Thesis of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES ON MANAGEMENT TASKS

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1. PRELIMINARIES, GOALS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

Constant change in the 21st century is now an accepted phenomenon that affects all fields of life. A change is a continuous and permanent feature of economic and social processes. We must agree with Heraclitus' statement that *'the only constant in life is change.'* Organizations experience these changes, as well, but in their case, adapting to the market and environment is a condition for survival. In general, by stable we mean something that is stable, sure, and fixed. However, in this environment exposed to permanent change, conditions change too quickly, and consequently, reaching the goal encounters significant obstacles. As a result, stabilizing the future condition of an organizations is difficult or almost impossible to achieve. Their daily operation is exposed to constant, ever-present instability, changes are uncertain, unpredictable and have irreversible consequences in several cases. Effective change management is key to successful leadership, as it allows managers to develop a strategy that fits the situation, which facilitates a smooth transition within the organization, and ensures that staff to adapt and respond positively to change.

The manager must consider two aspects during change management. On one hand, change management ensures that they communicate the necessity and benefits of the measures adequately - by conveying a suitable vision of the future, the urgency of change, and identifying directions. On the other hand, leadership characteristics appear that do not necessarily appear during their daily work. In most cases, changes generate revulsion in employees, therefore skills such as empathy or the ability to manage conflicts come to the fore to deal with resistance.

Several key factors for successful change can be defined, which I tried to summarize and place in a new context in my dissertation. However, the environment where changes take place determines the chances and possibilities of their implementation and may also affect the pace of implementation. This environment is nothing but the organizational culture. The concepts of change management and organizational culture are intricately linked in this aspect, both are essential elements for the successful operation of the organization. An effective change management strategy considers the characteristics of the existing organizational culture and the elements that support or hinder the planned changes.

The juxtaposition of change management and management tasks, and the correlation between them, are therefore worth studying. During my research, I aimed to uncover correlations that help the successful implementation of the change, so that the manager can prepare in advance for the strengthening of certain tasks, can provide himself or herself with a framework, and can serve as a guideline for providing the appropriate support.

Significant goals of the research

The general importance of the research and the topic is justified by the proven presence of permanent changes in organizational operations, which require a novel and proactive approach from managers in several cases (GÁL, 2017). The so-called VUCA environment (HIMMER - SZEKERES, 2020), which is volatile, uncertain, complex and includes several outcomes, describes the general environment of organizations in the 21st century. In this environment, changes often occur unexpectedly and quickly, and the outcome of future events is difficult to predict. The impact of such an environment is significant, which affects the daily operation of organizations.

According to Lewin (1951), the management of changes is divided into three stages by their nature: before, during and after the change (relaxation, change, stabilization). In these three stages, the leader is the key player, however, his or her management tasks may be different from each other in each stage.

The goal of my research is to answer how organizational culture, management tasks, and the manager's personality affect the implementation of changes and their success. During the study, special attention was dedicated to map the appearance of new or innovative management tasks, as well as the examination of the presence of agile management.

Accordingly, I set the following hypotheses:

Q1: Is it possible to interpret the achievement of a stable, future state during organizational change?

H1: The freeze, institutionalization of changes and the achievement of the desired future state occur independently of each other.

Q2: What role does organizational culture play in organizational changes?

H2: In addition to organizational culture that supports change, successful organizational changes also have an impact on organizational culture.

Q3: How can a successful change be linked to the manager?

H3: The key factors of a successful change can primarily be linked to the manager's personality.

Q4: How does the focus of individual tasks shift in a dynamic organizational environment?

H4: In the stages of the change, a significant correlation can be shown with changes in the importance of certain management tasks.

Q5: Among the key factors of successful change at each level of the organization, can the changing, complex environment and the need for flexible change management be included in literature?

H5a): The perception of the VUCA environment and its importance can be demonstrated regardless of the demographic or organizational characteristics of the employees.

H5b): Regardless of the demographic or organizational characteristics of the employees, the importance of the agile management criteria can be demonstrated as a condition for the implementation of successful change.

2. DATABASE AND METHODS

Due to the complexity of the research, I used several methodologies to explore the correlation between the factors.

As part of the research, I carried out preliminary surveys, which included semi-structured professional interviews, as well as the test run of a self-developed questionnaire. Afterwards, based on the results obtained by the preliminary investigations, I developed the content research method, which included the preparation and analysis of a case study, as well as a questionnaire covering the correlation between management tasks and organizational changes.

As the first step of the preliminary surveys, I opted for individual, semi-structured interviews as the qualitative methodology of my research. In 2019, I conducted the professional interviews with senior or middle managers face-to-face in 6 different sectors. The interviewees represented different fields of activity: banking services and finance, medical services, wholesale and retail representation, entertainment and hospitality, online services.

The selection of the interviewees was random, since by conducting the interviews and comparing the results, my goal was to define guidelines for how the transformation of the environment affects operation, through what organizational factors force the changes. For this purpose, I carried out an interview draft, where there was an explicit emphasis on organizational culture and changes. With the written consent of the interviewees, the audio of 60-90-minute conversations was recorded. After the interview, the audio was transcribed verbatim into an electronic document, which was followed by the categorization and interpretation analysis.

Based on the conclusions on professional interviews and the literature, I conducted a questionnaire focusing on the correlation between management tasks and change. I examined this questionnaire in a pilot survey with a random sample. My goal was to explore additional optional correlation regarding the roles of managers in change management. The questionnaire related to the pilot survey was available to anyone in online form and was available to those who completed it for a total of about 2 months in 2020. In addition to the segmentation questions, the questionnaire contained professional questions in four areas:

- the importance of management tasks, which, in addition to the detailed assessment of management tasks laid down by Fayol, also included questions about the tasks of group management, motivation, communication, and decision-making.
- the frame and evaluation of changes
- changes in workplace communication forms and channels, with special attention to the appearance and emphasis of online and hybrid forms during the period studied. In this regard, the change in the way of work, regarding the appearance and emphasis of online and hybrid forms during the period studied.
- evaluation of the reaction to changes, focusing on change management methods in the literature.

During the statistical evaluation in the pilot testing, I prepared simple descriptive statistics with Microsoft Excel. I examined position indicators (average, median, mode), variation indicators (standard deviation, range).

After laying down the conclusions, I conducted a detailed plan and method of content research based on specific factors and areas to be studied.

Due to the differentiation of the topic, I thought it vital to get to know the problems, organizational changes forced to change the environmental conditions, and the correlation between the importance of management tasks that shift in this context, even more deeply than the questionnaire survey. As a tool for this, the case studies that were meant to define the organizational changes in a more structured manner were prepared according to a predetermined outline.

Prepared interviewers who participated in university education and had appropriate professional knowledge contributed to the preparation of the case studies.

During the preparation, the basic theories of change management found in literature, which form the basis of the case study, were also explained in a detailed manner. Afterwards, the studies were prepared based on a uniform, self-developed draft.

The preparation of the special organizational studies took place in March-June 2023.

During the development of the case study, a brief presentation of the organization was given by BERDE et al. (2003), the following topics were followed:

- description and classification of changes (according to extent, range),
- initiators of changes, the role of management,
- appearance and causes of resistance within the organization,
- exploring how to overcome any resistance that may arise,
- description of the change according to Lewin's phases,
- the emergence of consciously applied change management tools based on Kotter's eight-step change management scenario,
- the effects, consequences, and experiences of the change.

My goal was to answer how different changes appear at an organization, what obstacles they represent for management and how they are overcome. The basis of the case studies was basic theoretical models of change management found in literature, and I focused on novel management tasks when analysing them. A total of 51 studies suitable for evaluation were completed, which were processed and evaluated based on a self-developed evaluation table. The evaluation table was used to compare the studies, which consisted of 7 thematic parts: organizational identification data, description of the processed change, compliance of the organizational change with Kotter's eight-step change management scenario, identification of key management tasks, interpretation of Lewin's change theories, identification of change success factors, institutionalization, and organizational culture.

During processing, I carried out the analysis and content analysis of the case studies. The statements were prepared by keyword analysis, which I illustrated with summary tables and diagrams.

Parallel to the methodology of the case study, I conducted a questionnaire survey for a structured understanding of management tasks and organizational changes.

The literature basis of the questionnaire was provided by 5 management tasks defined by Fayol, Lewin's three-phase change theory, Kotter's eight-step change management scenario and the VUCA environment. In addition, I considered factors assessed based on preliminary investigations, such as the imbalance of management tasks in the various stages of the change.

I used open-ended questions to define the change, so that the respondent could define the change in the organization he represented as precisely as possible. An important

characteristic of these questions is that the respondent rated changes that had already been completed, the role of which was in examining the evaluation ability of the entire process.

The most significant part of the questionnaire consisted of questions about the correlation between organizational changes and management tasks. After evaluating the organizational changes (determining their extent and coercive force), the respondent classified the changes according to KOTTER's (2008) eight-step change management scenario. The prepared form was available both online and in printed form. Sampling took place at thematic professional exhibitions, as well as in the form of direct inquiry, by personal invitation.

I used Microsoft Excel version 16.80 and IBM SPSS 29 software to analyse the questionnaires. Carrying out the general descriptive statistical tests involved the demographic distribution of the respondents and the examination of the average and standard deviation values for each question. The questionnaire was opened for filling in March 2023, the answers were received until the end of October 2023, both online and in printed form. After closing, a total of 367 responses were received, 54 online and 313 in printed form. After summarizing and cleaning the data, I started the evaluation of the results with 354 questionnaires.

To examine the distribution of the sample, I used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. When interpreting the results of the test, I accept the null hypothesis - i.e. that the sample is normally distributed regarding the given factor - if the p-value is greater than 0.05. If this value is lower than 0.05, the sample does not show a normal distribution, therefore I reject the null hypothesis (MALHOTRA, 2008). During my tests, in most cases I received a non-normally distributed sample. Accordingly, I evaluated my tests with the Kruskal-Wallis test for ordinal variables, with the Chi-square test and the Cramer-V index for nominal variables using a cross-tabulation analysis.

3. CORE FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

3.1. Results of semi-structured professional interviews

I conducted six senior management and/or owner professional interviews during the study prior to the research. My results showed that the reaction to changes is of primary importance in the functioning of organizations. The changes can transform organizational culture, but their extent and gravity are less important in the case of the examined organizations compared to the importance of successful and rapid changes. As the reaction of an organization to change, the organizational culture transforms only secondarily, which in the examined cases is based much more on cooperation and common mind. This can be defined as a kind of culture that supports organizational change.

The interviewees could name only the beginning of the change, they could not define the end partially or at all. They believed that constant change was necessary to survive. In this approach, however, Lewin's theory of change differs: the future stable state is not the same as the implementation of change, the substantiation of which indicates further lines of investigation.

However, the key ideas of the interviews were management tasks and the expectations placed on the manager to such an extent that I decided that I should continue my further investigations on the topic of organizational change and management tasks, as well as the demonstrable correlations between them.

Another question arose during the professional interviews; how the Lewin force field model defined in the literature is transformed, since based on the presented results, the desired future state and the completion of the change are separated in time. The measures of relaxation are believed to influence the success of the changes, affect their smooth implementation, as well as further measures of consolidation. Institutionalization is separate from consolidation, just as Kotter's eight-step change management scenario treats these two activities separately. Institutionalization, I believe, does not depend on the success of the change and its consolidation. However, these are complex questions that required further investigations to be answered. As part of the substantive research, I prepared organization- and change-specific case studies for this purpose, as described in the material and methodology chapter.

3.2. Results of the pilot survey

Reflecting on the results of 6 interviews with senior managers and/or owners conducted during the study prior to the research, I prepared a questionnaire. I ran this questionnaire as a test in a few weeks. The online questionnaire was filled by 104 people, of which 102 answers were finally evaluated. During the evaluation, I used descriptive statistical methods, especially for the average and standard deviation values. For the relevant questions, I analysed the frequency of occurrences. 35% of the respondents were women and 65% were men. In terms of position, 42% of those who completed the questionnaire were office employees, 26% were middle managers, and 17% were owners or senior managers. In terms of age group, the largest proportion of respondents was represented by those between the ages of 26 and 35, accounting for more than half of the respondents (57%). The 36-45 age group accounted for another 20% of the respondents, so more than two-thirds of the respondents came from those aged 26-45. 70% of the respondents have been working at the workplace for at least 3 years, of which 44% have been working for the organization they represent for more than 5 years. Barely 15% of the respondents have worked for the organization they represent for less than 1 year, and there are also a similar proportion of those who have been employed there for 1-2 years. The main objective of the pilot survey was to compile a final questionnaire that specifically helps in formulating questions between change and management tasks and that is suitable for exploring correlations. Based on the parameters above, I used simple descriptive statistics to determine the mean and standard deviation values along four large areas: the importance of management tasks, description of changes, the effect of change on the forms of communication at work, changes in the way of working, evaluation of the reaction to the changes.

Regarding the nature of the changes 40% of respondents gave an answer related to restrictions caused by the pandemic or the reaction to the situation generated by the pandemic in the related open question. The appearance of home-office work can be included, named by 15% of the respondents, which became an almost general phenomenon in organizations during this period. In addition, 16% of the respondents named changes related to human resources, 11% some kind of organizational transformation, 5% a change related to a change of management, 5% also evaluated some kind of transformation

implemented with the aim of increasing efficiency, and 4% some process changes reorganization.

Table 1 illustrates the transformation of the importance of different management tasks before and after the changes. The evolution of the average values draws attention to the fact that, to a certain extent, during an organizational change, the importance of each management task increases, i.e. the role of the manager becomes prominent. The importance of some management tasks increases to a greater extent, such as communication, information transfer, organizational tasks, motivation, and appropriate resistance management.

Table 1: Transformation of the importance of management tasks before and after the changes (*n=102*)

	Mean (before)	**Mean** *(after)*	***Deviation***
Communication	4,24	4,44	*+0,20*
Transfer of information	4,16	4,35	*+0,19*
Planning (on a short and long-term)	4,09	4,22	*+0,13*
Decision	4,22	4,33	*+0,11*
Order (instructions, directives issued to carry out tasks)	3,97	4,06	*+0,09*
Organization (coordinating the group's activities to achieve the goals)	4,01	4,16	*+0,15*
Control	3,99	4,09	*+0,10*
Group management	3,80	3,88	*+0,08*
Motivation	3,87	4,08	*+0,21*
Resistance management (management of objections and resistance to change)	3,45	3,85	*+0,41*

Source: own research (2021)

This suggestion is also supported by the fact that, in addition to the average values, the deviation indicators show a decreasing value compared to the initial state during the evaluation of the driving tasks. In addition to the increasing mean value, decreasing standard deviation may indicate that, according to the respondents, the importance of each management task is increasing. Deviation in information transfer, motivation, and resistance management justifies the phenomenon.

When it comes to owners, the mean values tend to decrease, which raises new research questions. Regarding middle managers, the deviation between the mean values is shown in the management of resistance, in other cases it has a low or negative sign. Considering that the importance of the given management task was given a higher assessment, in the period

before the organizational change took place, than the importance of the same management task in the period after it.

In two periods under study, deviation between the standard deviation values is outstanding in the circles of owners and senior management. There is a smaller deviation in the difference in deviation values from the mean in the case of middle managers and office employees. However, planning, organization (although in this case the average value did not show a significant difference) and resistance management became more important for operative employees. It is since the operational employees are extremely exposed to the shift schedule, the decisions of middle and senior management, which make it more difficult for them to experience each change, they need a clearly planned work process that is relevant to them and that it is organize and coordinate.

The next section of the questionnaire included questions about resistance. The results showed that, according to the respondents, communication, help and support, involvement and participation are more important. The mean values of these methods are among the highest.

The methods related to training show the lowest value, so based on this, they can be defined as non-targeted methods of managing resistance. Regarding the application of the methods, communication is also in the first place in terms of the average value, followed by help and support, then negotiation and agreement. It can be concluded that, in both approaches (importance, application), methods based on cooperation are more important when dealing with resistance during changes compared to methods related to training (*Figure 1*).

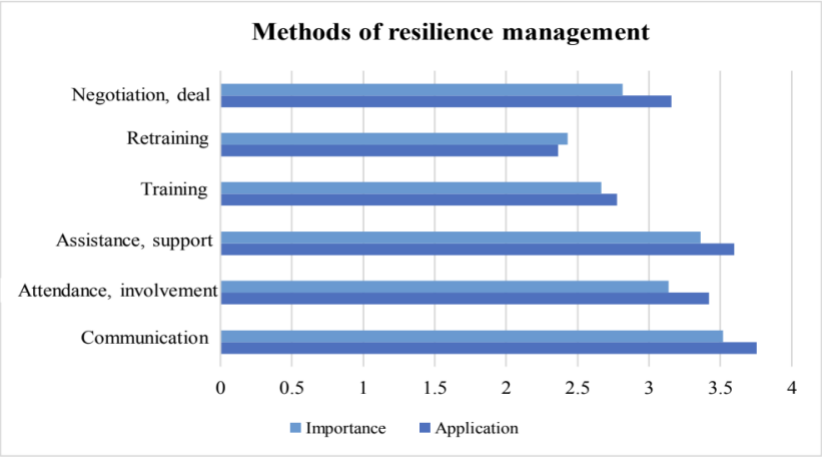

Figure 1: Significance and application of resistance management methods during organizational changes (n=102)

Source: Own research (2021)

The results drew the attention to the fact that management tasks can be transformed during a change in such a way that they require a new or innovative approach. The correlations can be examined in a complex manner. In terms of the nature of the changes, measures generated by the pandemic appeared in a substantial proportion, in addition, the respondents reported on changes related to human resources, organizational transformation, and transformation in processes. The importance of management tasks shifts during the measures. There was a more significant difference between managers and those performing core activities in these questions. During organizational changes in management or ownership, the importance of each management task increases, but communication is valued to the largest extent.

Based on the study prior to the content research, I found that the changes can transform the organizational culture, but their scale and importance are only secondary to successful and quick changes. Organizational changes take place in a dynamic environment, in which it is crucial how and in what time organizations react. Thus, understanding the nature of changes and their management is an integral part of research.

Based on the questionnaire survey, it became necessary to fine-tune the questions. As a result of the study prior to the content research, the recognition, implementation, and stabilization of change, as well as the examination of the mutual influence of management tasks, can be targeted as further research directions during change management. A deeper analysis is also worth whether different measures and the extent of the change affect management tasks and the assessment of the success of the change. To explore the cause-and-effect relationships and to examine the interactions between change and leadership more deeply, I prepared a self-developed questionnaire as part of the content research.

3.3. Evaluation of the case studies

In the evaluation of organizational studies aimed at studying changes, 51 case studies were included, which I examined with content and keyword analysis. A significant part of the changes affecting the organizations under the study were due to infrastructural (typically IT, SAP) developments, as well as diversification efforts (introduction of a new product, new service, portfolio expansion) and expansion investments (*Figure 2*). In the case of enterprises under the study, the changes are in the direction of development, although there

are also changes aimed at cost-effective operation, which typically involved austerity and downsizing.

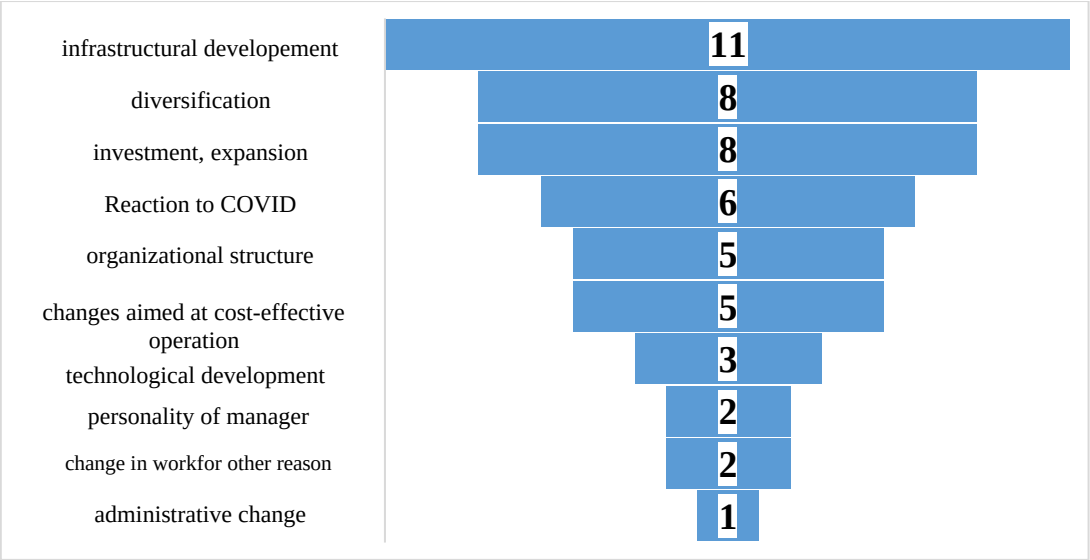

Figure 2: Frequency of occurrence of categories of changes (*pcs*)

Source: own research (2023)

Most of the changes processed in the case studies aimed at increasing efficiency, improving processes, or preserving the competitive market position. The changes were extremely diverse: from the development of the infrastructure, through expansion investments to diversification. A total of 10 organizations initiated changes of a preventive nature, which meant survival, or the avoidance of bankruptcy, or the reduction of health risks. Overall, the goals of the changes aimed at the forward-looking direction. I distinguished the changes in the case studies along a radical and incremental axis (DOBÁK, 2008), on the basis of which I identified 28 incremental and 23 radical changes. Afterwards, I examined the characteristics of Lewin's three-phase theory of change (relaxation, change, consolidation). Accordingly, I concluded, in most cases, it is the description of the managerial decision that loosens the framework of organizational operation, without the nuances of the numerous problems found in the case studies and the responses to them. I have defined a total of 6 categories that can be identified during loosening:

1. Recognition, perception,
2. Risk assessment, risk analysis,
3. The management explains its decision,
4. Planning, analysis, review,
5. Starting negotiations (with subcontractors, partners),

6. Preparation by providing the background.

Furthermore, I found that in the event of incremental changes, recognition and perception appear prominently during loosening - which is followed by immediate measures (in some cases without sufficient planning), or the appearance of the compulsion to change is followed by the start of negotiations with subcontractors and partners.

In the case of radical changes, planning, analysis, and review are extremely prominent during the loosening process - it precedes the changes. Radical changes affect the entire organization, so this is a natural phenomenon, the case studies confirm this statement.

The tests showed that the extent of the change (incremental or radical) is no longer particularly important in the consolidation phase. The scope of the problem and the response to it determine the consolidation measures. In the case studies, the measures of monitoring, control and measurement were overrepresented, in a total of 16 cases these represented the consolidation for the organization. With respect to Lewin's force field analysis, I examined what hindering and generative factors influenced the changes. During the studies, it was clearly established that almost 50% of the factors generating the changes can be traced back to external causes (changes in market demands, the need to innovate, the need to gain ground against competitors). On the other hand, more than 90% of the hindering factors were internal causes (resistance, employee insecurity, the difficulty of implementing the new practice in addition to daily work). Achieving the desired future state - which is the last, pivotal point of Lewin's force field analysis - was not achieved in each case based on the case studies. *Figure 3* illustrates that in 51% of cases the desired state was only partially achieved, in 16% it was achieved, and in 19% it was not achieved at all. Furthermore, in 14% of cases, I worked on cases that require continuous improvement. No significant difference between incremental and radical changes could be observed.

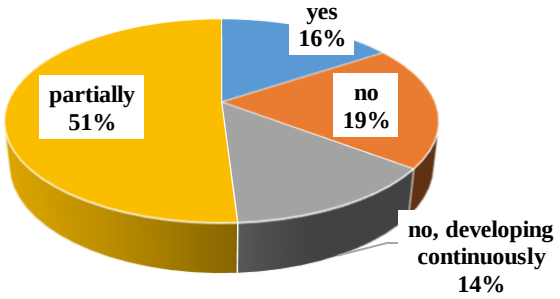

Figure 3: Will the organization achieve the desired future state? (n=51)

Source: own research (2023)

Achieving the desired future state shows significant differences. Among the successful changes, it was possible to state that the organization reached the target state in 8 cases. In 2 cases, despite the success of the change, it was not possible to bring the organization to a stable, future state. In another 22 cases, these aspirations were only partially realized. If we take the changes into account that were successful or partially successful, we can say that in only 8 cases out of 41 case studies it was clearly stated that the target state was reached after the change was successful.

In cases where the change was not, or only partially, successful, it was possible neither to integrate the changes into the organizational culture, nor to achieve the future state.

My research question, which related to the achievement of the future state achieved during the change, is supported by the fact that despite the success of the change - i.e. the consolidated state - in most cases, the desired future state was not achieved, or only partially achieved. Accordingly, consolidation and the desired future state differ in time, consolidation does not mean re-stabilization of the organization.

Kotter's eight-step change management scenario formed the basis of the case studies and completed interviews. Regardless of the scale of the changes, key steps are missing to implement the changes successfully. This correlation was predicted by the fact that during the relaxation period, only a few organizations started the changes with planning, some kind of preliminary survey, and review. Based on the comparison of Kotter's 8-step change management scenario, the development of the vision and strategy in the case studies does not always precede the implementation of the changes. The empowerment of employees was not implemented in 17 case studies, in another 12 case studies the participation of employees in the changes was included in involvement. Of the 51 completed case studies, 9 organizational changes were not consolidated or institutionalized. Due to the lack of planning, control and consistent behaviour, the daily routine of the employees automatically returned to the direction before the changes. The issue of institutionalization can be examined together with the success of the change. During the evaluation, the embedding of the organizational culture was realized if, based on what was described in the case study, the impact on the organizational soft factors could be clearly identified. Based on the results, the solutions that were institutionalized were fully embedded in the organizational culture

in 42%, and partially rooted there in 35%. However, the impact of institutionalization on organizational culture did not appear in 23.25% of cases.

Resistance was dominant in cases where employees were not empowered (in 17 studies) or involved only in change processes (in 12 studies). This was an obstacle to successful change. Conflicts arise regardless of the depth of employee involvement. However, positional fear and employee dissatisfaction did not appear in those cases where employees were not authorized to conduct the process but were involved. The management of resistance can be completed in several ways, which is also discussed in detail in literature. In the 51 organizational case studies, I explored the following categories: communication, management support, education and training, regulation, incentives, confirmation of facts, involvement, conflict management.

Based on the case studies, I analysed the management tasks related to the changes, the key factors of the success of the change, which are organically connected to the issues of stabilization and institutionalization. Management tasks and their transformation due to the successful implementation of changes are the key questions of the research. I investigated the role of management tasks in the process of change by analysing case studies in addition to questionnaire research.

During the changes, I examined the importance of management tasks according to 5 basic management tasks formulated by FAYOL (1916), as well as the management tasks highlighted based on the pilot survey and included in my questionnaire, which is part of the content research. I compiled 3-5 management tasks with a prominent role in each case study with keyword and interpretive analysis.

Communication (mostly two-way communication) and planning take on the most outstanding value (these two management tasks are highlighted in 35 and 21 case studies). The predominance of basic management tasks is typical (coordination in 17 cases, control in 17 cases) and group management appears 16 times as the most important management task supporting the implementation of change.

Examining the success of the change, we can see that out of the 51 case studies processed, 32 changes were followed by a successful closure., this did not clearly mean the institutionalization or the achievement of the future state of the change in each case, in some

cases not even its consolidation (in 19 cases, the closure of the change could be said to be partially successful).

During my studies aimed at successful change, I discovered 8 key factors: communication, planning, quick response, flexible intervention, management support, quick adaptation, supportive organizational culture, and stable organizational background.

Communication and planning appeared in 15 of the 32 cases, i.e. in more than half, as a key factor supporting the successful implementation of the change. In addition, in 6 additional cases, quick reaction could also be identified - which meant extremely quick perception and action by the manager. A few novel suggestions appearing among the results, such as quick response, quick adaptation, management support, or flexible intervention, draw attention to the continuation of further investigations. These factors do not appear in previous studies or in the literature, or only in a nuanced way. I defined factors that are the key factors of a successful change, as well as those that were shown as faults, but have a profound influence on the success of the change (*Table 2*).

Table 2: Factors supporting and influencing successful change

Key factors for successful change	Factors affecting successful change
communication	institutionalization effort
rapid reaction	involvement, empowerment
planning	consistency in implementation
flexible intervention	solutions that can be used in practice in the long term
management support	rate of rection
rapid adaptation	
organizational culture that supports change	

Source: own research (2023)

In my research, I also examined whether novel management tasks can be identified during the implementation of changes. Although the changes are not institutionalized in each case, the new management approach is worth presenting.

In 51 case studies processed, management characteristics such as proactive participation, democratic flexibility, and three-way communication appeared during the changes.

The emergence of novel features that appear during organizational changes cannot necessarily be deemed a management task, but rather a management characteristic that directed attention towards agile management. Although the literature discusses agile management, the flexibility mentioned was also associated with a high degree of democratic

cooperation in the case studies. The employees were not only involved - even though they did not take part in the decision - they received support from the management that really served their interests.

The processed case studies illustrate the emergence of perception as a new leadership trait, with the fact that quick response was in several cases a key factor in the successful implementation of change - which in many cases was aimed at preserving or increasing the market position, even maintaining it.

Based on the case studies, it could be concluded that stabilization and the desired future state differ in time. Stabilization does not mean re-stabilization of the organization; permanent changes make the instability of organizations continuous. The institutionalization of changes is related to the successful implementation of the changes. During the evaluation of the case studies, if changes are institutionalized, it affects the organizational culture. If this interaction can be observed, it can be defined as the successful implementation of the changes. If these processes are incomplete, the previously used methods are returned to daily practice.

The role of management tasks can also be perceived in the implementation of the changes. Based on the results of the case studies, communication, involvement, empowerment, and planning play a key role. During the analyses, other management characteristics such as consistency, support, and the ability to build trust also emerged. I conducted questionnaire research to explore the relationships between management tasks and changes.

3.4. The results of the content research questionnaire

My goal was a deeper exploration of the relationship and mutual influence of management tasks and organizational changes. Furthermore, I tried to reveal how the role and importance of management tasks are transformed in a highly complex and dynamic organizational environment, and how the importance of the tasks shifts.

The final questionnaire was available to those who completed it between February 1, 2023, and October 31, 2023. The questionnaire could be completed online as well as in a printed version. During the period indicated above, 382 respondents filled the questionnaire, which were followed by cleaning after aggregation. After cleaning and preparing the data, I analysed the results with 354 evaluable questionnaires. Evaluating the reliability test, the

Cronbach's alpha value varied between 0.807-0.884 for all but one question group, so it can be concluded that the question groups are reliable.

The gender distribution of the respondents is almost 50-50%; 176 women and 178 men. In terms of age group, 18-24, 25-30, and 31-35 age groups filled out the questionnaire in the same proportion (19-29%), which thus represents 72% of the entire sample. The remaining 28% of the sample was represented by older age group (36-40, 41-50, 51-60). Examining the position as well, other employees make up 49% of the sample. Slightly more than half of the sample (51%) consists of respondents in managerial positions. Accordingly, we can say that the correlations between management tasks and the management of change - based on the sample - can be well examined in terms of managerial and subordinate aspects.

In terms of regional location, most of the organizations represented by the respondents are in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, Pest County, and Hajdú-Bihar County. Enterprises in the counties of the North Great Plain region (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, Hajdú-Bihar County and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County) account for 66.67% of the sample. This value results from the method of sampling since the questionnaires could be filled either online or offline during the questionnaire survey. It was easier to reach the employees of the organizations in the surrounding cities and counties, which may be the explanation for the territorial distribution of the sample.

Although 33% of the organizations represented by the respondents are not located in the Northern Great Plain region, more than 75% of these organizations still have a location or a head office in the affected region.

Regarding the changes that have already been concluded, a significant part of them included changes affecting the organizational structure (mergers, acquisitions, other organizational transformations). Changes affecting the person of the manager appeared with the second greatest weight, followed by IT developments, expansion and bringing new products to market, creating innovative solutions, gaining ground in new markets (diversification efforts), and defensive changes such as reorganization due to downsizing, liquidation. The extent of the change was medium in the largest proportion. This was followed by far-reaching, significant changes. A slight change was hardly characteristic of the answers. On the scale from 1 to 5, the average value was 2.52, the standard deviation was - high - 1.19.

I performed the correlation tests based on these distribution, demographic and other identification data, as well as the characteristics of changes.

Given that the sample did not follow a normal distribution based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, I evaluated my tests using the Kruskal-Wallis test for ordinal variables, the Chi-square test and the Cramer-V indicator for nominal variables using a cross-tabulation analysis.

I compared the correlation studies and management tasks with the steps of Kotter's change management scenario. In the cross-tabulation studies, in addition to the general management tasks formulated by Fayol, I also compared the task of decision-making, acquiring information inside and outside the organization, personnel tasks, and two-way communication with Kotter's theory. In the tests, I analysed Chi-square value, significance level, and relationship strength.

Based on the results, management tasks are prioritized in achieving short-term quick successes during the change. This correlation can be explained by the fact that quick successes serve as motivation for employees and those involved in change in an uncertain situation. In addition, the basic management tasks can be associated with the initial and final steps of the change. Coordination appears significant to express the immediacy of change, in addition to the creation of a team that manages the change. The organization proved to be significant during the integration and institutionalization of the measures consolidated during the change into organizational processes. Among other management tasks, decision showed correlations in the first and last steps of the change management scenario, and two-way communication in the last step.

As it was also shown in the case studies, the organizations set well-separated management tasks for the initial, stable state and the consolidation phase, however, during the specific change, due to the quality and depth of the change and the series of measures, general results could not be formulated. Organizational response requires unique or less identifiable management tasks. This statement can also be formulated during the questionnaire survey, which can be inferred from the fact that the middle stage of the change management scenario (vision, strategy development, communication, employee empowerment) is completely omitted from the test results showing significant and strong relationship correlations.

To examine this conclusion more deeply, I compared the category of change from the questions in the questionnaire with the importance of management tasks, as well as the state before, during and after the change. In the evaluation, I considered the remarkable results below 0.05, as well as the corresponding connection strength value. During the investigation, I judged those variables as the interpretation of the management task shifting in the change, in which the connection strength above the average (0.457) and the significance value below 0.05 were both significant.

The results confirmed that was also presented in the descriptive statistics: the shift in the importance of management tasks can be significantly verified depending on the degree of change.

However, based on the aggregate studies, in the comparison of the three periods of the change, in only a few cases did not appear significantly each of the examined driving tasks. Thus, the increase or decrease in importance cannot be clearly determined in the three stages, which is why I also included the nature of the changes in the evaluation. In this way, I was able to get a more nuanced picture of which management tasks change in importance within each category.

Based on the results of the period before the changes, the importance of management tasks increases to a great extent during changes affecting the organizational structure. A strong relationship above 0.5 and a significance value of around 0.01 characterize this type of change. In relation to the changes concerning the person of the manager, a value corresponding to the conditions appears in three cases: coordination, acquisition of information outside the organization, acquisition of information within the organization. In the case of measures related to investment and expansion, the significance value takes on a value of 0.001 in the period before the change, which is further strengthened by the connection strength of 0.812. This shows an extremely strong correlation: during changes related to investment and expansion, the greater the extent of the change, according to the respondents, the greater the importance of preliminary planning. Compared to this, there is a less strong but detectable significant correlation in the field of decision making and obtaining information outside the organization in this category as well.

During the change, the importance of management tasks during the measures affecting the organizational structure, coordination, decision, and personnel tasks show a correlation with the extent of the change. Coordination, control, and decision-making also play a prominent role in measures affecting the person of the manager. In relation to investment and expansion-type changes, planning shows a strong correlation with the extent of the change here, and in addition, provision and control also appear among the basic management tasks. The correlation between obtaining information outside the organization and the importance of two-way communication and the degree of change can be demonstrated in the case of infrastructural, IT-related changes.

Looking at the period after the change, planning, organization, disposition, and decision are of foremost importance in the organizational structure. During the changes affecting the manager, after the change, the planning comes to the fore again, and there is a significant correlation in coordination, control, decision-making and obtaining information from outside the organization. The investment and expansion-type changes are related to the tasks of planning, control, and decision-making.

Based on the results of the relationship strength tests for Kotter's scenario, the shift in the importance of management tasks can be significantly verified depending on the degree of change. During the investigation of the change process, the management tasks come to the fore in relation to the motivation of those involved in the change. Most of all, connections achieve quick successes. In addition, in the initial and final stages of organizational changes, the basic management tasks show a significant correlation (coordination, organization), and the decision and communication also show a correlation.

The correlations shown during the three periods highlight several key results. On one hand, they make it clear that although the extent of the change by its nature affects the management tasks, the nature of the changes fundamentally determines the significance of the management tasks. On the other hand, it can also be seen that in the period before the change, many more significant management tasks appeared, which gradually decreased as the change progressed, and each task became less and less important. While 31 matchings could be established in the period before the change, during and after the change I found 18-18 correlations that corresponded to the significance value of 0.05 and were characterized by an above-average relationship strength.

When preparing for structural changes, the role of the organization shows a significant correlation before the changes, which remains even after the changes, although the strength of the relationship decreases. Coordination is also key in measures regarding the organizational structure and in matters concerning the person of the leader. In the former case, the strength of the relationship decreases, but in the latter case, it increases before, during and after the change (an exceedingly high relationship strength of 0.793 is observed after the changes). The role of control regarding the person of the manager will increase significantly after the change. The decision shows connections in both cases. Their role varies: in matters affecting the structure, their importance first decreases, then increases, in the case of measures affecting the person of the manager, it does not show a significant correlation before the changes, but it continues to increase afterwards. The importance of the role of planning appears naturally during investment and expansion measures. The larger the volume of change involved, the greater the importance of this management task. It shows the highest correlation before the changes, with a correlation strength of 0.812, which can be deemed to be extremely high. Diversification efforts make the Phi value negative. That is, there is a negative correlation regarding the provision, which occurs both in the period before and after the change. In both cases, the correlation is matched with a connection strength above 0.5. It is due to the fact that the increase in the rate of such changes makes the importance of the provision less and less necessary, importance shifts to other areas, based on this sample, two-way communication replaces the manager's one-way communication regarding provisions and instructions.

Overall, as a result of the study, it can be concluded that management tasks are indeed transformed during the changes, which was confirmed by the questionnaire survey with significant correlations. However, it is worth considering what kind of changes the given organization implements, because the sample I examined showed that the importance of management tasks in several cases demonstrably depends on the purpose of the organizational measures.

Based on the questionnaire surveys, the management tasks come to the fore during the changes, in achieving short-term quick successes, which can mostly be related to the motivation of the employees and those involved in the change. The basic management tasks appear more dominantly in the initial stages of the change, their importance decreases during

the last steps. Well-separated management tasks can be formulated for the initial state and the consolidation phase, such as coordination, organization, and decision-making and communication. However, during the specific change, the question is nuanced by the uniqueness of the organizational response, the quality and depth of the changes. The middle stage of the change management scenario (vision, strategy development, communication, employee empowerment) is completely omitted from the study results showing significant and strong relationship correlations.

It is also important for management to consider that organizational changes take place in an environment that is constantly changing, so it is a kind of compulsion for managers and owners to adapt to the environmental conditions. The peculiarity of the 21st century is the so-called VUCA environment, which is characterized by variability, unpredictability, complexity, and multiple outcomes. I believe that survival in a VUCA environment depends on the scale of change. To examine this, I compared the degree of change with questions about the VUCA environment within the framework of the Kruskal-Wallis test, where the significance level was 0.05. With my results, I was only able to partially justify this statement.

In connection with the VUCA environment, it can be established that the manager or owner perceives these factors less depending on the extent of the changes. Although the Kruskal-Wallis test yielded different results, it showed that there is a correlation between the position and the perception of the VUCA environment in all areas other than unpredictability, which was also supported by the examination of the correlations between the VUCA environment and the degree of change. In the cross-tabulation analysis, I got a more nuanced picture. Managers' or owners' perception of complexity and variation in outcomes does not depend on the degree of change they implement in the organization. On the contrary, in all cases extremely strong significance was shown in the Kruskal-Wallis test, as well as in the cross-tabulation analysis in the perception of variability, which clearly shows that the changes can be considered permanent in the examined sample.

In recent articles and studies, the AVICA-type manager is also mentioned in connection with the VUCA environment. AVICA manager characteristics: agile, values-driven leader, inspiring, cooperative, appreciative. The importance of these characteristics, based on the frequency of mentions, stands out based on the answers received. This also presents the

importance of leadership in the changing environment, where organizations are constantly forced to adapt. The standard deviation values can be said to be high, ranging from 1.3 to 1.5. And the results of the correlation studies allow us to conclude that these leadership characteristics and the assessment of their role in change depend to the greatest extent on the position, where all factors showed a significant correlation, based on the examined sample. In addition, age group and organizational size only partially influence the perception of the above leadership characteristics in the success of the change.

The perception of the VUCA environment shows a significant correlation with the degree of change: the more far-reaching the change, the more environmental variability is perceived and the more uncertain the achievement of the desired future state. However, the unpredictable environment, the complexity, does not depend on the degree of change. The assessment of AVICA-type leadership characteristics and their role in change is mostly a function of position. Employees in higher positions attach less importance to the characteristics of the AVICA-type leader.

I summarize my findings regarding the proof of my hypotheses based on the test results in *Table 3*.

Table 3: **The summary of the hypotheses**

Q1: Is it possible to interpret the achievement of a stable, future state during organizational change? H1: The freeze, institutionalization of changes and the achievement of the desired future state occur independently of each other.	Proved
Q2: What role does organizational culture play in organizational changes? **H2:** In addition to organizational culture that supports change, successful organizational changes also have an immediate impact on organizational culture.	Partially proved
Q3: How can a successful change be linked to the manager? **H3:** The key factors of a successful change can primarily be linked to the manager's personality.	Proved
Q4: How does the focus of individual tasks shift in a dynamic organizational environment? **H4:** In the stages of the change, a significant correlation can be shown with changes in the importance of certain management tasks.	Partially proved
Q5: Among the key factors of successful change at each level of the organization, can the changing, complex environment and the need for flexible change management be included in literature?	Not proved

H5a): The perception of the VUCA environment and its importance can be demonstrated regardless of the demographic or organizational characteristics of the employees. H5b): Regardless of the demographic or organizational characteristics of the employees, the importance of the agile management criteria can be demonstrated as a condition for the implementation of successful change.	Not proved

Source: own edition (2024)

Based on my results, I made the following conclusions:

During a successful change, freeze and the desired future state differ in time, putting the change into daily practice does not always mean the re-stabilization of the organization (Q1 – H1).

During organizational changes, organizational culture plays a secondary role. However, the impact of a successful change on organizational culture is only partially demonstrable and is mostly characterized by long-term formation (Q2 – H2).

The key factors of successful organizational change can primarily be linked to the manager's personality, such as flexibility, the ability to build trust, support and consistency (Q3 – H3).

The nature and extent of the organizational change are decisive in management tasks, but their importance decreases as the process progresses. In the initial and final stages of the change, the management tasks can be separated, the nature of the change is decisive during the concrete measures (Q4 - H4).

In management positions, the degree of change does not affect the perception of the VUCA environment, but it is a general phenomenon in other employee areas (Q5 – H5a).

The presence of agile management criteria can be demonstrated during the changes, but its importance depends on the size of the organization, the position in the organizational hierarchy, and the age of the employee (Q5 - H5b).

4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Management tasks play a decisive role in the implementation of organizational changes. The impact of organizational culture can be seen to a small extent, its role is secondary – its change is a slow, long-lasting process, and can be evaluated as a consequence of organizational changes.
2. I proved that during organizational changes, successful change is not equivalent to achieving the desired future state and institutionalizing the transformations.
3. Based on my results, it is evident that the importance of management tasks is appreciated in the initial stage of the change, their role decreases in the process of change.
4. The importance of management tasks depends demonstrably on the purpose of organizational measures and the extent and direction of the change.

Based on my results, I supplemented the force field analysis based on Lewin's three-phase model with related factors and interpreted it in a new way *(Figure 4).*

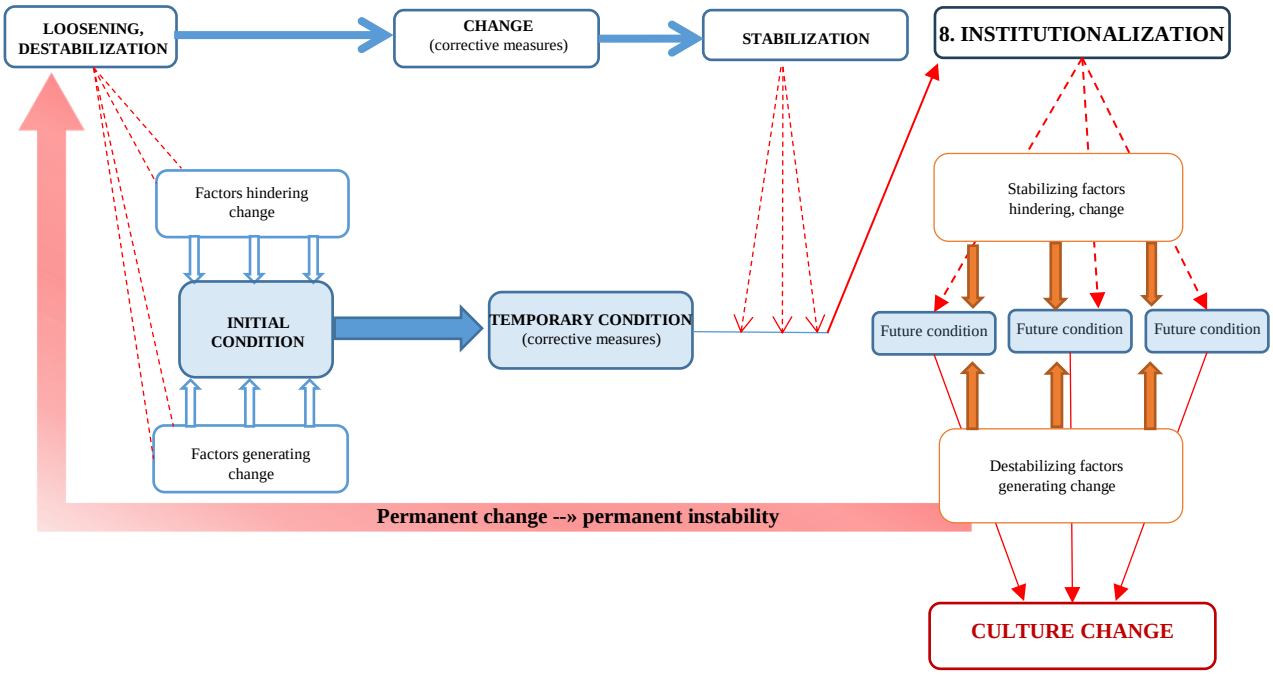

Figure 4: Interpretation of theoretical models based on research results

Source: own edition (2024)

Based on my results, the desired future state cannot be clearly determined, which means several possible outcomes during the organizational change. Given that factors that generate and hinder change affect the desired states, the organization needs to adapt

constantly. Freeze of the changes and their institutionalization appear at different times. This continuous adaptation forces the organizational culture to adapt continuously. Permanent change appears as another new element in the model. As a result, permanent instability becomes a general phenomenon in the life of organizations.

5. PRACTICAL USEFULNESS OF THE RESULTS

The research area of my doctoral dissertation covers a topic that is a constant challenge for each organization, regardless of size and scope of activity. Recognizing the need for change and reacting to it at the right time and in the right way is a key factor for long-term survival. My results can be well-implemented in practice during permanent changes to implement the changes successfully. The importance of management tasks is appreciated in the initial phase of the change, after which their role decreases more and more:

- Planning and awareness before intervention, as well as setting milestones, increase the success of the change to a great extent.
- Organization and decision make a significant contribution to the stabilization of the changes.
- Communication is a management task related to the desire for institutionalization.

During organizational changes, stabilization measures are different. However, the implementation of the measures does not necessarily mean the achievement of the desired future state. During the re-stabilization, the environmental factors affect the functioning of the organization continuously, and therefore can destabilize it again. Organizations thus exist in a constant state of instability. Therefore, it is worth defining the milestones in such a way that they can be shaped flexibly.

During the management of the changes, deficiencies are found in the planning, vision, and strategy development, and in the designation of short-term goals. Due to the transformation of management tasks during changes, it is worth evaluating the measures planned in the change according to the following factors: nature and extent of change, management tasks showing strong and weak correlation with them. Based on these factors, the manager can prepare for the expected challenges: he or she can manage the entire change process with consciously planned steps for quick and successful implementation.

During organizational changes, proactive participation, democratic flexibility, the ability to intervene flexibly, and empathic support can be defined as novel characteristics of the manager.

6. PUBLICATIONS IN THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Candidate: Zsuzsa Gál
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MTMT ID: 10059905

List of publications related to the dissertation

Articles, studies (8)

1. **Gál, Z.**: A szervezeti kultúra lehetséges értelmezései.
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Conference presentations (2)

9. **Gál, Z.**: Management of change and the context analysis of the leader's personality.
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11. **Gál, Z.**, Bauerné Gáthy, A.: A vállalkozások felelőssége a fenntarthatóságban.
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