shared ownership and accountability during transformation efforts. Equally important is the development of leadership capacity tailored to change contexts. Organizations must invest in training programs that build transformational and participative leadership competencies, as these styles have been consistently linked with positive employee responses to change. Leaders should be equipped not only to articulate a compelling vision but also to navigate team dynamics, build trust, and manage interpersonal resistance with confidence. Embedding these competencies into leadership development policies will foster a resilient and adaptable managerial culture.

The review also highlights the need for personality-informed change strategies. Recognizing that individual traits—such as tolerance for ambiguity, adaptability, and open-mindedness—shape responses to change, organizations should integrate personality assessments into their change management planning. Tailored interventions, such as mentoring, targeted communication, and emotional support, can help address individual differences and enhance overall change acceptance. Effective communication and trust-building should be central tenets of any change management policy. Organizations must commit to transparent, timely, and multi-directional communication during change implementation. Policies should mandate the use of clear communication protocols and outline strategies for fostering procedural fairness and psychological safety, both of which reduce resistance and cynicism.

Technological readiness also emerges as a key priority. As organizations adapt to rapid digital transformations, policies should emphasize proactive investments in employee upskilling, digital literacy, and adaptive technology infrastructure. Preparing employees for change through anticipatory planning and training ensures smoother transitions and minimizes disruption. Furthermore, the review underscores the importance of culturally and generationally sensitive change strategies. With increasingly diverse and multi-generational workforces, one-size-fits-all approaches to change communication and implementation are no longer effective. Organizational policies should reflect this diversity, promoting inclusive language, multiple communication formats, and differentiated support strategies that respect cultural values and generational preferences. Change readiness must be framed not as a one-time event but as a continuous organizational process. Organizations should institutionalize change readiness audits, resilience assessments, and feedback systems as part of their

routine management practices. In parallel, public and private institutions should support evidence-based change practices by investing in research, promoting knowledge exchange, and encouraging partnerships between academia and industry. These initiatives will ensure that change models remain dynamic, context-sensitive, and grounded in empirical evidence.

LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW

Despite the comprehensive scope and methodological rigor of this systematic literature review, several limitations must be acknowledged. The study deliberately restricted its scope to peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus. While this approach ensured the inclusion of high-impact and widely cited academic works, it also excluded potentially valuable insights from books, practitioner reports, conference proceedings, and articles published in non-indexed or region-specific journals. This limitation may have led to the omission of context-rich studies or emerging perspectives from less mainstream publication outlets. Although the PRISMA guidelines were followed, the review did not employ a formal quality appraisal framework to assess the methodological rigor of the included studies. As such, the synthesis may include studies with varying degrees of methodological quality, which could influence the robustness of some conclusions. The review emphasizes internal organizational variables (e.g., leadership style, employee personality, commitment) and does not extensively examine broader institutional, regulatory, or macroeconomic factors. As a result, the findings may be more relevant to organizational-level interventions rather than systemic change initiatives. Finally, while the review spans a 25-year period (2000–2025), it does not include a temporal or bibliometric analysis to track the evolution of themes over time. Therefore, while recurring patterns were identified, the dynamic progression of change management theories and practices across decades was not systematically mapped.

CONCLUSION

This SLR contributes to the field of change management by synthesizing diverse perspectives on the variables and factors that influence employees' responses to organizational change. The findings emphasize that successful change management is a holistic endeavour, requiring organizations to consider individual characteristics, organizational practices, and external pressures. By highlighting the complexities of change management, this review offers a valuable resource for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers aiming to foster resilient, adaptable organizations. Organizational Environment and Commitment play a crucial role in managing change, as supportive environments that encourage managerial involvement and participative decision-making significantly reduce resistance. High organizational commitment, often strengthened by transparency and fairness, is consistently linked to positive employee attitudes toward change. In addition, Leadership Dynamics—especially transformational and participative leadership styles—are vital in shaping how employees respond. Leaders who communicate a clear vision, show adaptability, and build trust can greatly enhance employee engagement and lessen resistance. Clear and frequent communication helps keep employees informed and engaged during times of change. Collaboration within teams and support from peers greatly influence how employees respond to change. An organization's willingness to embrace innovation, along with employees' acceptance of new ideas, plays a crucial role in achieving successful and lasting change. Furthermore, Personality Traits and External Pressures also impact reactions to change; traits like adaptability and open-mindedness affect individual responses, while external factors such as technological advances and market competition require continuous adaptation. Organizations that clearly communicate the reasons behind these pressures tend to experience higher levels of employee cooperation. These findings underscore the multi-dimensional nature of change management, confirming that successful change initiatives require consideration of individual, organizational, and external factors.

Future Research Directions

Cross-Cultural and Generational Studies are increasingly important as workplaces become more diverse, and future research could examine how cultural and generational differences influence responses to change. Gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics can help organizations create more nuanced and inclusive change management strategies. The Impact of Digital Transformation also warrants further investigation, especially regarding how technology affects employee adaptability and acceptance of change. Longitudinal studies could

provide valuable insights on how organizations can better prepare employees for technology-driven transitions. Additionally, Team-Level and Interpersonal Dynamics remain underexplored since most research focuses on individual or organizational factors; exploring how team cohesion, collaboration, and peer influence shape change acceptance could offer practical guidance for implementing change at the team level. Comparative Studies on Leadership Styles could further enhance knowledge by assessing the relative effectiveness of transformational and participative leadership across various industries and organizational contexts. Authentic leadership remains an underexplored area in the context of change management. Finally, understanding Resilience and Well-being in Change Management is critical, as investigating how employee resilience and well-being impact stress reduction and adaptability can help organizations foster healthier and more supportive environments during change initiatives.

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