

# Organizations in change: a short correlational analysis of a few motivational practices and the organizational agility

VOICA Orlando Marian<sup>1</sup>, SILVESTRU Ramona-Camelia<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania,  
[orlandoivoica@yahoo.com](mailto:orlandoivoica@yahoo.com), ORCID: 0000-0002-4191-3784

<sup>2</sup>Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest ,  
[ramona.silvestru@gmail.com](mailto:ramona.silvestru@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Our research examines some organizations that have implemented change in order to identify relevant motivational practices that can be used by organizations that intend to involve themselves in an organizational change endeavour. The research investigate the existing correlations between the organizational ability to reconfigure its' resources according to the changing demands of the environment and some organizational practices in the sphere of individual motivation, specific to proactive or reactive organizations.. The analysis was based on data collected through a questionnaire whose respondents were directors, managers and consultants directly involved in a change initiative within a Romanian organization and who had extensive knowledge about change processes and their results. Our results aim to support the continuous improvement of organizational change processes, revealing some motivational aspects with impact on the organizational agility

**Keywords:** organizational change, agility, reconfiguration capability, motivation

## 1. Introduction

In recent decades the notion of organizational change and the processes associated with it have gained great importance in specialized studies. The researchers who investigated the subject of organizational change in the efforts to increase organizational performance faced various challenges related to defining its success, respectively its processes.

Thus, the definition of change and its' processes are related to elements such as the organizational level of the change activity, the process of initiation and implementation of change, the way in which the change is produced and its duration, the depth of the change, the organizational barriers to the implementation or the way of organization preparation. (Appelbaum et al., 2018).

This diversity of descriptions of organizational change and its multitude of characteristics found in the specialized literature makes it difficult to develop a single definition of the success of this approach and the organizational capabilities that characterize it.

However, in today's turbulent times, agility has become a key resource of 21st century organizations, imperative for survival and also necessary for proper decision-making (Nold et al., 2018). Weber & Tarba (2014) believe that organizations are agile if they remain flexible and continuously adapt the company's strategic direction to new developments and environmental conditions, while developing innovative ways to create value. Therefore, organizational agility has become a strategic differentiator for organizations, capable of generating competitive advantage. (Harraf et al., 2015).

Various ways of defining agility have been considered by researchers in this field. Thus, agility defines fast and flexible action driven by current conditions (Skyrius et al., 2021) and is demonstrated by the organizational ability to identify unexpected and sudden changes in environment and to quickly adapt to them (Sherehiy, 2008). Anticipation, innovation and learning are organizational capabilities that determine the ability to sense and react quickly to changes in the environment and are the foundation of agility (Charbonnier-voirin, 2011)

Managers increasingly recognize the critical need for organizational agility when faced with dynamism in the environment and must find a way to overcome organizational inertia (Hopkins, Mallette & Hopkins, 2013). Organizational agility was defined by Nold and Michel (2016) as the ability to make countless small adaptations in response to endless environmental changes. Also, some authors (Verdu and Gómez-Gras, 2009; Birkinshaw et al, 2016, Wójcik, 2020) believe that agility is the result of the manifestation of dynamic capabilities, a system formed by resources, processes and managerial functions that act in the sense of continuous adaptation to the environment by stimulating and supporting organizational change.

Nevertheless, an organizational change may occur as a response to new opportunities or to avoid a threat to the company. From the point of view of initiating organizational change, researchers have identified two types of change: reactive and proactive. Proactive change is initiated by an organization that prepares for the challenges of the environment in which it operates and plans in advance to avoid or manage future problems. It involves actively trying to make changes to the workplace and its practices to avoid a potential future threat or to capitalize on a potential future opportunity.

Proactive change implies a proactive behavior of the organization, the change being initiated in the quest to prevent the occurrence of a crisis and to obtain a competitive advantage. The trigger for proactive change is initiative, recognized as “the primary manifestation of dispersed corporate entrepreneurship” (Birkinshaw, 2000). The initiative is the ability to capitalize on employee awareness opportunities at the organizational level, thus stimulating the development of the organizational innovation capability (El Hanchi and Kerzazi, 2020) and contributing to the increase of individual motivation and job satisfaction.

Proactivity is related to things that *could happen* to an organization, rather than something that *has happened*, which reflects a reactive approach. Reactive change is a change imposed by the urgent need to adapt to environmental conditions and requires a reactive behavior to various unforeseen situations. Reactive change is initiated in an organization in reaction to external forces, with the organization making changes in its practices only after a threat or crisis has already occurred.

Despite the change rationale, the initiation of an organizational change, its’ planning and implementation are carried out by individuals who find at the organizational level the motivation to get involved in such efforts. The motivation of each individual differs and Maslow (1943), McGregor (1960) and Herzberg (1968) highlighted the specific needs and motivating factors of various types of employees. Also, McClelland (1961) consider that achievement-motivated people are, in general, those who make things happen and achieve results, making organizations to be agile.

Based on these elements, it becomes obvious that the existence of clear practices at the organizational level with results in the area of individual motivation is essential for organizational success. Thus, the implementation in the organization of some routines that highlight the relationship between the individual efforts, the outcomes and their motivational consequences represent a precondition for the success of any attempt for initiating and implementing a change. These routines thus represent the requirements for ensuring organizational agility.

## **2. Methods**

We used for this study the data collected from change executives, managers and consultants that were directly involved in an organizational change initiative within Romanian organizations and had extensive knowledge about the (processes and results of) this endeavour.

Our study was using the snow-ball research methodology (Simkus, 2022) and a total number of 131 usable responses were obtained as result of various messages sent through e-mail. Non-response bias was prevented through questionnaire that accepted only full-completed responses. All variables are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The data analysis was carried out with help of descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS 20 as support for processing the analysis.

We analysed the answers and identified organizations that proactively initiated the change mainly due to the identification of an opportunity. Also, there were organizations that started their internal change mainly as a reaction at the environmental changes, when threats were identified and they overcame the opportunities identified. We grouped these companies and performed the correlation parameters' estimates for each group, identifying their significance.

### 3. Results

Participants at our study were 131 change managers or consultants from private companies with (predominantly) Romanian capital (33.6%), private company with (predominantly) foreign capital (22.1%), public institution (22.1%), state institution/sole shareholder the Romanian state (8.7%), multinationals (16.0%), NGOs (4.6%) and self-financing public services (8.7%)

The organizational changes described by respondents were initiated due to the following elements: desire to materialize an opportunity (8.4%), addressing an identified problem (2.3%), as answer to the requirements of the market (6.1), achieving a competitive advantage (6.1), , proactive / anticipatory strategic approach (1.5%), willingness for income increasing (11.5%), willingness for market share increasing (3.8%), need for error reduction (6.9%), increase in operational efficiency (30.5%), improving customer satisfaction (8.4%), reduction of risk exposure (4.6%), satisfying normative requirements (4.6%), cost reduction (3.8%), other reason (1.5%).

The rationales for change implementation were the new ERP model implementation (12.2%), the transition to new ways of registration in accounting, HR, stocks, etc. (9.2%), transition to new monitoring systems (4.6%), transition to new performance evaluation systems (13.7%), implementation of a new software tool (15.3%), restructuring / reorganization (24.4%), relocation of activities (6.1%), installation of new equipment in the manufacturing process (3.8%), optimization of business processes (8.4%), changing the product portfolio (1.6%) and culture change (.8%).

The groups to be compared differ in size (38.1% proactive vs 19.08 reactive organizations; 42.7% organizations have the same level of activeness - Neutral/ Balanced), so this will affect standard errors of the same variable for each group.

Our research analyzed the following variables:

- **Recomp\_1:** *“There is the practice of motivating employees to achieve objectives”*
- **Recomp\_2:** *“There are rewards determined by individual performance”*
- **Recomp\_3:** *“There is a clear relationship between individual performance and incentives/rewards”*
- **Reconf (OCRR):** *“To what extent the organization can reconfigure its resources according to the changing demands of the environment”*

The results for **Spearman's rho** correlations between the organizational capacity to reconfigure resources according to the changing demands of the environment (OCRR) and the organizational rewarding practices are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. **Spearman's rho** correlations among variables

Spearman's rho		Reactive org.				Neutral/ Balanced				Proactive org			
		Recomp_1	Recomp_2	Recomp_3	Reconf	Recomp_1	Recomp_2	Recomp_3	Reconf	Recomp_1	Recomp_2	Recomp_3	Reconf
Recomp_1	Correlation Coefficient	1	,738**	,808*	,494*	1	,756**	,803**	,482**	1	,764**	,730**	,450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0	0	,012	.	0	0	0	.	0	0	0,001

	N	25	25	25	25	56	56	56	56	50	50	50	50
Recomp_2	Correlation Coefficient	,738*	1	,844*	,154	,756**	1	,873**	,549**	,764**	1	,845**	,400**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.	0	,462	0	.	0	0	0	.	0	0,004
	N	25	25	25	25	56	56	56	56	50	50	50	50
Recomp_3	Correlation Coefficient	,808*	,844**	1	,332	,803**	,873**	1	,540**	,730**	,845**	1	,467**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	.	,105	0	0	.	0	0	0	.	,001
	N	25	25	25	25	56	56	56	56	50	50	50	50
Reconf	Correlation Coefficient	,494*	,154	,332	1	,482**	,549**	,540**	1	,450**	,400**	,467**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,012	,462	,105	.	0	0	0	.	,001	,004	,001	.
	N	25	25	25	25	56	56	56	56	50	50	50	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Sources: SPSS Output

#### 4. Discussion

For the reactive organizations we found positive correlations between the OCRR score (organizational capacity to reconfigure resources according to the changing demands of the environment) score and the Recompl\_1 ( $r = .494, p < .05$ ), Recompl\_2 ( $r = .154, p < .5$ ), Recompl\_3 ( $r = .332, p < .15$ ). We observe that the only significant correlations is between the OCRR score (organizational capacity to reconfigure resources according to the changing demands of the environment) and the existence of the practices to motivate employees to achieve objectives, which can explain the reactive response of organization.

However, for both the proactive and balanced organizations we found statistically significant positive correlations among the analyzed variables. The correlation coefficients between the OCRR score (organizational capacity to reconfigure resources according to the changing demands of the environment) and each of the motivational routines for the neutral/equilibrium-type organizations are :  $r = .482 (p < .01)$  for Recompl\_1,  $r = .549 (p < .01)$  for Recompl\_2,  $r = .540, (p < .01)$  for Recompl\_3.

We also found in the case of proactive organizations three statistically significant positive correlations between the OCRR score (organizational capacity to reconfigure resources according to the changing demands of the environment) score and each one of the motivational analyzed routines, as follows: Recompl\_1: ( $r = .450, p < .01$ ), Recompl\_2: ( $r = .400, p < .01$ ), Recompl\_3: ( $r = .467, p < .01$ ).

We observe that while the correlation of Recompl\_1 is relatively similar for each type of organization, both Recompl\_2 and Recompl\_3 have higher and significant coefficients for the proactive and neutral/equilibrium-type organizations.

#### 5. Conclusions

Our research aimed to identify the relationship between the organizational agility and the existence within the organization of some routines that highlight the relationship between the individual efforts, the outcomes and their motivational consequences

Following the correlational analysis, the Spearman's rho coefficients prove that motivational practices are existent within proactive and equilibrium-type organizations, which are eager to take advantage of perceived opportunities.

The existence of rewards determined by individual performance and of a clear relationship between individual performance and incentives/rewards contributes to the organizational agility, making it able to reconfigure its resources according to the changing demands of the environment.

Therefore, these motivational practices represent the requirements for ensuring success of any attempt for initiating and implementing a change.

## 6. Bibliographic References

- [1] Appelbaum, S.H., Profka, E., Depta A.M., Petrynski, B. (2018), *Impact of business model change on organizational success*, Industrial and Commercial Training, Vol. 50 Issue: 2, pp.41-54, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-07-2017-0058>.
- [2] Birkinshaw, J., Bresman, H., Håkanson, L., (2000), *Managing the Post-acquisition Integration Process: How the Human Integration and Task Integration Processes Interact to Foster Value Creation*, J Management Studies, DOI: 10.1111/1467-6486.00186
- [3] Birkinshaw, J., Zimmermann, A. and Raisch, S. (2016), "How do firms adapt to discontinuous change? Bridging the dynamic capabilities and ambidexterity perspectives", California Management Review, Vol. 58 No. 4, pp. 36-58.
- [4] Charbonnier-voirin, A. (2011). *The development and partial testing of the psychometric properties of a measurement scale of organizational agility*. M@n@gement, 14(2), 120-154.
- [5] El Hanchi, S., & Kerzazi, L. (2020). Startup innovation capability from a dynamic capability-based view: A literature review and conceptual framework. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 30(2), 72-92. Retrieved from <https://am.e-nformation.ro/scholarly-journals/startup-innovation-capability-dynamic-based-view/docview/2465480873/se-2?accountid=136549>
- [6] Harraf, A., Wanasika, I., Tate, K., & Talbott, K. (2015). *Organizational agility*. The Journal of Applied Business Research, 31(2), 675-686.
- [7] Herzberg, Frederick (January–February 1968). "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?" (PDF). Harvard Business Review. 46 (1): 53–62. OCLC 219963337.
- [8] McGregor, D. (2006). *The Human Side of Enterprise*, Annotated Edition, Columbus: McGraw-Hill Education.
- [9] Hopkins, W., Mallette, P., & Hopkins, S. (2013). *Proposed factors influencing strategic inertia/strategic renewal in organizations*. Academy of Strategic Management Journal, 12(2), 77-94.
- [10] McClelland, D.C. (1961). *The Achieving Society*. New York: Van Nostrand.
- [11] McGregor, D. (1960) *The Human Side of Enterprise*. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. [10] Nöid, H., Michel, L. (2016). *The performance triangle: A model for corporate agility*. Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, 37(3), 341-356. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org.am.e-nformation.ro/10.1108/LODJ-072014-0123>
- [12] Nold, H., Anzengruber, J., Woelfle, M., & Michel, L. (2018). *Organizational agility - testing, validity, and reliability of a diagnostic instrument*. Journal of Organizational Psychology, 18(3), 104-117.
- [13] Sherehiy, B. (2008). *Relationships between agility strategy, work organization and workforce agility*. University of Louisville.
- [14] Simkus, J. (2022, Jan 10). *Snowball Sampling: Definition, Method and Examples*. Simply Psychology. [www.simplypsychology.org/snowball-sampling.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/snowball-sampling.html)
- [15] Skyrius, R., Krutinis, M., Nemitko, S., Valentukevičė, J., Gulbinovič, N. A., Sanosianaitė, M., (2021). *In-forming agility in the context of organizational changes*. Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline, 24, 19-30. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4789>
- [16] Verdu, A., & Gómez-Gras, J. (2009). Measuring the organizational responsiveness through managerial flexibility. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 22(6), 668-690.
- [17] Weber, Yaakov & Tarba, Shlomo. (2014). *Strategic Agility: A State Of The Art: Introduction To The Special Section On Strategic Agility*. California Management Review. 56. 5-12. 10.1525/cmr.2013.56.3.5.
- [18] Wójcik, P. (2020). Paradoxical nature of dynamic capabilities research: A content analysis of literature. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 15(5), 727-755. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/BJM-08-2019-0289>