Psychosemantics of Employees' Images when Identifying the Dimensions of Change Management

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Abstract

In the article we present an empirical research performed in October-December, 2008. As the main research method anonymous semi-open questionnaire was chosen for the employees of organisations of business and public sectors. 306 participants of the researched organisations participated in the survey. The questionnaire included empirical indicators reflecting employees' perception about the meaning of changes, attitude to factors of a successful organisation, planning the changes and ways of overcoming resistance to changes. This article is limited to respondents' answers to three open questions of the questionnaire: *Why must organisational changes be planned? How and at what level are changes resisted at your organisation?* and *How would it be possible to overcome resistance to changes?*

In order to identify the level and ways of resistance to changes in organisation we referred to the facts of research into individual and organisational behaviour presented by Robbins (2006, p. 309–312) and when analysing the ways of overcoming resistance to changes we referred to the methods, means and tactics presented by Bartol and Martin (1991, p. 241), Neverauskas and Rastenis (2001, p. 105–106), Stankeviciene and Lobanova (2006, p. 150) and Sajiene and others (2008, p. 40). Meanwhile the formation of the category of relevance of planning of changes is grounded on subjective opinion of article's authors and available competences.

The research revealed the psychosemantics of employees' opinion in the aspects of expression of change management, emphasized the attitudes of organisation's members towards planning of changes, resistance to changes and ways of overcoming resistance to changes.

Keywords: change management, planning of changes, resistance to changes, overcoming resistance to changes, psychosemantics.

Introduction

Scientific problem, novelty and relevance of the research. Recently changes in external environment greatly influence organisation's activities. "Although it is impossible to avoid changes, they are not always welcome, consequences of possible changes are not foreseen, attitudes of organisations' employees towards the issues of initiation, management and possible resistance to changes are not sufficiently researched and analysed. Alternation presents new requirements to the employees, their groups and organisation" (Bersenaite, Saparnis, 2007, p. 20). Therefore, constant interest in attitudes of organisation's members, their education and information are the best ways to take up challenges of changes.

Since organisational changes and development are not retreating from the centre of attention of scientists and practicians all over the world, global problems and tendencies are constantly being analysed: privatization, reform of public sector, consolidation and acquisition of organisations, citizens' migration, poverty (Rees, 2008, p. 87), new technologies, reorganization, restructurization, internet access to knowledge, democratization of regimes and flattening of organisational structures (Markovic, 2008), extent of present economical and social changes, globalization process, quick transition to knowledge-based society and demographical tension (Kumpikaite, 2008, p. 25). Today old management technologies are often ineffective and do not provide an organisation with an opportunity to notice changes of activities and conditions of business environment in time (Kopitov, Faingloz, 2008, p. 312). New structures, staff policy, reform of customer service, self-renewal have been planned as management tools to implement changes (Sepper, Alas, 2008, p. 16).

The methodology of change management encompasses two parts: 1) ways and methods of prediction (determination) of changes and preparation of the scenario of their realization; and 2) organisation and monitoring of implementation of changes (Vanagas, 2007). When analyzing change management deeper, the aspect of organisational development is involved, i.e. implementation of the planned changes with reference to humanistic-democratic values. Improvement of organisation's effectiveness is considered to be the main aim of these managerial activities. Perceiving change management as an analytical, educational and political process (Alas, 2004, p. 110), rational, political and emotional reasons of resistance to changes might be determined (Sakalas, Savaneviciene, 2003, p. 158).

In the recent years, the problem of change management in an organisation was analysed in various

aspects by foreign (Carnall, 1990; Burnes, 2004; Kotter, Rathgeber, 2008; Sepper, Alas, 2008 and others) and Lithuanian (Pundziene, 2004; Zakarevicius, Kvedaravicius, Augustauskas, 2004; Korsakiene, 2006; Zakarevicius, 2006; Buoziute-Rafanaviciene, Pundziene, Turauskas, 2009 and others) scientists. Most of the authors analyse changes as transformations occurring at individual, group and organisational (system) levels. Processes of change in external organisation's environment, the influence of which is significant to activities of any organisation, are analysed together. However, we miss scientists' attention paid to the problem of analysis of management of change of psychosemantic structures of employees of various organisations. Scientific problem of the research is expressed by problem questions that require empirical research: What is the expression of opinion of organisation's employees when identifying the organisation as an organisation that manages changes? What is the expression of employees' opinion when identifying the dimensions of resistance to changes? What is the subjective law of rating psychosemantic categories reflecting the expression of change management? What is the subjective character of taxonomy, arising from rating's data, of psychosemantic categories reflecting the expression of change management?

Subject of the research is expression of employees' opinion about change management.

Aim of the research is to investigate psychosemantics of employees' opinion in the aspects of expression of change management.

Objectives of the research are to analyse scientific sources in the aspect of change management and resistance to changes; to empirically investigate the attitudes of organisation's members towards planning of changes, resistance to changes and ways of overcoming resistance to changes.

Methods of the research: analysis of scientific literature sources, qualitative and quantitative content analysis, statistical data processing.

Theoretical substantiation of the research

Aspect of planning of changes. According to Zakarevicius, Kvedaravicius and Augustauskas (2004), planning is one of the elements of conception of creation of future. Without planning, as well as without other elements (forecasting, designing, projecting, programming, scenario creation) successful and effective creation of future is impossible. Thus, the authors of this article concentrate on the planned (i.e., purposeful) changes that might be successfully managed while changing attitudes of the members and expanding their professional competences (Bersenaite, Saparnis, Saparniene, 2006).

Although changes have been always characteristic to organisational activities, recently their frequency and meaning are especially emphasized. As pointed out by Burnes (2004, p. 267), attitude to planning of changes is closely related to organisational development and is its basis. Planned changes help individuals, teams, and organisations to act more effectively.

Changes are always accepted favourably neither in larger environment, nor in a separate organisation. As some authors (Bagdonas, Bagdoniene, 2000; Sepper, Alas, 2008) have suggested, it is not enough to understand the stages of process of change, it is necessary to prepare for it in advance, to plan. A planned change covers actions based on a well considered process, foreseeing difficulties, threats, and opportunities in the future (Bartol, Martin, 1991, p. 235). At present, changes occurring in organisations' environment are so fast, that planning becomes a single opportunity to foresee the majority of opportunities and problems (Sajiene and others, 2008, p. 53), to forecast changes in the market (Davidaviciene, 2008). Yusof and Aziz (2008, p. 107) argued that when planning the future activities of an organisation, it is important to initiate and implement changes.

Some recent theoretical and empirical studies (Sepper and Alas, 2008; Yusof, Aziz, 2008) established another important feature of planned changes: they give great shifts in the sense of quality, thus economic efficiency is achieved. In order to preserve competitive advantage, it is necessary to foresee and adapt to changes of environment. Hence, only those organisations that manage to find out and understand the features of environment and adapt in the course of time survive in the market.

The aim of planned changes is to prepare the entire organisation or its main part to adapt to broad organisation's aims and big changes of directions. According to Stoner et al. (2005, p. 405), a precisely planned change is defined as "considered creation and implementation of structural innovations, new politics or aims or as a change of philosophy, climate or style of activities". When planning changes, attention is concentrated on the expansion of effectiveness of resources of organisation's people. The essence of the planned changes is such: the heads of an organisation and receivers/recipients of the changes as well as consultants together diagnose a problem in the organisation, together plan and design specific changes. Learning is necessary for successful proceedings of changes. Burnes (2004, p. 279) claims that it allows learning people to acquire or change foresight, attitude, expectations, and ways of thinking.

Planned alternation in organisation's work process is going on when initiators of alternation com-

municate changes (conceptualize and convey a new ostensive aspect of the process which is interpreted by the participants of the process) and adapt changes (the participants of the process discover and integrate a new aspect of implementation of the process). Vilkas and Stancikas (2006) described planned changes as a suggestion of a new attitude to the process implementation, the interpretation, discovery, and integration of which have no end.

According to Stoskus and Berzinskiene (2005, p. 9), unplanned changes are more often related to losses, they occur unexpectedly, a person accepts them much more negatively; they are often related to *stresses and conflicts.* People participate in planned changes, the processes of which are managed and the changes themselves are related to benefit. When changes at enterprises occur spontaneously, i.e. without preparation in advance, there is a great possibility that after implementation they will not yield an expected result. In this case employees are usually unprepared to work under new conditions and probably they will not agree with the changes. Implementation of *improperly managed* changes may last for a very long time and become ineffective. In addition, one more danger is waiting: *spontaneous changes* may cause employees' long-term resistance to various innovations. When something is being changed in one sphere of company's activities and the essence of changes as well as how the work is organized are not explained to the employees of other spheres, common activities will not become more effective, because the better working company's sphere will be impeded by other not so successfully working spheres.

Today change programmes are necessary because the influence of time and relations has become especially important in all organisations. Refinement of technologies that process information together with the spread of organisations all over the world mean that the heads are attacked by plenty of new ideas, new products, and new challenges. In order to manage such growth of information flow during a short period of time the heads can devote to make decisions, the heads must improve their ability to manage changes. Majority of organisations have detailed programmes of change management in order to increase employees' ability to foresee changes and to learn from the occurring changes (Stoner, 2005, p. 405).

As pointed out by Bartol and Martin (1991, p. 234–235), a reactive change occurs when one takes action in response to perceived problems, threats, or opportunities, while a planned change involves actions based on a carefully thought-out process for change that anticipates future difficulties, threats, and opportunities.
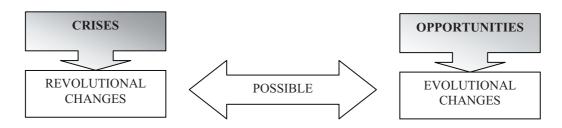

Figure 1. Types and reasons of changes
Source: Diaukstiene, J. (2008). *Darbuotoju motyvavimo ypatumai, kuriant darbine aplinka pokycio metu.* Accessed on 2009-04-09. Available online at <http://fastleader3.cma.ee/index.php?lang=lit&main_id=767>.

As Figure 1 shows, in a critical situation it is necessary to initiate drastic changes since there is no time to follow Japanese conception "step by step". Such changes require "to change employees' behaviour radically and this causes their resistance" (Sakalas, Savaneviciene, 2003, p. 155). The authors claim that the main causes of resistance to changes are such: employees are not involved in preparation of changes, do not understand the essence of changes and are not motivated to implement them.

Aspect of resistance to changes. In literature, resistance to changes that are being implemented in an organisation is evaluated ambiguously. In a positive sense (Robbins, 2006, p. 309), resistance "provides a certain stability of organisational behaviour and a degree of predictability", however, its drawback is emphasized as well: "it discourages to adapt and progress".

The authors who are analysing this sphere state that employees resist changes because of "uncertainty, feeling of loss and belief that changes will provide nothing good" (Neverauskas, Rastenis, 2001, p. 105), "inertia of thinking, fear of uncertainty, unwillingness to do extra work, planned reduction of positions, reaction to too fast and unclear changes, lack of information (Alas, 2004, p. 114), objectively deteriorated employees' situation due to change (rational reasons of resistance), loss of hierarchic authority (political reasons of resistance), inadequacy to personal orientation (emotional reasons of resistance) (Sakalas, Savaneviciene, 2003, p. 159). Neverauskas and Rastenis (2001) note that when people do not know

the consequences of changes, feel uncertainty of information, they inadequately react to any message. Employees are concerned about meeting the needs during the alternation and they start to think that "changes are unnecessary or undesirable".

Many researchers (Alas, 2004; Laumenskaite, 2003) confirm that employees resist social changes more than technical ones. The change programmes that ignore psychological resistance to changes often

fail. Organisations flounder or collapse when people do not accept changes and do not change internally together with them.

According to Robbins (2006, p. 309), "resistance to changes may be open, hidden, urgent or delayed". Individual resistance or resistance of an entire organisation is usually analysed in literature (see Table 1).

Table 1

Levels and sources of resistance to changes

Individual resistance	Organisation's resistance
Habit	Structural inertia
Security	Limited centre of attention of changes
Economical factors	Group inertia
Fear of uncertainty	Threat to experience
Selective information processing	Threat to formed authorities' relations
	Threat to steady distribution of sources

Source: Compiled by the authors of the article with reference to Robbins, S. (2006). *Organizacines elgsenos pagrindai.* Kaunas: Poligrafija ir informatika, p. 309–312.

Overcoming resistance to changes. When implementing changes, any organisation may experience resistance. As Stankeviciene and Lobanova (2006) state, great explanatory work is necessary in the company. "When planning and implementing changes, it is not enough simply to inform about their necessity or enforce implementation of changes. Such ways of change management cause great resistance only" (Almonaitiene, 2000, p. 75).

As Sepper and Alas (2008) emphasise, the programme of change management covers rational presentation of changes, employees' involvement and motivation to work. The aim of the programme of change management is to guarantee that all people understand and recognise new aims and are ready to achieve them. It is necessary to receive staff's support for change, to inform clearly about the aims of change and expected results.

According to Bagdanavicius (2002, p. 75), it is common to consider that people with higher education "better adapt to changes, have greater opportunities to be employed at prestigious jobs". Meanwhile the attitude towards changes "depends upon the position (status)" (Simanskiene, 2005, p. 33). According to the data of the performed researches, the majority of heads and employees of organisations state that when evaluating changes it is important to refer to the past.

As Davidaviciene (2008) states, decisions of change management depend upon the level of resistance to changes. Theorists and practicians of management suggest various methods in order to overcome resistance to changes (see Table 2).

Table 2

Ways, methods, stages, tactics of activities for overcoming resistance to changes

Bartol, Martin, 1991, p. 241	Neverauskas, Rastenis, 2001, p. 105–106	Stankeviciene, Lobanova, 2006, p. 150	Sajiene, Targamadze, Savickiene, Obeleniene, 2008, p. 40
Methods	**Ways**	**Stages**	**Tactics of activities**
• Education and communication. • Participation and involvement. • Facilitation and support. • Negotiation and agreement. • Manipulation and co-optation. • Explicit and implicit coercion.	• Collection and transmission of information. • Invitation. • Maintenance and support. • Negotiations. • Co-optation. • Shunt. • Pressure.	1. Understanding of employees' needs. 2. Understanding and elimination of resistance. 3. Motivation. 4. Information. 5. Involvement into decision making.	• to involve employees into changes planning and implementation (participation). • Clearly show the result of achievements as future benefit for everyone. • To ensure employees' security during the period of changes. • To ensure effective communication when informing employees about what is happening, to seek their psychological proximity. • If possible to refer to the power of the group. • To aspire to concentrate efforts.

Besides the opportunities of overcoming resistance to changes indicated in Table 2, it is worth mentioning two more factors that at least reduce wish to resist change. First, stimulation of those who accept changes by psychological and material means. Second, deliberate creation of an organisation that "would be able to constantly adapt and change". "A learning organisation is characterised by five main features. People get rid of old thinking, learn to be open to each other, understand how their organisation really functions, create a plan or a vision that may be accepted by all and all may work jointly in order to implement this vision" (Robbins, 2006, p. 312).

Methodology of the research

As the main research method anonymous semi-open, semi-closed questionnaire was chosen for the employees of organisations of business and public sectors. 306 participants of the researched organisations participated in the research.

The developed questionnaire contained questions involving employees' opinions about changes' perception, attitude to successful organisation's factors, planning of changes and ways of overcoming resistance to changes.

In order to identify the level and ways of resistance to changes in organisation we referred to the facts of research into individual and organisational behaviour presented by Robbins (2006, p. 309–312) and when analysing the ways of negotiations of resistance to changes we referred to the methods, means and tactics presented by Bartol and Martin (1991, p. 241), Neverauskas and Rastenis (2001, p. 105–106), Stankeviciene and Lobanova (2006, p. 150) and Sajiene and others (2008, p. 40). Meanwhile the formation of the category of relevance of change planning is based on a subjective opinion of article authors and available competences.

In interpretation of research data a rather great role was played by a psychology branch psychosemantics (Sinchenko, Mescheriakov, 1996). Besides, it investigates what subjective meanings individuals and social groups tend to ascribe to verbal irritants. Language is not a random factor; it reflects individual psychic and sociocultural reality (Saparnis, 2000; Saparnis, Saparniene, 2004). From the history of social research it is known that psychosemantic material – associative reaction of the being researched to verbal irritants – has been recommended as a reliable empirical referent. Reference to analysis of psychosemantic structures gave an opportunity to arrive at certain achievements in the spheres of differential psychology, psychodiagnostics, and researches into social attitudes (Osgood, 1959). Particularly in our research

the role of a word-irritant was performed by stimulating material composed on the basis of lexical derivatives "*change management*" and "*resistance to changes*", which was presented to the organisations' employees.

After collection of the questionnaires it became clear that the answers contain 473 statements that reflect respondents' opinions about the significance of change planning (152 indicators), levels of resistance to changes (91 indicator), and the ways of overcoming resistance to changes (230 indicators). The respondents replied to the questions in one or three sentences. In addition, some respondents ambiguously grounded their opinion about the issues of change management. When processing data it was decided to move to "a strict system of variables" for application of a qualitative method to be possible. Therefore, the categories were formed dividing empirically obtained answers into separate groups.

Research results and their discussion

Sample of the research. Heads and employees of organisations were chosen for the research. While forming the sample we did not try to satisfy formal, statistical requirements of a random sample. In this case not quantitative (speaking about the researched) but qualitative criterion was more important. Therefore, the following essential representative parameters of the sample are not strictly defined: respondents' gender, age, work experience, qualification. The most important source of the research was respondent's opinion, evaluation and attitude towards change management.

The rate of questionnaire return was about 87.43 percent (350 questionnaires were distributed). Such a margin of rate of return when using semi-open, semi-closed type instruments is a rather good achievement.

In the research 306 respondents from companies and organisations of Siauliai city and Siauliai district represented the sample. It was pursued that the research participants would be the heads and employees from various organisations the experience and activities of which have been lasting for many years, that are relatively new, established during the period of independence.

Respondents' age and gender are also important characteristics of research sample. Young and middle-aged respondents dominate our research. The sample contains a little bit larger part of women, they make 55.6 percents of all the respondents (see Table 3). Respondents' distribution by age and position shows a tendency that in the researched organisations young and middle-aged people work. The sample of

the research consists of representatives holding different positions: deputy directors, heads of departments, managers, owners of companies, employees of organisations. The latter make more that two thirds of the respondents.

Total work experience of respondents is an important characteristic of the sample as well. Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents (42.4 percents) have total work experience of up to 5 years. The longest work experience reflected in the sample is 42 years.

Table 3

Demographic variables (N = 306)

Respondents' gender	%	Total work experience (in years)	%
Women	55.6	Up to 5	42.4
Men	44.4	6–10	17.4
Respondents' age (in years)	**%**	11–20	20.1
Up to 25	31.2	21–30	14.1
26-35	35.6	Over 31	5.9
36-45	18.8	*Experience of managerial work (in years)*	**%**
46-55	12.0	None	50.7
Over 56	2.4	Up to 5	38.2
Respondents' education	**%**	6–10	5.6
Secondary	9.8	11–20	3.9
Vocational training school	3.9	21–30	0.7
Special secondary	2.0	Over 31	1.0
College	15.1	*Respondents' positions*	**%**
Not completed higher	24.3	Director, head	6.0
Non-university higher	7.2	Head of department	4.3
University higher	35.7	Deputy director	8.3
Other	1.9	Manager	9.3
		Employee	70.8
		Owner	0.3
		Other	1.0

The respondents who participated in the research represent the organisations operating in the city, towns, and villages (see Table 4). 10 or less employees work in the smallest companies or institutions of our research, there are around 9 percent of such organisations; whereas in the biggest organisation there are 3000 employees. A little bit more than one third of the respondents work at small and medium-size organisations. The respondents were equally distributed by the years of activities of the company or institution; however, it is worth mentioning that there are few companies operating for 50 or more years (5.9 percents).

Table 4

Information about companies and organisations (N = 306)

Location of a company/organisation	%	Duration of operation of a company/organisation (in years)	%
City	94.4	Up to 5	22.6
Town	2.6	6–10	23.6
Village	3.0	11–20	33.1
Number of employees	**%**	21–50	12.1
Very small company: less than 10	9.2	51–100	3.9
Small company: 10–49	38.9	Over 100	2.0
Average company: 50–249	37.6	Not indicated	2.6
Big company: per 250	12.4		
Not indicated	2.0		

Research results. Generalized research results show that the respondents tend to consider that changes are to be planned. These employees are mainly 26–35 year old, with university education, representing steadily operating average companies. It is worth mentioning that older respondents with more mana-

gerial experience more positively accept planning of changes in comparison to younger respondents working in small organisations and having no managerial work experience. Executives of various levels as well as respondents positively evaluating their organisation's activities are more inclined to planning of changes. Table 5 presents data on the necessity of planning of changes in the analyzed organisations.

Table 5

Necessity of planning of changes (N = 290)

Answers	Frequencies	Validated percentage
Yes	215	74.1
Don't know	15	5.2
No	60	20.7

Another aspect of significance of planning of changes is reasons for which changes are to be planned, this was evaluated by 196 respondents' statements. In the course of categorization, these statements were divided into seven categories (see Table 6). Analysing the research data it was noticed that 26–35 year old women with university degree think that planning of changes helps to fulfil aims of organisation. This reason was indicated by the respondents who have no or very little experience in management and mainly represent medium-size organisations working in the city. Respondents with university degree indicated that a planned change is an opportunity to avoid economical instability, to develop organisation and forecast perspectives. This attitude is followed by young employees working in small or medium-size organisations. Besides, when planning changes increases a probability that stresses and conflicts will be avoided in a team. Such possibility was indicated by women having no managerial experience and working in medium-size organisations.

Table 6

Rating of categories reflecting the necessity of planning of changes (N = 152)

Factors	Frequencies	Validated percentage
Fulfilment of organisation's aims	50	32.9
Effective change management	35	23.0
Avoidance of economical instability	26	17.1
Organisation's development	12	7.9
Avoidance of organisational stresses and conflicts	12	7.9
Forecasting and foreseeing organisation's perspectives	12	7.9
Effective organisation's activities	10	6.6

Organisations' executives identify planning of changes as ability to manage changes effectively, as means of pursuing organisation's aims and avoiding economical instability. Only two questioned organisations' executives indicated that when planning changes it is possible to forecast (foresee) organisation's perspectives and ensure effective organisation's activities.

Performed cluster analysis of research data enabled us to group by similarity the components of the investigated phenomenon. For the grouping the method of hierarchy cluster analysis was used as well as grouping procedure of Ward's method and the se-

lected measure of Euclid's distance. Figure 2 presents a dendogram obtained by cluster analysis where 2 clusters obviously dominate: 1) organisation's development / forecasting, foreseeing of perspectives / avoidance of conflicts / effective organisation's activities and 2) effective change management / implementation of organisation's aims / avoidance of economical instability. The method of cluster analysis confirmed the consistent patterns of rating of empirically formed categories: by similarity, categories occupying the highest positions in the structure of rating fell in one cluster, and in the other one were categories occupying the lowest positions.

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                            Scale of cluster distances

                                0         5        10        15        20        25
CATEGORIES                 No.  +---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+

DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANISATION          5   -+
FORECASTING, FORESEEING OF PERSPECTIVES  6   -+
AVOIDANCE OF STRESSES/CONFLICTS      2   -+---------------------------------------------+
EFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES OF ORGANISATION 4   -+                                             I
EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT          3   -+---------+                                   I
AVOIDANCE OF ECONOMICAL INSTABILITY  7   -+         +-----------------------------------+
IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANISATION'S AIMS 1   -----------+
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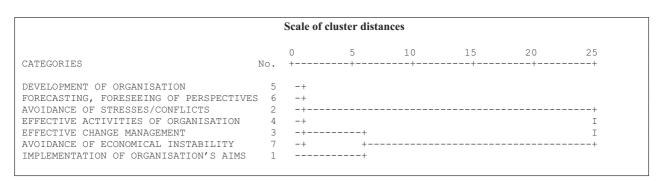
Figure 2. Significance of planning of changes: results of cluster analysis (N = 152)

It became clear that respondents found it rather difficult to enumerate the reasons why changes are resisted in their organisations. Almost every tenth questioned person did not know why resistance to changes is occurring. Maybe their ignorance was determined by a rather short work experience in these organisations, at that time they were studying, had not analysed organisation's activities, had not done managerial work and had no such experience. Since they are the employees of medium-size organisations, it is likely that due to lack of communication it is difficult for them to know level and ways of resistance. Even 40 percent of the respondents stated that in their organisations resistance to changes is not occurring. Major part of the questioned consisted of 26–35 year old women with a university degree. Managers of medium-size companies also think that in their organisations there is no resistance to changes.

The research results showed that only 91 respondents indicated how and in what way changes are resisted in their organisations (see Table 7). The way of resistance through discussions and negotiations during meetings or consultations was most frequently mentioned by employees working at small organisations. It was mainly indicated by young female employees working from 11 to 20 years. Respondents from medium-size organisations stated that resistance to changes occurs indirectly or rather passively or through employees' refusal to comply with executives' requirements. Some questioned executives and subordinates did not directly indicate the ways of resistance to changes, they simply indicated that it occurs variously. There were some empirical statements emphasising that manifestations of managerial authoritarianism are recognized as resistance to changes. This opinion is mainly characteristic to women younger than 25 years with non-university higher education who have never done managerial work. Psychological obstacles to changes (fear of changes) were more emphasized by men and resistance to changes in written form – by women.

Table 7

Categories reflecting levels of resistance to changes in organisation (N = 91)

Factors	Frequencies	Validated percentage
Through discussions, negotiations, meetings, consultations	33	35.5
Minimally, informally, indirectly, passively	23	25.3
Through non-compliance with requirements	18	19.4
In various ways	11	11.6
Occurrence of managerial authoritarianism	8	8.6
By individual initiatives	4	4.3
Psychological obstacles: fear of changes	3	3.2
In written form	3	3.2
Organisational resistance	1	1.1

It was found that individual resistance to changes is more noticeable by women having university degree and working in small organisations. Whereas organisational resistance to changes was noticed only by one 41 year-old male respondent with higher university education and 23 years work experience and working in a medium organisation.

The heads of organisations, their deputies and functional heads state that in their organisations resistance to changes is minimal.

With reference to the set strategy of statistical data processing used in this research, a cluster analysis of categories about levels of resistance to changes has been performed and on the basis of it taxonomy of categories has been obtained. Figure 3 presents a dendogram obtained by the way of cluster analysis where 3 clusters are distinguished.
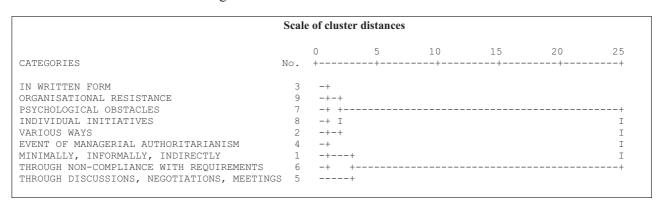
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                                  Scale of cluster distances

                                  0         5         10        15        20        25
CATEGORIES                   No.  +---------+---------+---------+---------+---------+

IN WRITTEN FORM               3   -+
ORGANISATIONAL RESISTANCE     9   -+-+
PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSTACLES       7   -+ +--------------------------------------------+
INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES        8   -+ I                                           I
VARIOUS WAYS                  2   -+-+                                           I
EVENT OF MANAGERIAL AUTHORITARIANISM  4   -+                                     I
MINIMALLY, INFORMALLY, INDIRECTLY     1   -+---+                                 I
THROUGH NON-COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS  6   -+   +-----------------------------------+
THROUGH DISCUSSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, MEETINGS  5   -----+
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Figure 3. Levels of resistance to changes: results of cluster analysis (N = 91)

Despite conditionally small number of classified categories, one of the clusters is composed only by one category which overtakes all the rest according to the rating of frequencies. This category reflects the ability of organisation's members to pursue the aims of resistance to changes by using democratic methods, i.e. discussions, negotiations, meetings, consultations. Another cluster is composed by two categories reflecting, in our opinion, diametrical poles, i.e. latent (indirectly, informally, minimally) and manifesting (open non-compliance with requirements) aspects of resistance to changes and taking middle positions in the structure of rating data. The third cluster involves the remaining six categories that reflect various dimensions of resistance to changes.

It is evident that overcoming the resistance to changes is rather difficult. If in organisations changes are being resisted, it means that processes of changes are managed poorly, unplanned changes are implemented, etc. Almost one fifth of the respondents (18.3 percent) could not answer how resistance should be defeated. These are mainly young, up to 25 years of age studying respondents, employees of small organisations, having minimum work experience. A part of the respondents (8.3 percent: mainly male employees of small organisations) are disappointed with changes, feel helpless and think that resistance is compulsive. Among them are even 6 heads of various levels.

Table 8 presents the examples of categories reflecting employees' attitudes towards the ways of overcoming resistance to changes, frequency of mentioning and validated percentage.

Table 8

Frequency of categories reflecting the ways of overcoming resistance to changes with examples of statements included (N = 230)

Titles of categories	Examples of statements	Frequencies	Validated percentage
Perception of benefit (conveyance, teaching, information, diagnosis, analysis) of changes	To show employees that these changes will be beneficial To present more information on why the suggested changes would be useful (why they are necessary) To introduce employees with planned changes more widely. To explain why they are necessary	60	26.1
Motivation (stimulation, support, maintenance)	To give bonuses for this To stimulate them morally and financially To improve working conditions, to increase wage	32	13.9
Strategic change management (vision, mission, aims) + introducing changes gradually	Planning changes in advance Improvement of present management, implementation of structure of changes, their management Trying to overcome resistance and accept new strategies	30	13
Stimulation of interaction and communication	To express own and working employees' opinions To come to an understanding To listen to employees and to communicate with them more often	17	7.4
Alternation of attitudes with regard to changes	It is necessary to change way of thinking To try to overcome changes and to cope with them Consistent and fair attitude to changes, employees	14	6.1
Compulsion – pressure	To dismiss resisting employees from the organisation Strike Hunger strike	12	5.2
Negotiations	Searching for alternative solutions Common agreement between employees and administration Listening to opponent's reasons why they are resisting, what the reasons are and accepting their suggestions to modify changes	12	5.2
Invoking government structures	If state organisations, the Parliament (Seimas), etc. would change their attitude to work then probably individual companies would adapt to changes easier Lithuanian government has to think about this With the help of the state	5	2.2

Status quo retention	Not interested in changes and it is not necessary to do this	4	1.7
	To ignore		
	Do not implement changes		
Participation, involvement, invitation, authorisation	To prove to the employees that their opinion is important to the company	3	1.3
	By common efforts		
	Employees' consciousness		
Manipulation	It is necessary to prepossess the employees that everything is only to good advantage	1	0.4

As one of the main ways of overcoming resistance to changes we may indicate introduction of changes' benefit to the employees and permanent information about the situation after having performed its analysis. This way was usually suggested by women younger than 35 years, working in medium-size companies and organisations. Besides, this variant was most often suggested by questioned heads. According to the participants of research (mainly men working in small organisations without managerial work experience), it is important to stimulate, support employees. This is also the second by frequency of mentioning suggestion among the heads. According to female students and women with university degree working in medium-size organisations, ability to manage strategic changes by introducing them gradually is one more opportunity to reduce or eliminate resistance to changes. Organisations' heads and female employees state that stimulation of communication is an opportunity to avoid resistance to changes. Studying employees of medium-size companies and organisations state that it is important to change attitudes towards changes. Other ways of overcoming resistance mentioned by women with university degree are: to make the employees implement changes, to summon state structures to help, to manipulate employees or try to preserve *status quo*. Whereas male respondents mostly offered to start negotiations or to involve employees into the processes of changes by providing them with an opportunity to participate in change management.

In order to determine taxonomy of the categories composed during the research about the ways of overcoming resistance to changes, cluster analysis has been carried out. Figure 4 presents a dendogram obtained by the way of cluster analysis where 3 clusters obviously dominate.
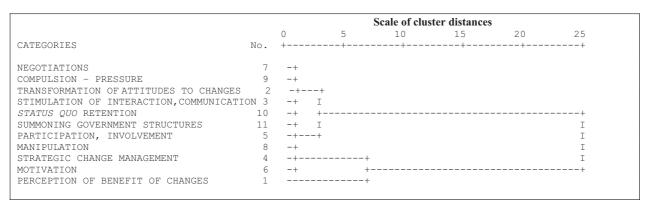
```
                                                      Scale of cluster distances
                                       0        5        10       15       20       25
CATEGORIES                       No.   +--------+--------+--------+--------+--------+

NEGOTIATIONS                      7    -+
COMPULSION – PRESSURE             9    -+
TRANSFORMATION OF ATTITUDES TO CHANGES  2  -+---+
STIMULATION OF INTERACTION,COMMUNICATION 3  -+   I
STATUS QUO RETENTION             10    -+   +----------------------------------------+
SUMMONING GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES  11    -+   I                                        I
PARTICIPATION, INVOLVEMENT        5    -+---+                                        I
MANIPULATION                      8    -+                                            I
STRATEGIC CHANGE MANAGEMENT       4    -+----------+                                 I
MOTIVATION                        6    -+          +---------------------------------+
PERCEPTION OF BENEFIT OF CHANGES  1    ------------+
```

Figure 4. Ways of overcoming resistance to changes: results of cluster analysis (N = 230)

Despite a rather big number of classified categories, one of the clusters is composed by the category strongly exceeding all the others according to frequency rating. It is a category reflecting the perception of benefit of changes that is achieved through organisation's ability to convey to its members the perspectives of benefit of changes, improving their knowledge about the necessity for organisational changes and performing a detailed analysis of possible changes. Another cluster is formed by two categories *"Strategic change management"* and *"Motivation"*, these in the structure of frequency rating of categories occupy high positions. It is obvious that management of organisational changes carried out in strategically appropriate direction by clearly implementing the set aims is one of inseparable dimensions of overcoming resistance to changes. Overcoming resistance to changes it is important to pay attention to creation of a system of motivation of organisation's members (stimulation, support). The third cluster involved all the remaining eight categories reflecting various dimensions of ways of overcoming resistance to changes.

Conclusions

1. The majority of scientists claim that changes have always been characteristic to organisational activities, however, recently, particularly during the critical period, their frequency and importance are especially emphasized. Attitude to planning of changes is closely related to organisational development. Analysis of scientific literature revealed that planned changes help organisations to act more effectively when pursuing set aims and to survive longer in competitive environment.

2. Resistance to changes in scientific literature is evaluated ambiguously. The positive side of resistance to changes is that it provides a certain degree of stability and predictability of organisational activities, the negative side is that it obstructs adaptation and progress.

3. Analysis of theoretical sources has shown that there are various means (methods, ways, stages and activities' tactics) to overcome resistance to changes. It goes without saying that the levels of their usage depend upon culture of a particular organisation, the selected way of organisational development, etc.

4. The research has demonstrated that older and having more managerial experience persons more positively consider planning the changes in comparison to younger respondents who work at small organisations and have no managerial work experience. Heads of various levels and the respondents evaluating activities of their organisations more positively also tend to plan changes.

5. After analysis of the research data it was noticed that those who think that planning of changes helps to implement organisation's aims are mainly 26-35 year old women with university degree. This reason was indicated by the respondents who have no or very little experience in managing work and mainly represent medium companies operating in the city. Respondents with university degree indicated that a planned change is an opportunity to avoid economic instability, to develop the organisation and forecast perspectives.

6. During the research it was identified that respondents found it difficult to indicate the reasons why changes are resisted in their organisations. Almost every tenth questioned person did not know why resistance to changes is happening. Maybe their ignorance was determined by a rather short work experience in these organisations, or by the fact that at that time they were studying, had not analysed organisation's activities, had not done managerial work and had no such experience. Since they are the employees of medium-size organisations, it is likely that due to lack of communication it is difficult for them to know level and ways of resistance.

7. Respondents indicate conveyance of benefit of changes to the employees and permanent information about the situation after its analysis was performed as one of the main dimensions of ways of overcoming resistance to changes. This way was usually suggested by women younger than 35 years, working in medium-size organisations. Besides, this variant was also most often suggested by the questioned heads. According to the research participants (mainly men working at small organisations without managerial work experience), it is important to stimulate and support employees. This is also the second suggestion by popularity among the heads. According to the women who are studying or have university degree, work in medium-size organisations, ability to manage strategic changes by introducing them gradually is another opportunity to reduce or eliminate resistance to changes.

8. Generalised research data enables us to claim that theoretical and empirical components of dimensions of researched change management create preconditions to expand scientific knowledge about the aspects of expression of significance of planning of changes, resistance to changes and overcoming resistance to changes.

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Darbuotojų vaizdinių psichosemantika identifikuojant pokyčių valdymo dimensijas

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos organizacinių pokyčių valdymo dimensijos. Pokyčių valdymas aprašomas kaip gebėjimas numatyti pokyčius, planuoti jų realizavimą, pokyčių diegimas ir stebėjimas. Straipsnio autoriai pateikia savo atlikto tyrimo rezultatus ir aprašo darbuotojų nuomonės psichosemantiką pokyčių valdymo raiškos aspektais, išryškina organizacijos narių nuostatas apie pokyčių planavimą, pasipriešinimą pokyčiams ir pasipriešinimo pokyčiams įveikimo būdus.

Apibendrinti tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad respondentai linkę manyti, jog pokyčius reikia planuoti. Tai daugiausia 26–35 m., turintys universitetinį išsilavinimą darbuotojai, atstovaujantys stabiliai veikiančioms vidutinėms įmonėms. Pastebėtina, kad vyresni ir daugiau vadybinės patirties turintys asmenys pozityviau vertina pokyčių planavimą nei jaunesni respondentai, kurie dirba mažose organizacijose ir neturi vadybinio darbo patirties. Įvairaus lygio vadovai ir pozityviai savo organizacijų veiklą vertinantys respondentai taip pat labiau linkę į pokyčių planavimą.

Kitas pokyčių planavimo reikšmingumo aspektas – priežastys, dėl kurių reikia planuoti pokyčius, respondentų buvo įvertintos 196 teiginiais. Šie teiginiai kategorizavimo metu buvo suskirstyti į septynias kategorijas. Analizuojant tyrimo duomenis, pastebėta, kad daugiausiai 26–35 m. su universitetiniu išsilavinimu moterys mano, kad pokyčių planavimas padeda įgyvendinti organizacijos tikslus. Šią

priežastį nurodė respondentai, neturintys arba turintys labai mažą vadovaujamo darbo patirtį ir daugiausia atstovaujantys vidutinėms įmonėms, veikiančioms mieste. Turintys universitetinį išsilavinimą respondentai nurodė, kad planingas pokytis – tai galimybė išvengti ekonominio nestabilumo, organizacijai vystytis ir prognozuoti perspektyvas. Tokio požiūrio laikosi jauni darbuotojai, dirbantys mažose ir vidutinio dydžio organizacijose. Be to, planuojant pokyčius, didėja tikimybė, kad kolektyve bus išvengta stresų ir konfliktų. Tokią galimybę daugiausia nurodė neturinčios vadybinės patirties moterys, dirbančios vidutinio dydžio organizacijose.

Organizacijų vadovai pokyčių planavimą identifikuoja kaip gebėjimą efektyviai valdyti pokyčius, kaip priemonę siekiant organizacijos tikslų ir vengiant ekonominio nestabilumo. Tik 2 apklausti organizacijų vadovai nurodė, kad planuojant pokyčius, galima prognozuoti (numatyti) organizacijos perspektyvas ir užtikrinti efektyvią organizacijos veiklą.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad tik 91 respondentas įvardijo, kaip ir kokiu lygiu jų organizacijose priešinamasi pokyčiams. Dažniausiai minėtas priešinimosi būdas – diskusijos ir derybos per susirinkimus ar pasitarimus – mažose organizacijose dirbančių asmenų. Jį daugiausia nurodė jaunos darbuotojos moterys, dirbančios nuo 11 iki 20 m. Respondentai iš vidutinio dydžio organizacijų teigė, kad pasipriešinimas kaitai vyksta netiesiogiai arba gana pasyviai, arba darbuotojams atsisakant vykdyti vadovų reikalavimus. Kai kurie apklaustieji vadovai ir pavaldiniai tiesiogiai neįvardijo pasipriešinimo permainoms būdų, tiesiog nurodė, kad tai vyksta įvairiai. Pasitaikė empirinių teiginių, kuriuose akcentuojama, kad vadybinio autoritarizmo pasireiškimai atpažįstami kaip pasipriešinimas pokyčiams. Tokios nuomonės labiausiai laikosi moterys iki 25 m., turinčios neuniversitetinį aukštąjį išsilavinimą, tačiau nedirbusios vadybinio darbo. Psichologines kliūtis pokyčiams (pokyčių baimę) labiau akcentavo vyrai, o pasipriešinimą pokyčiams raštu – moterys.

Nustatyta, kad individualus pasipriešinimas pokyčiams labiau pastebimas moterų, turinčių universitetinį išsilavinimą ir dirbančių mažose organizacijose. Tuo tarpu organizacinį pasipriešinimą kaitai pastebėjo tik vienas 41 m. respondentas vyras su aukštuoju universitetiniu išsilavinimu, turintis 23 m. darbo stažą ir dirbantis vidutinio dydžio organizacijoje. Organizacijų vadovai, jų pavaduotojai ir funkciniai vadovai teigia, kad jų organizacijose pokyčiams priešinamasi minimaliai.

Per tyrimą buvo nustatyta, kad respondentams pakankamai sunku nusakyti priežastis, kodėl jų organizacijose priešinamasi pokyčiams. Beveik kas dešimtas apklaustasis nežinojo, kodėl vyksta pasipriešinimas pokyčiams. Galbūt jų nežinojimą lemia tai, kad jie tose organizacijose dirba gana trumpai, tuo metu dar studijavo, nebuvo įsigilinę į visos organizacijos veiklą, nedirbo vadybinio darbo ir neturėjo tokios patirties. Kadangi tai vidutinio dydžio organizacijų darbuotojai, greičiausiai dėl komunikacijos stokos jiems sudėtinga žinoti pasipriešinimo lygį ir būdus.

Respondentai kaip vienu svarbiausių pasipriešinimo pokyčiams įveikimo būdų dimensijų pažymi pokyčių naudos perteikimą darbuotojams ir nuolatinį jų informavimą apie situaciją, atlikus jos analizę. Tokį būdą dažniausiai siūlė darbuotojos moterys iki 35 m., dirbančios vidutinėse įmonėse ir organizacijose. Be to, šį variantą dažniausiai siūlė ir apklausti vadovai. Pasak apklausos dalyvių (daugiausia mažų organizacijų darbuotojų vyrų, neturinčių vadybinio darbo patirties), svarbu skatinti, remti ir palaikyti darbuotojus. Tai antras pagal populiarumą pasiūlymas ir tarp vadovų. Pasak studijuojančių ir aukštąjį išsilavinimą turinčių vidutinių organizacijų darbuotojų moterų, gebėjimas valdyti strateginius pokyčius, įvedant juos pamažu – dar viena galimybė sumažinti arba apskritai panaikinti priešinimąsi permainoms.

Tiek teoriniai, tiek empiriniai tiriamų pokyčių valdymo dimensijų komponentai sudaro prielaidas praplėsti mokslinį žinojimą apie pokyčių valdymo aspektus.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: pokyčių valdymas, pokyčių planavimas, pasipriešinimas pokyčiams, pasipriešinimo pokyčiams įveikimas, psichosemantika.