

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH IN WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: Organizational change (OC) initiatives require effective human resource management practices (HRMPs). This review analyzes recent research on the role of HRMPs in OC, focusing on major trends and differences between Western and non-Western contexts. A Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA)-guided search using Scopus and Google Scholar identified 26 relevant studies. The key findings showed the varied and crucial roles that HRMPs play in communicating change goals, engaging employees, and collaborating with stakeholders. In particular, hard OC involving actions such as downsizing warrants responsive HRMPs. Although some practices transfer well across settings, implementing HRMPs in non-Western environments requires adaptation to local cultural and religious norms. The predominant focus on Western contexts underscores the need for more research in understudied regions, such as the Middle East and North Africa. The limitations of this review include potential biases in the source studies and the exclusion of nonindexed literature. We conclude by calling for an expanded investigation into evidence-based HRMPs and the complex dynamics between HRMPs and diverse types of OC across different organizational and national settings.

Keywords: change agent, employee–organization relationship, human resource management, organizational change.

JEL Classification: O15, D23.

1 Introduction

Organizational change (OC) has accelerated in scope and frequency amid globalization, technological disruptions, and shifting workplace dynamics, making it a defining feature of the contemporary business landscape (Supriharyanti and Sukoco, 2022). Worker sentiment surveys in three countries found that approximately 70% of employees had experienced OCs, with approximately 40% classifying the change as moderate to significant (Brazzale, et al., 2021). While essential for competitiveness and growth, poorly managed OC takes a toll on employees, with multiple studies showing heightened stress, uncertainty, resistance, and turnover concerns.

During OCs, human resource (HR) managers and employees face many procedural, cultural, emotional, and administrative changes. The functions and roles of HR professionals have been the subject of significant debate in recent decades, including arguments

about HR as a whole and how it relates to organizational reform initiatives. In particular, employees who have experienced frequent changes express unfavorable psychological ramifications, posing a challenge to the successful realization of OC's intended outcome (Choi, 2011; Heim and Sardar-Drenda, 2020). Studies also examine the particular functions that HR professionals play in the process of transformation (Alfes, et al., 2010; Alqudah, et al., 2022). It has been stated that the execution of organizational transformation plans may be more successful if HR takes on the role of strategic partners or change agents and HR competencies are made more responsive (Syamsuri and Siregar, 2019). This underscores the critical importance of human resource management practices (HRMPs) tailored to support employees through OC transition.

HRMPs significantly affect OC actualization, mainly by shaping policies that improve workers' attitudes and commitment to change and promote employee

adaptability and creativity (Potosky and Azan, 2022). Employee psychological well-being and perceived organizational support have been shown to be positively associated with a favorable attitude toward OC and emotional loyalty to the firm (Xerri, et al., 2015); therefore, HRM scholars and practitioners must include change frequency as a contextual factor and monitor staff reactions during OC (Brazzale, et al., 2021). During OCs, HRMPs can aid an organization's success by empowering workers to recognize their individual and collective responsibilities and accept personal accountability for their jobs (Bridle, 2010).

However, studies have revealed significant gaps in understanding effective evidence-based HRMPs in contemporary OC contexts. OCs and HRMPs that precede OCs may manifest in different regions of the world. However, no effort has yet been undertaken to synthesize the information available in different studies to elucidate the role of HRMPs in organizational transformation in different countries. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, there is a lack of a review of HRMPs that emerge from change processes, although such information will provide useful insights to researchers and HR practitioners on the complexities of HR–organization–employee dynamics during episodic or continuous changes (Cloutier and Robert-Huot, 2021; Rodríguez-Sánchez, et al., 2019).

This research was carried out with an aim to review studies that provided critical information on effective HRMP in OC settings. We examined how HRMP can increase productivity while minimizing employee resistance to OC. First, we discuss the literature from various countries and related developments pertinent to the topic and then shift our focus to recognizing the significance of HRMPs during OC, investigating which forms and sets of practices are most supportive during the transition. Subsequently, we examined HRMP's role in implementing change initiatives, strategies for enhancing workers' understanding of change, management–employee communication, research from Western and non-Western countries, and the future of HRM in change management.

These insights will be invaluable for both scholars and practitioners seeking to leverage HRMPs that empower employees as change partners to drive successful implementation. They have special relevance amidst rising global complexity and uncertainty, where

organizational resilience hinges on engaged workers and enables them to participate meaningfully in shaping the future. Our hope is to catalyze more targeted, context-sensitive research that provides HR leader guidance anchored in leading change management and organizational behavior theories.

2 Methods

2.1 Literature Search Strategy

We adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher, et al., 2009), ensuring a structured and transparent approach to the literature search and selection process.

2.1.1 Database Selection

The primary search platforms were Google Scholar and Scopus. The search spanned a 10-day period, from July 1 to July 10, 2022.

2.1.2 Search Queries

Specific queries included combinations such as "human resource management interventions" with "organizational change" and "role of human resource management" with "organizational transformation".

2.1.3 Filtering and Refinement

To maintain a focus on business and management contexts, we refined our search results by shortlisting 148 articles from Scopus and 138 from Google Scholar. We screened these articles to ensure their relevance, excluding those that did not directly address HRMPs in the context of OC. To ensure the uniqueness and quality of the selected articles, we employed reference management software (Zotero 6.0) to effectively eliminate duplicate entries. After screening and evaluation, the review focused on a curated set of 26 publications.

2.2 Terminology and Classifications

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of our review, it is important to elucidate the key terminologies and classifications associated with OCs and HRMPs.

2.2.1 Classification of OCs

OCs can be categorized into four primary types based on two dimensions: episodic versus continuous and convergent versus radical (Weick and Quinn, 1999). Episodic convergent changes are intermittent adjustments aligned with an organization's current trajectory. Continuous convergent changes involve ongoing incremental modifications that are consistent with the existing strategic directions. In contrast, continuous radical changes are persistent transformations that diverge markedly from established organizational paths. Episodic radical changes are sporadic and lead to major departures from conventional business models and activities. This framework provides a useful lens through which to examine how divergent OC types interact with HRMPs (Baran, et al., 2018; Plowman, et al., 2007; Street and Gallupe 2009; Weick and Quinn 1999).

2.2.2 Classification of OCs

At the heart of every OC are three foundational pillars. The process of change refers to the methodology or approach adopted to facilitate transformation. The substance of change delves into the core content or specific elements undergoing change. The context of change provides the environment or backdrop against which these modifications are set in motion (Devos, et al., 2007; Walker, et al., 2007).

Beyond these pillars, the nature and impetus of changes further characterize them. Changes can be reactive, responding to external stimuli, or proactive and stem from internal initiatives. They may unfold as planned, premeditated shifts, or emerge spontaneously, adapting to real-time scenarios. Furthermore, the driving force behind these changes can be explained by management directives or they arise from employee insights and feedback. It is pivotal to recognize that, in certain scenarios, HR practices

might be unilaterally decided or even imposed by the management, contingent upon the specific nature of the business and the prevailing HR strategies. In this review, HRMPs were limited to change-specific practices that included activities related to reorganization or downsizing (Raeder, 2019). The scope of these OCs is extensive. They can manifest externally, influenced by market dynamics, or internally, driven by shifts within the organization. This encompasses a broad spectrum, from changes in organizational objectives and work structures to alterations in workforce dynamics and legal frameworks, underscoring the comprehensive nature of OCs (Cloutier and Robert-Huot, 2021).

2.2.3 Geographic Context

Geographic landscapes play an important role in the shaping of HRMPs and OCs, with cultural, economic, and political factors that vary between regions. In the Western context, which primarily encompasses Europe and North America, nations often share mature economies, democratic political systems, and a high degree of industrialization. Historically, many foundational HRM theories and practices have originated here, setting a global benchmark. HRM in these regions tends to prioritize individual rights, performance-based rewards, and employee empowerment, with a pronounced emphasis on work–life balance, diversity, and inclusion. Conversely, the non-Western context, spanning diverse nations from East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), presents a mosaic of emerging economies, varied political systems, and deep-rooted cultural traditions. These regions, with their distinct workplace norms and behaviors, require HRM practices that resonate with local values. For example, while East Asian cultures might prioritize workplace harmony and consensus, the MENA region often leans toward reverence for authority and seniority. Recognizing and navigating these geographic intricacies is paramount for the effective implementation and understanding of HRM practices globally (Karan, 2004).

3 Key Findings from the Reviewed Studies

The majority of the papers (31%) were published in HRM journals, followed by change management (23%), others (23%), general management (15%), and business strategy (8%). Most articles were published in Western countries (77%), followed by others (12%) and the MENA region (11%). During the last two decades, there have been no abrupt changes in the number of publications, ranging from one to three publications per year (Figure 2).

Table 1 lists the details of each study, including the year of publication, country, sector, type of change, HRM role, and implications for HRMPs. The subsequent section discusses findings from Western countries, MENA, and other countries.

4 Western Countries

Alfes, et al., conducted significant qualitative research examining the role of HRMPs in change management in two UK public sector firms (Alfes, et al., 2010). These authors considered both the substance and the method of change, ultimately settling on four distinct HRM functions: change focus, change driver, HR focus, and change respondent. The authors concluded that HR must take a proactive approach across both content and process dimensions, rather than merely one (Alfes, et al., 2010). Another study that might significantly influence HR practices for change management examined the views and well-being of OC managers (Lindorff, et al., 2011). Lindorff et al. tested the hypothesis that hard changes, such as budget cuts, layoffs, and postponements, have a negative effect on employee optimism. They observed that such difficult changes have the potential to break transactional psychological commitments, resulting in diminished employee loyalty, productivity, competitiveness, and overall corporate performance. In particular, senior management professionals are more optimistic about their work, organization, and change than lower-level managers, indicating that HRMPs should be tailored to various employee segments, and that generic

HRMPs may not be effective in change management (Lindorff, et al., 2011).

When taken as a whole, HR has the potential to impact OC efficiency by helping a company build its adaptive capacities. Garavan, et al., and Alfes, et al., rightly argued that the significance of HRMPs in OC management could not be understood, and that HR department's decisions to hire, train, and promote workers may have both immediate and long-term effects on the adaptability of the company's workforce to change initiatives (Alfes, et al., 2019; Garavan, et al., 2016). Shipton et al. investigated the influences of HRMP organizational performance against the backdrop of complex change and devised a preliminary framework involving a mediating role for OC capacity (OCC), a particular subset within dynamic capabilities. This framework includes external and internal parameters and proposes a relationship between HRMPs, OCC, and organizational performance (Shipton, et al., 2012). Consistent with this finding, Correia et al. found that HRM centrality has a moderating effect on OCs, depending on the kind of responsibility for HRMPs and strategic HRM engagement (Faia Correia, et al., 2011).

The effect of an HRD endeavor in the form of a cultural change program following the merging of two significant state agencies was investigated in a critical study that involved a 2-year analysis (Barratt-Pugh, et al., 2013). Barratt-Pugh et al. used Giddens structuration theory to build a model of management activities throughout the transitional process. The authors argued that HRMPs should be directed toward developing unified cultural changes with their workers (Barratt-Pugh, et al., 2013). In a subsequent study, these authors explored the context and significance of the transformation process by illustrating how the organization shifted its emphasis from managers' domain-specific skills to their interpersonal abilities. The findings also established the importance of HR strategic function during OC, showing that strategic HR measures accelerated the process, and that successful HRMPs can be leveraged to create change agents (Barratt-Pugh and Bahn, 2015).

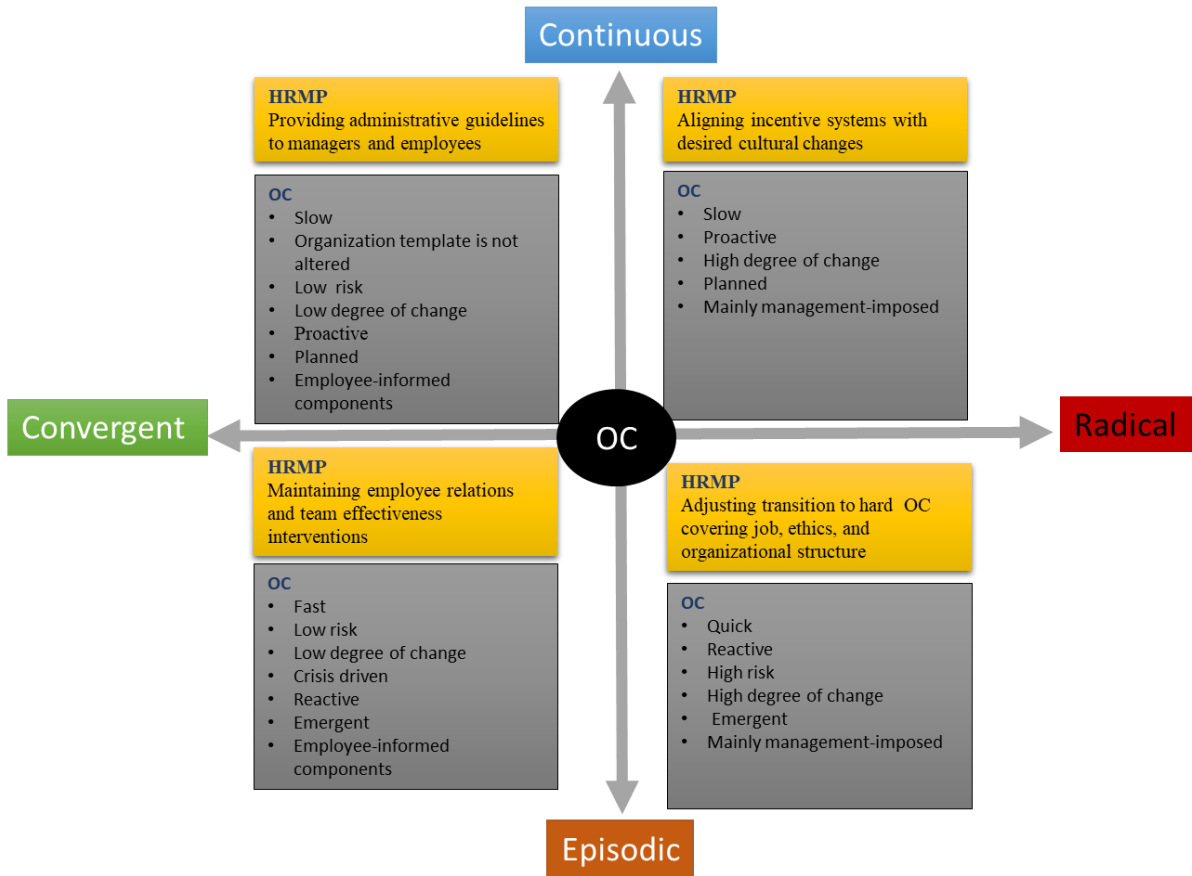


Figure 1. Classification of OCs and examples of relevant HRMPs. (Source: Authors' own research)

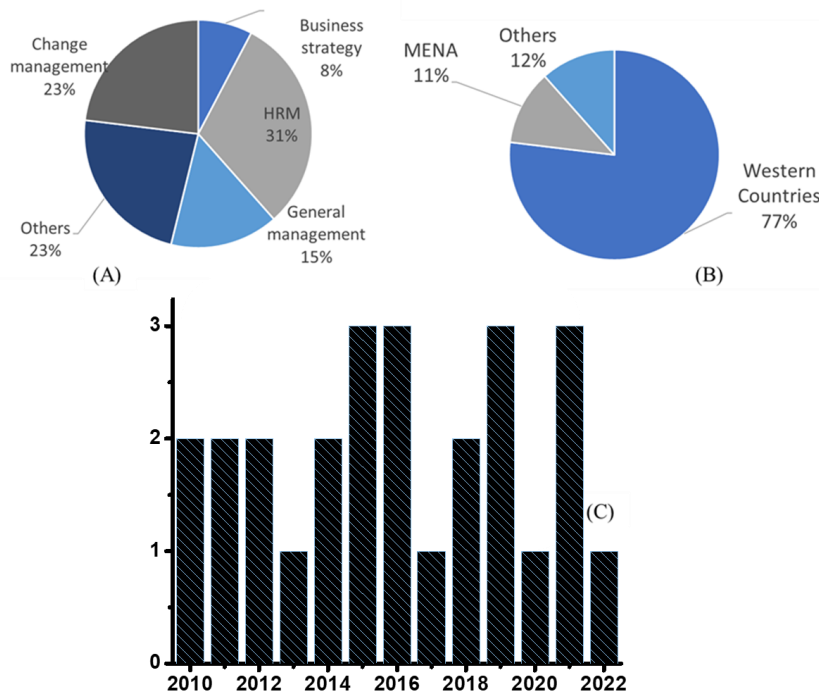


Figure 2. Key features of the literature survey: (A) theme of journals publishing articles on HRMPs in the context of OC, (B) countries from which studies are reported, and (C) yearly publications on HRMPs in the context of OC. (Source: Authors' own research)

Table 1. Summary of key findings on the role of HRMPs in OC
(Source: Authors' own research)

References	Year	Country	Sector	Type of change	HRM role	Implications
Alfes et al., 2010	2010	UK	Public	Content and process of change	Change driver, responsive, change focused, and HR focused	During OC, HRMPs must be proactive
Alfes et al., 2019	2019	UK	Public	Content and process of change	Employee centric, responsive, and HR focused	HRMP can help the development of dynamic capabilities in employees to cope with OC
Alqudah et al., 2022	2022	Jordan	Banking	Process of change	Employee centric, responsive, and HR focused	HRMPs can help employees' readiness for change
Bani, 2021	2021	Ghana	Public	Process of change	Multifaceted	Effective HRMPs can reduce staff litigation
Baran, Filipkowski, and Stockwell, 2018	2019	USA	Multiple	Content and process of change (perspectives of HR professionals)	"Change agent" and "consultant"	HR managers considered effective OC hierarchical
Barratt-Pugh and Bahn, 2015	2015	Australia	Public	Cultural change during the merger	Develop a unified culture	During OC, HRMPs must consider mitigating efficiencies due to cultural differences
Barratt-Pugh, Schiavone, Bahn, and Gakere, 2013	2013	Australia	Public	Cultural change program	Develop a unified culture	During OC, HRMPs must consider mitigating efficiencies due to cultural differences
Brown, Kulik, Cregan, and Metz, 2017	2017	Australia	Multiple	Content and process of change	Strategic change agent	When HR assumes a strategic change agent role, OC is less likely to generate change cynicism
Cloutier and Robert-Huot, 2021	2021	Canada	Multiple	Content and process of change	Depends on the dimension of change	HRMPs should vary according to the type of change, the objective of change, and the expected outcome
D'Cruz, Noronha, and Beale, 2014	2014	India	Private	OC as a predictor of workplace bullying	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPs should focus on addressing possible compounded bullying during OC
Faia Correia, Campos Cunha, and Scholten, 2011	2011	Portugal	Multiple	Mergers and acquisitions	Strategic and responsive	HRM centrality has a moderating effect on OCs

References	Year	Country	Sector	Type of change	HRM role	Implications
Garavan, Shanahan, Carbery, and Watson, 2016	2016	UK	Multiple	Process of change	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPs can help in the development of dynamic skills
Gollan, Kalfa, and Xu, 2015	2015	Australia	Private	Content and process of change	Collaborative	HRMPs affect organizational performance indirectly
Huang, Zhang, Feng, and Seal, 2020	2020	Canada	Multiple	Organizational innovation	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPs matter eventually
Lindorff, Worrall, and Cooper, 2011	2011	UK and Australia	Multiple	Content and process of change	Employee centric and responsive	Hard change is the most detrimental
Sang Long and Khairuzzaman Wan Ismail, 2012	2012	Malaysia	Multiple	Process of change	Change agent	HRMPs should be directed at a broader and cross-functional perspective
Lucia-Casademunt, Cuéllar-Molina, and García-Cabrera, 2018	2018	Europe	Multiple	Process of change	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPs should be directed to enhance employees' well-being
Pellegrini, Rizzi, and Frey, 2018	2018	Italy	Multiple	Change for sustainability	Employee centric and responsive	Effective HRMPs can enhance employees' commitment and behavior
Peters, Poutsma, Van der Heijden, Bakker, and Bruijn, 2014	2014	The Netherlands	Multiple	New ways to work *(<i>employee empowerment, home teleworking, and creating trust relationships</i>) and work-related flow as experienced by employees (absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation)	Combined perspective integrating insights from the HRM-process model and the job demands–resources model	HRMPs should be aimed at improving employees' perception of job autonomy in the new working conditions
Pinzone, Guerci, Lettieri, and Redman, 2016	2016	Italy	Multiple	Environmental management as an OC	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPs can improve collective engagement toward change objectives

References	Year	Country	Sector	Type of change	HRM role	Implications
Pluta and Rudawska, 2016	2016	Poland	Multiple	Process of change	Employee centric and responsive	HR practices should apply the multidimensionality of individual resources and treat them holistically
Raeder, 2019	2019	Norway	Multiple	Reorganization and downsizing	Broader scope of HRMPs	HRMPs should consider OC to be a factor of contingency
Rees, Rees, and Johari, 2010	2010	Malaysia	Public/banking	Strategic OC	Culture/employee sensitive	HRMPs should include ethics, spirituality, and regional contexts
Rubbers, 2020	2020	Congo	Multiple	Multinational practices	Liaison, legal, and employee centric	HRMPs can help establish new contracts and recruitments to meet OC objectives
Shipton, Budhwar, and Crawshaw, 2012	2012	UK	Multiple	Process of change	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPs can improve dynamic capabilities during OC
Tummers, Professor David Pick, Kruyen, Vijverberg, and Voesenek, 2015	2015	The Netherlands	Public	Change management	Employee centric and responsive	HRMPS are particularly effective for improving the proactivity and vitality of employees

HRM systems have evolved over time. Huang, et al., studied this process in terms of its impact on business innovation. These authors examined the impact of rapid OC on employee creativity by drawing on information from a survey of the same people over 8 years. After examining over 15,000 work years, Huang, et al. (2020) found that HRM efforts have more benefits for productivity than average, suggesting that strategic modifications to HRM systems may yield innovative, long-term results (Huang, et al., 2020). Pinzone, et al., evaluated the impact of HRMPs on environmental management to demonstrate the relevance of HRD function in change management. This study is notable because it focuses on environmental management, which is an excellent example of organizational transformation that requires employee support and provides critical information on how HRMP might

affect employees' viewpoints and attitudes toward change. Pinzone, et al., claimed that performing voluntary acts can have a substantial influence on change initiatives to foster environmentally conscious and collective voluntary behaviors in organizations. Furthermore, they found that the desire of workers to help their organization in the environmental management effort of that company is a partial mediator of their successful contribution to the change initiative (Pinzone, et al., 2016).

It has been suggested that adopting an all-inclusive HR style is beneficial to help employees keep their individual resources sustainable in the face of ongoing OC and increased time pressure (Pluta and Rudawska, 2016). These authors defined stress as a person's perceived inability to meet objectives owing to a lack of available resources. They developed a framework

of individual employee resources that provides a complete picture of a person's role in an organization in accordance with the ideas of human capital and personal effort in one's job. The authors also discovered that at times of OC, HRM plays a significant role in preserving workers' individual resources and reducing the risk of occupational stress and burnout. HR strategies should consider the multidimensionality of personal resources and approach them holistically to preserve their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical potentials. This study was distinctive in that it addressed the question of organizational acceleration from the point of view of the individual (Pluta and Rudawska, 2016).

During OCs, a change in cynicism among employees is an unexpected consequence that can impede the efficacy of change initiatives. Brown et al. studied the impact of two HR functions, namely, strategic change agents and administrative experts, on the association between OC and employee cynicism toward OC. Using multilevel data from 1,831 people in 70 companies, they discovered that employees exposed to more OCs had higher levels of change skepticism. However, the intensity of the association between OCs and cynicism was influenced by HR function. When HR acts as an administrative expert, it increases resistance to change. Cynicism during the transition is mitigated when HR plays a strategic role. The authors suggest that organizations should seriously consider HR when planning OCs and actively urge HR to assume a strategic change agent role during these events (Brown, et al., 2017). The potential impact of internal and external circumstances on the results of HRMPs has been the subject of another study (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018). The employees' positive experiences with HRMPs and the encouragement they received from their superiors were the primary emphases. The authors used a survey of 5,646 responses from 18 European countries undergoing significant restructuring and OCs to show that national "uncertainty avoidance" principles play a significant role in determining which HRMPs are more likely to succeed in boosting employee happiness (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018). Pellegrini et al. analyzed organizational transformation for sustainability in the context of HRMPs. Specifically, they examined the mediating function of "affective commitment

to change" between HRMPs and sustainability and found that sustainability is more likely to be understood and embraced by staff when prioritized at the organizational and managerial levels. Training improves the tendency to engage in sustainable conduct when it is mediated by emotional commitment, whereas incentives have no effect (Pellegrini, et al., 2018).

In a significant work, Cloutier and Robert-Huot adapted 11 theoretical views on OCs from the management field to HRM. They mention that the contributions of HRMPs should be tailored according to the dimensions of change (Cloutier and Robert-Huot, 2021). In another study, data on HRM practices related to major OCs, mainly reorganization and downsizing, were collected from five organizations (Raeder, 2019). According to this study, better results can be achieved by adopting a wide variety of HRM practices. The authors stated that OCs should be seen as an element of contingency because it is advantageous for organizations to modify established procedures while keeping an eye on the constant flux of new information (Raeder, 2019).

Few studies have examined the perspectives and responsibilities of HR professionals in OC. To address this gap, Baron et al. investigated the perspectives of HR managers about their perceived role in OCs. Top-leader participation was present in 80% of effective OCs, according to data collected from more than 500 HR professionals working in different sectors. HR professionals play an array of roles in change initiatives, including a "consultant" and a "change agent." Furthermore, the findings showed that most HR professionals tended to believe that effective OC occurs predominantly in a hierarchy of tops (Baran, et al., 2018). The role of HR in OC in lean manufacturing was investigated using a qualitative case study by Gollan et al. According to the findings of this study, delegating HR tasks to line employees effectively facilitates a shift from traditional manufacturing processes to lean manufacturing techniques, suggesting an indirect and collaborative effect of HRMPs. What this study showed, in essence, was that HRM experts should be putting in place mechanisms of support for line managers to guarantee the uniform and equitable adoption of desired HRMPs (Gollan, et al., 2015).

Being proactive and maintaining personal energy on the job are essential in circumstances that are constantly changing. For example, vital employees are better able to adapt to change because of their higher energy levels. Tummers, et al., investigated how HRMPs invigorate and encourage job proactivity and vitality as components of positive psychology in the workplace. The authors investigated the impact of five aspects of HRMPs on proactiveness and vitality using survey data from major healthcare companies in the Netherlands. According to these findings, three aspects of HRM are beneficial for increasing proactiveness and vitality: autonomy and decision sharing, collaboration, and teamwork. The authors explained that HRMPs might be used to increase workers' capacity to cope with OC (Tummers, et al., 2015). Another study investigated the relationship between HRMPs and work-related flow experienced by employees in the context of implementing New Ways to Work (employee empowerment, home-based teleworking, and creating trust relationships). This flow was defined as the degree to which employees focus on their work without distractions. The results showed that HRMPs' positive benefits on productivity in the workplace are diminished if workers do not feel empowered or see their workplaces as resources (Peters, et al., 2014).

5 MENA

A recent study examined the role of Congo HR managers working for multinational firms with mining operations. The authors argued that HR managers worked as company brokers who acquired influence through their ability to limit access to employment in foreign enterprises and played an active role in OCs implemented by new investors (Rubbers, 2020). According to a study from Ghana, HRMP during OCs can minimize personnel litigation and may advance the continual improvement of public service performance (Bani, 2021). Jordanian researchers have investigated how high-performance HRMPs and emotional commitment influence workers' willingness to change. The findings revealed a clear link between emotional commitment and transitional preparedness. Furthermore, hierarchical culture positively moderates the relationship between high-performance HRM methods and emotional commitment (Alqudah, et al., 2022).

6 Other Countries

An investigation conducted in Malaysia examined the challenges faced by HR professionals in their attempts to drive change implementation and the degree to which senior management felt that the HRM function had aided the strategic goal of OC during times of rapid change. The results indicated concerns regarding strategic focus, autonomy, integrity, and management tactics related to HR efforts to participate in strategic transformation projects and favorable impressions of the HRM function. The views of the respondents on the incorporation of spirituality, ethics, and religion into HRM initiatives suggest a strong relationship between morals, spiritual beliefs, and HRM. The authors stated that the direct deployment of Western-originated change management strategies in non-Western contexts might be unsuccessful (Rees, et al., 2010).

OC as a predictor of workplace bullying and HRM function was examined by D'Cruz, et al., (2014), focusing on employees who lost their jobs in India's IT industry during the 2008–2009 economic downturn. The study revealed that HR managers participated in downward depersonalized bullying that originated in the organizational setting and was a direct result of OC. Due to the seemingly unquestioned validity of executive power during OC, this study introduced the concept of "compounded bullying," which adds a new dimension to the workplace bullying perspective from HRMP standpoint (D'Cruz, et al., 2014). Long and Ismail examined the skills that HR professionals need to develop to become more valuable representatives of the organization during the transition and contribute to change management efforts (Sang Long and Khairuzzaman Wan Ismail, 2012). The outcome of this research emphasized multicultural monitoring, strong interpersonal and communication skills, sound HR development techniques, productivity management abilities, grasp of the value stream, conflict resolution skills, and the ability to use cutting-edge information systems. The authors suggested that HR professionals become more involved in operational problems to better grasp the challenges at hand and aid line managers in increasing their efficiency (Sang Long and Khairuzzaman Wan Ismail, 2012).

7 Discussion

In this study, we reviewed the peculiarities and significance of HRMP in OC. During OC, HR professionals have various responsibilities and participate in a wide range of cross-functional activities, as shown in the literature (Figure 3). Relocation, contracting, mergers and acquisitions, addressing redundancies, and other forms of corporate development or reorganization fall under the umbrella term OC (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018). Because HRMPs can be used and perceived differently as packages that impact operational performance by multiple stakeholders, studies have been conducted from the perspectives of managers, employees, and organizations. The following sections examine HRMPs during OCs, communication with employees during OCs, a cursory comparison of studies from Western and non-Western countries, and future perspectives.

8 The Roles of HR During Major Change Initiatives

HRMPs in the context of OC have been investigated using various approaches by academics in the field of organizational sciences. Significant restructuring of HRMPs, such as recruitment, remuneration, training, development, and associated specialties, is required throughout OC to ensure coherence and uniformity across the organization. HR professionals play an important role in many operations, such as distributing surveys across an organization, providing managers and staff with administrative advice (continuous convergent change), bringing about the necessary cultural shifts (continuous radical change), implementing teamwork and relationship programs (episodic convergent change), and making employees adjust to the modified organizational mission and priorities (episodic radical) (Baran, et al., 2018).

HR professionals are under growing pressure to expand their responsibilities in ways that benefit their organizations. There are many other functions that need to be filled, such as "tactical positioner," "trustworthy activist," "capacity builder," "change campaigner," "HR innovator," and "technology promoter" (Baran, et

al., 2018; Ulrich, 2012). HR managers often act as conduits between stakeholders. Furthermore, by contributing to a firm's development of dynamic skills, HRMPs can impact the success of organizational transformation (Garavan, et al., 2016). For instance, a study of the mining industry found that to obtain and stay in their current positions, HR managers had to learn on the job, picking up expertise in areas such as organizational structure, law, and culture (Rubbers, 2020). The perception that they have exclusive power over employment opportunities in the mining industry provides them with a measure of social influence, and HR managers prove that they are worthy of their employers' confidence by actively participating in OCs. Business-related competencies are vital for HR professionals to develop into strategic partners and change agents, as these competencies help them comprehend the objectives of OC and function as integrated strategic partners (Sang Long and Khairuzaman Wan Ismail, 2012). Specifically, it has been noted that OC, such as shifting to lean manufacturing, should be accompanied by well-designed HR practices and devolving HR by understanding line managers' values and forming partnerships (Gollan, et al., 2015).

9 Improving Employees' Understanding of Change

Given that the HR function typically involves matters of employee selection, training, and leadership development, it can have both direct and indirect effects on employee adaptability. Because employees spend a significant fraction of their lives at work, changes that occur in organizations can have a profound influence on their health and well-being (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018). The relationships among four specific HRMPs – job participation, internal promotion, job design, work–life balance, and well-being at work – are particularly important during OC. The moderating role of supervisors, which can interfere with the effects of job design and work–life balance on well-being, is evident (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018).

During OCs, the impact of resistance to change is mitigated by willingness to change, trust, perceived support from the organization, and emotional connections, which reduce and shrink the gap between resistance

and readiness (Thakur and Srivastava, 2018). In particular, employees in cultures characterized by high uncertainty avoidance may feel insecure when faced with changes. Supervisor support, internal promotion, and work–life balance for individuals in changing organizations can also improve employee satisfaction. These practices affect the development and maintenance of well-being (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018). A desire to change, trust, perception of organizational support, and emotional bonds all help lessen the effect of resistance to change during OCs and narrow the gap between readiness and resistance.

Although uncertainties remain regarding the interaction among incentive systems, training, and OC outcomes, it is generally believed that organizations should design training programs that improve employees' understanding of OC and their involvement in achieving company goals (Cloutier and Robert-Huot, 2021). By shaping employees' perceptions of OC and expected behavior in the workplace, mission statements and internal policies lead to the internalization of OC objectives (Cloutier and Robert-Huot, 2021). Giving employees a more significant role in their jobs and more flexibility to make their own choices may positively affect their views. However, it is crucial to recognize that empowering behavior is not necessarily related to more favorable perceptions of workflow among workers. Employees who felt that they had more influence on their work, as measured by work engagement, were the only ones to report higher levels of flow (Peters, et al., 2014).

During OC, employee outcomes such as emotional commitment to change linked favorably with incentives, staffing, and communication, but did not show such an association after adjusting for variables such as job stability, career and performance growth, collaboration, and autonomy (Raeder, 2019). Multiple and long-term change initiatives foster negative attitudes toward change. HRMPs should prioritize initiatives such as collaboration, internal recruitment centers, and early retirement benefits to facilitate effective and rapid adaptation to change (Raeder, 2019). HRM should be trained to be more attuned to OC indicators and be better able to respond rationally when such situations arise. Scenario-based learning that anticipates change-related activities, such as when a person acts as a change agent, as opposed to a change

catalyst or facilitator, may be useful in training and education programs aimed at aspiring HR executives (Baran, et al., 2018). Employee involvement programs (EIPs) can also influence innovation, leading to faster implementation of strategic changes. The rate of EIP development must match that of OC development. It is important to note that the link between EIPs, innovation speed, and efficiency follows an inverse U-shaped relationship, and HRMPs are most effective when they are designed to synchronize with the underlying cycles of change in a company (Huang, et al., 2020).

Recently, scholars have devised and expanded the notion of efficiency adaptability, which is of direct significance in the domain of OC, as it facilitates employee adaptation to change (Baard, et al., 2013). Employees' ability to adapt to OC may be influenced by factors such as self-motivation, receptive attitudes, individual characteristics, training techniques, and leadership style (Jundt, et al., 2015). HRMPs focused on developing flexibility in employees can mitigate the negative repercussions of resistance to change, and trust, perceived organizational support, and openness to change can decrease the gap between resistance and preparedness (Thakur and Srivastava, 2018).

10 Increasing Communication Between Management and Employees

HRMPs may be considered valuable assets; however, their true potential depends on their delivery to employees (Peters, et al., 2014). Research combining OC and HRM practices has delved deeply into questions such as the role of managers and HR managers during change, the effects of communication and participation, the consequences of systems of practices that are not adapted to change, and the means by which organizations align their practices with change.

Workplace dynamics include personal relationships, identity-based interactions, and power structure. Disoriented HRMPs can lead to poor communication between HR managers and employees, resulting in adverse outcomes and distress. A common type of harassment in an OC setting is depersonalized bullying directed downward and tied to the victim's execution role and level of involvement in the group.

Condescension, intimidation, unfair treatment of workers, and physical violence have all been reported as forms of bullying used by managers during the change process (D'Cruz, et al., 2014). Negative feelings toward change, such as resistance, may emerge when an employee believes that their company treats them unfairly because of poor working conditions or improperly managed change attempts (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018).

A popular organizational method for managing change is to provide employees with information during change programs. However, studies have not yet fully grasped the influence of information sources on employees' responses to change. Employees are more likely to succeed in dealing with OC if they are given more flexibility to make decisions at work, are encouraged to take an initiative, and are inspired to work in teams (Tummers, et al., 2015). HRMPs are effective when HR managers assume the roles of strategic change agents and administrative experts. The involvement of the strategic change agent mitigates the relationship between the intensity of change and the pessimism of the workers. HR managers may feel compelled to play catalytic roles during significant transitions. It is also possible that employees shape the role of HR rather than HR alone, thus shaping employee skepticism. HR firms may find it more difficult to become strategic change agents when employee cynicism is prevalent. In such settings, HR must prioritize initiatives that increase productivity and empowerment among workers (Brown, et al., 2017).

Internal promotions can help people grow and change their minds regarding OC by giving them more control over their careers and futures. Employees' ability to handle negative outcomes of change may be enhanced by their understanding of promotion opportunities linked with change (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018). However, organizations that do not use effective HRM practices to create change-friendly environments can deal with change processes by selecting and using HRM practices that pave the way for a smooth integration of change (Figure 4). For example, participation in a job empowers people to feel

that they have a say in shaping future developments. In doing so, it helps workers adjust to new norms and practices more easily (Lucia-Casademunt, et al., 2018).

11 Western and Non-Western Countries

As the socioeconomic framework varies between emerging and developed nations, the influence of OC on workers and the accompanying HRMPs is expected to differ between Western and non-Western countries. Most research on this subject has been conducted in the West. Studies from Western countries have mainly focused on developing a theoretical framework, understanding the cross-functional role that HR can play during organizational transformation and employees' responses to change initiatives and their corresponding HRMPs. These aspects are covered in the discussion above. Studies from non-Western countries also included aspects identified in the research conducted in Western countries. In addition, they pointed out the specific sociocultural aspects that differentiate them from Western countries. Only three relevant studies were identified using MENA. A study from Africa showed that the HR function is profoundly dependent on socioeconomic structure (Rubbers, 2020). A study in Jordan emphasized a favorable link between emotional commitment and preparation for the transition. Furthermore, hierarchical culture has been found to positively moderate the association between high-performance HRMPs and emotional commitment (Alqudah, et al., 2022). A study in Malaysia emphasized the ethical, spiritual, and religious components. The authors suggested that it was important to adapt Western methods of change management to non-Western environments to define OC goals precisely and to acknowledge the symbiotic link between ethics, spirituality, and HR management in several Asian societies (Rees, et al., 2010).

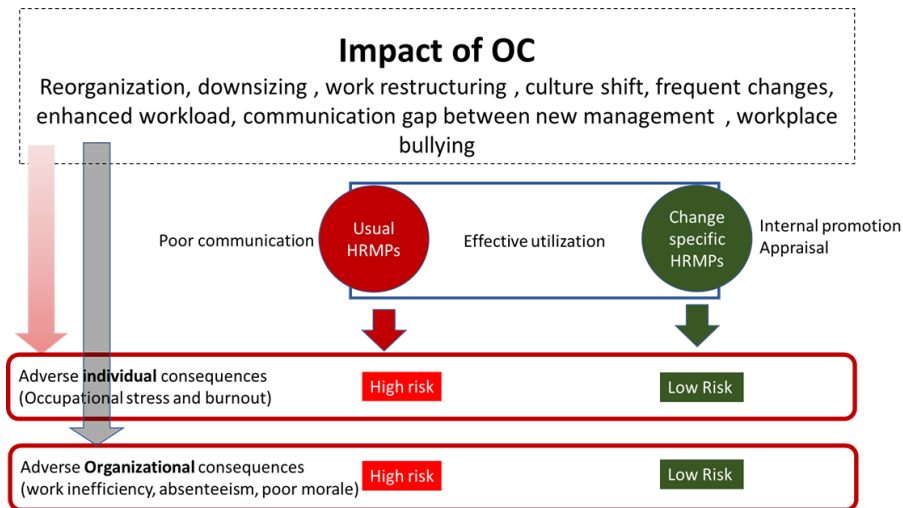


Figure 3. Impact of OC on employees and effect of change-specific HRMPs on mitigating adverse individual and organizational consequences of OC.
(Source: Authors' own research)

The research, which examined bullying in the workplace during OC, found that bullying stemmed from the execution of change initiatives and showed HR managers' cooperation (D'Cruz, et al., 2014).

On the other hand, Long and Ismail examined the skills that HR professionals should work on honing, so that they can become more valuable members of their organizations' top teams during times of transition and contribute to OC. Competencies in cultural management, interpersonal and communication effectiveness, HR development strategies, performance management, value chain comprehension, conflict resolution, and state-of-the-art information technology are essential. HR professionals have been suggested to engage more in operational problems, so that they can better grasp the challenges at hand and help line managers increase their efficiency (Sang Long and Khairuzzaman Wan Ismail, 2012). In a review by Indonesian researchers, it was argued that managing organizational transformation strategies has been the focus of an HR department in carrying out corporate operations, and the implementation of these organizational transformation strategies may be effective if changes are made to the roles and functions of HRs, strategic partners, change agents, and HR competencies (Syamsuri and Siregar, 2019).

12 Guidance for Future Research and Practice

Further studies should determine which HRM practices and interventions are the most effective buffers in radical and episodic OCs. Despite having more resources at their disposal to help transition, larger companies face particular challenges, such as those related to informing employees about the transition. In this context, it is important to communicate the need for change, and workers can be motivated to embrace it more effectively in smaller companies through greater personal engagement. Moreover, the results are country specific because a prosperous economy and a robust job market separate them from those of other nations. As a result, HRM studies that focus on transformation must expand their scope to include a variety of business settings, nationalities, and cultures. Much of the literature on these domains has neglected the reason why a particular HRMP takes its current form. Employee perspectives should also be analyzed in more detail with different management functions, as the processes of implementation or the perceptions of actors at different levels vary (Wolonciej, 2018). Intradepartmental communication positively influences employees' reactions to OC; this aspect should be explored further. It should also be noted that direct supervisors, along with HR department staff, play an important role in maintaining employees' individual resources (Islam, et al., 2020). This calls for further research that considers HRM process

models. It is necessary to integrate objective measures with longitudinal data and analyze the effects of organizational factors such as organizational behavior, employee participation, and managerial support, as well as personal factors such as personality traits with respect to resilience and belief in corporate accountability. Web-based role-play simulations and social media application environments can serve as intelligent techniques that allow workers to embrace OC (Naeem, 2020; Zgodavova, et al., 2016).

The strategic positioning of HR in the context of OC also requires further evaluation, as limited case studies are available on this topic (Nadiv, et al., 2017). Cultivating and maintaining positive responses to change among workers, managers, and organizations can consider establishing techniques to enhance individuals' emotional stability and encourage them to welcome future changes. This could be an early attempt to evaluate the influence of cross-departmental interactions and emotional maturity on workers' responses to OC (Tang and Gao, 2012). Future studies should look more closely at possible mediating factors, such as work-life quality, loyalty to the organization, morality, and dedication to OC.

13 Conclusions

This review demonstrated that HRMPs play a pivotal role in enabling successful OC by fostering positive employee attitudes, enhancing adaptability and creativity, and driving commitment to change initiatives. Most existing research offers valuable insights into HRs' multifaceted role during OCs and the influence of tailored HRMPs on productivity, drawn predominantly from Western cultural contexts.

Studies reveal that hard changes, such as restructuring and downsizing, exert the most negative impacts on employees compared to other types of OC, which require strategic HR efforts to mitigate the impact and embed cultural evolution. Holistic HRMPs that safeguard workers' spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being are essential, along with increasing autonomy, involvement in decision-making, collaboration, and teamwork. Fostering occupational health and emotional commitment are critical for readiness and effectiveness in transition.

However, there are limitations, including the Western-centric focus of most studies, which may overlook the HR challenges in other cultures. While prescriptive recommendations are abundant, empirical evidence detailing HR's optimal role remains scarce. Further research should investigate how national, sectoral, and cultural mediators shape HRMP efficacy across diverse contexts in OCs. As the business environment continues to evolve, the reassessment and adaptation of HRMPs will be crucial in driving positive OC outcomes in the future.

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