

## THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODELS FROM 1950 TO 2020

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**Abstract.** *In the modern world economy, the survival of the organization increasingly depends on the ability of management to understand and manage change. The organization is constantly on the move and nothing should be considered static. Many diverse factors affect change, and few are under the control of the organization. The task of management is to understand the nature of changes, accept them, and direct them. However, there is no generally accepted model in the field of organizational change management. Many researchers and practitioners have failed to reach a consensus on which model is more effective for organizational change to be successful. This paper aims to identify the most influential organizational change models from 1950 to 2020. In order to identify them an analysis of 16 leading journals was carried out. The first 10 journals are listed on the Financial Times 50 list as the most influential in business and management and were selected for the analysis based on their relevance and scope (organizational change management). Other 6 journals were selected for the analysis as they are published by the world's prestigious academic institutions and have a high impact on the field of organizational change. Analysis of the journals in the period from 1950 to 2020 was performed, and 19 models of organizational change management that are relevant for this research were extracted. Afterward, an examination of domestic literature was conducted. There, three additional referent models were identified using the keywords: "model" and "change" within the research of the COBIB.SR database. The identified models of organizational change are then further analyzed and divided into three groups - process models that focus on the actual steps or phases of the change - 14 models, structural models that discuss the factors of change - 5 models; and integrated ones that use a combination of the previous two approaches - 3 models.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly turbulent and faster environment, change has become an imperative, a necessity and the key to success when it comes to increasing business efficiency and survival in the market. Those who do not change lose and disappear. Therefore, if an organization wants to beat the competition, then it must provide and accelerate the process of change, use it as a weapon and be able to manage the creativity of existing staff (Eftimov & Kamenjarska, 2021; Vrclj, Vrclj, & Jagodić Rusić, 2017; Vrclj, Bučalina Matić, & Milanović, 2017).

In order to fully explain the organizational change, three key issues need to be analyzed in more detail: why organizational change happens, what changes during organizational change, and how organizational change occurs. The answer to the first question requires finding out the causes of organizational change, the second - it is necessary to discover the content of organizational change, and the third question - it is necessary to explain the process of organizational change. Namely, causes, content, and process are the three basic components of the model of organizational change. If the causes, content, and course of the process of organizational change are familiar, then organizational change can be fully understood and successfully managed (Čuturić, 2005, p. 102; Janićijević & Babić, 1998, p. 37). Definition of a model in dictionaries mainly includes the following keywords: imitation or what we compare something to. Additional definitions often include terms such as a copy or representation of how something was built or how something looks. Under the model in this research, we mean the presentation of the organization of the company and its structural elements.

According to Burke (1994, p. 55; 2011) theoretical organizational model can be useful because of several reasons. First, it helps to categorize the information we have - when we look at the company and collect data on activities and behavior in the organization, we have millions of pieces of information at our disposal; for this reason, models are used to select and categorize information and reduce them to a framework that we can manage (for instance: 12 components of a company, instead of thousands). Second, the organizational model serves to a better understanding of organizational processes and elements - may reveal that serious organizational problems exist only in, e.g. four categories, and let us know in which parts of the organization we should operate. Third, the model helps to interpret the data we have about the organization itself (if, among others, there are two organizational components in the model - structure, and strategy and if it is known with certainty that they are correlated, we will be aware that changes in structure will affect strategy and vice versa). Fourth, the model simplifies the language and communication in the company - instead of saying: predisposition to behave in a certain way, we will say (organizational) culture. Fifth, the model directs actions during organizational changes - serves as a map for the implementation of change strategy (highlights priorities or consequences - what comes next), etc.

Although the organizational model can be very useful for explaining how a company operates or its components, at least two limitations should be kept in mind. Firstly, the model is good to the extent that all factors and relationships between them are well identified. Secondly, if companies are observed only through theoretical organizational

models, there is a high chance that some important aspects of organizational functioning will be overlooked (Burke, 2011).

There are many organizational models in modern theory, and some of the most famous authors of these models are Mintzberg, McKinsey, Morgan, Kübler-Ross, Hussein, Backhard & Harris, Bullock & Batten, Kotter, Lewin, Wilson, Lawrence & Lorsch, Khandwall, Inkson, Poras & Robertson, Friedlander & Brown, Denning, Greiner, Burke & Litwin, and others. Many of them are based on Leavitt's model if they are structurally typological, or on Lewin's model if they are procedural in nature.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This research began with a review of foreign models of organizational change that were published/cited between 1950 and 2020 in at least two of the 16 selected journals. Journals were selected in two ways: first, those listed on the Financial Times 50 (FT50) list from 2016<sup>2</sup> were analyzed as the most influential in business and management. The list includes 50 journals. Based on the relevance and scope of the journal (organizational change management), 40 journals were eliminated, leaving only 10. They are given in the following table (Table 1).

**Table 1** Selected journals from the FT50 (2016) list of the most influential in business and management

Position of the journal on the FT50 list, its name, and the publisher
1. 1. Academy of Management Journal (Academy of Management)
2. 2. Academy of Management Review (Academy of Management)
3. 9. Harvard Business Review (Harvard Business School Publishing)
4. 24. Journal of Management (SAGE)
5. 26. Journal of Management Studies (Wiley)
6. 32. Management Science (Informs)
7. 37. Organization Science (Informs)
8. 38. Organization Studies (SAGE)
9. 47. Sloan Management Review (MIT)
10. 49. Strategic Management Journal (Wiley)

*Source:* Authors' processing according to the FT50 journal list (2016)

On the other hand, influential journals in the field of organizational change, published by the world's leading academic institutions with high impact factors in the field of organizational change are given in the following table (Table 2). In the second phase of the selection of journals, they are included in the analysis. The selection of journals to be analyzed reached number 16.

In the next phase of the research, in order for the model of organizational change to be included in the analysis, it had to be published/cited in at least two journals out of 16 selected. In this way, a total of 19 different models of organizational change were identified. The data are shown in the following table (Table 3). As can be seen, Kotter's 1995 model is the most cited, and the 1980's 7S model is cited the least.

<sup>2</sup> The list is being published every four years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the list was not released in 2020.

**Table 2** Influential journals in the field of organizational change

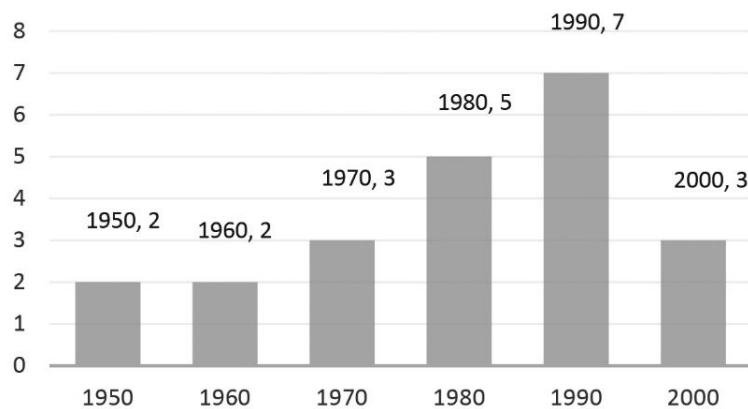
Journal name and the publisher
1. Academy of Management Perspectives (AMP)
2. California Management Review (UC Berkeley)
3. Journal of Change Management (Taylor and Francis Group)
4. Journal of Organizational Change Management (Emerald)
5. Journal of Organization Behavior (John Wiley and Sons)
6. Leadership & Organization Development Journal (Emerald)

*Source:* Authors' research

In the last phase of the research on the identification of organizational change models, an analysis of domestic literature was performed by searching the COBIB.SR database<sup>3</sup>. There, three additional reference models were identified using the keywords: "model" and "change" – Janićijević-Babić (1998), Janićijević (2004) and Cvijanović (2004).

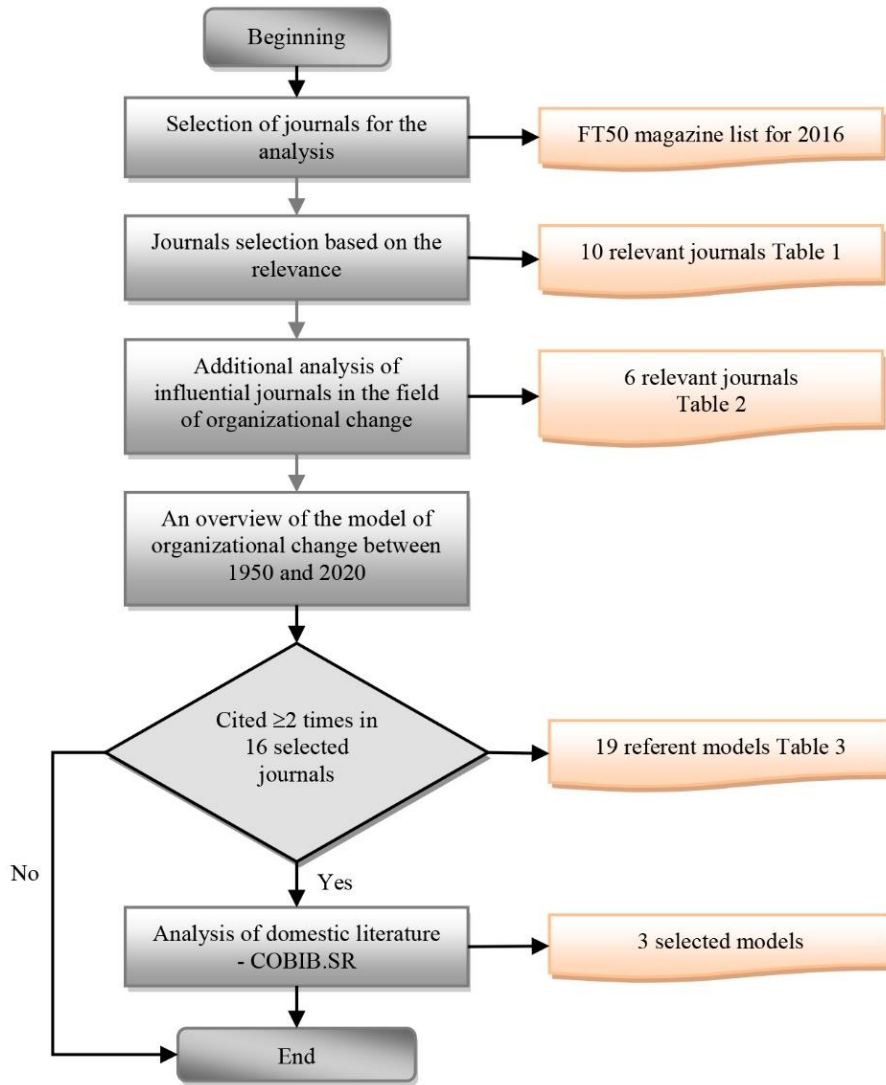
The process of identifying the most influential models of organizational change is best explained in the following figure (Fig 1).

The time distribution of the origin of 22 selected models (19 foreign models and three domestic models), which covers the period from 1950 to 2020, is shown in the following graph (Graph 1).

**Fig 2** Time distribution of the occurrence of selected models of organizational change included in the analysis

*Source:* Authors' research

<sup>3</sup> The mutual electronic catalog COBIB.SR was formed from the local electronic catalogs of the National Library of Serbia, the Library of the Matica Srpska, the University Library "Svetozar Markovic" in Belgrade and the Yugoslav Bibliographic Information Institute.



**Fig. 1** Methodology of selecting the reference models of organizational change for analysis  
 Source: Authors' processing

**Table 3** Comparative analysis of selected journals and appearance of organizational change models

Name of the journal and impact factor for 2021	Lewin (1951)	Lippitt et al. (1958)	Leavitt (1965)	Denning (1968)	Bullcock & Batten (1973)	Friedlander & Brown (1974)	Six box model (1976)	Bridges (1980)	Huse (1980)	7S (1980)	Nadler & Tushman (1980)	Beckhard & Harris (1987)	Judson (1991)	Burke & Litwin (1992)	Kanter et al. (1992)	Kotter (1995)	Galpin (1996)	Armenakis et al. (1999)	Luecke (2003)
1. Academy of Management Journal (IF 10,194)													✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2. Academy of Management Perspectives (IF 7,846)											✓					✓			
3. Academy of Management Review (IF 12,638)	✓	✓									✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
4. California Management Review (IF 8,836)			✓	✓					✓		✓								✓
5. Harvard Business Review (IF 1,666)		✓	✓	✓					✓		✓		✓						
6. Journal of Management Studies (IF 7,388)	✓		✓	✓	✓										✓				
7. Management Science (IF 4,883)			✓					✓											
8. Organization Science (IF 5,000)																✓			
9. Organization Studies (IF 6,306)		✓	✓	✓			✓												
10. Sloan Management Review (IF 1,803)																✓			
11. Strategic Management Journal (IF 8,641)	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓	✓			
12. Journal of Management (IF 11,790)													✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
13. Journal of Change Management (IF -)	✓														✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14. Journal of Organizational Change Management (IF 2,293)	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15. Journal of Organization Behavior (IF 8,174)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16. Leadership & Organization Development Journal (IF 3,242)	✓	✓		✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Overall citation in the journals</b>	7	6	7	7	3	3	5	6	3	2	8	3	6	5	7	14	6	4	3

Source: Authors' research

### 3. CLASSIFICATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODELS

The identified models of organizational change that will be further analyzed are divided into three groups. The first group consists of process models that focus on the actual steps or phases (determinant "how") of the process of organizational change - 14 models. On the other hand, structural models discuss the factors of change in the organization (real factors, related to the determinant "what") - 5 models; integrated ones help analyze and understand change using a combination of the previous two approaches - 3 models.

#### 3.1. Process models of organizational change

The process of change has always attracted the attention of researchers who sought to answer the question: what is the course of organizational change, what the stages in the process are, and what should be done to ensure that the process runs smoothly. There are numerous models of the flow of organizational change processes that differ, both in scope (the content of change) and in the nature of the changes themselves. Thus, some flow patterns include only partial changes, while others involve radical and comprehensive changes. In doing so, a distinction is made between descriptive and prescriptive models of organizational change. Descriptive models are oriented towards explaining the course of organizational change, as it really is, while prescriptive models try to prescribe what an effective process of organizational change should look like (Janićijević & Babić, 1998, p. 38).

Process models of change are viewed in an applicative, practically oriented way, i.e. they focus on the question of "how" - the actual steps to be taken during the changes, their sequence, and the measures that follow them. The following representations of the models (Table 4) follow the logic from simple to more complex and were selected using the previously explained methodology.

Many theorists have explained their understanding of organizational change through the concept of transition. According to Burke (2011), these models illustrate the complexity of major organizational changes. Also, transition models make it easier to realize the importance of understanding the multilevel organizational changes that can happen at the same time. Three transitional models are presented in Table 4 – Lewin's Change Management Model, Beckhard & Harris Change Process Model, and Bridges Transition Model.

Additional process models (Seven-stage Model of Change by Edgar Huse, 7 Stage Model of Change by Ronald Lippitt, Bullock and Batten's Planned Change Model, Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, and others) are also classified and presented in more detail in Table 4.

#### 3.2. Structural models of organizational change

Another general issue of organizational change relates to its content: what changes in the organizational change. From the review of concepts and programs of organizational change, it can be seen that the differences between them arose, among other things, because they had different content of organizational change. Although different elements appear in different models of organization and organizational change, those that are unavoidable in almost all concepts can be singled out.

The following Table 5 is an overview of different models of organization that can serve as the components lists of the organization that are most often included in models of organizational change as their object (Janićijević & Babić, 1998).

**Table 4** Process models of organizational change: classification

Model name	Reference
<i>Transitional models</i>	
Lewin's Change Management Model (1951)	(Burke, 2011; Cawsey & Deszca, 2007; Ceranić, 2003; Cone & Unni, 2020; Hussain et al., 2018; Janićijević, 1993; Jaško, 2000; Mašić, 2012; Špiler, 2012; Stojković, 2006; Zakić, 2007)
Beckhard & Harris Change Process Model (1987)	(Čudanov, Tornjanski, & Jaško, 2019; Young, 2009; Zakić, 2007)
Bridges Transition Model (1980)	(Burke, 2011; Hemmeter, Donovan, Cobb, & Asbury, 2015; Miller, 2017)
<i>The Seven-stage Model of Change</i> by Edgar Huse (1980)	(Burnes, 1996; National Organisation Development and Design Directorate, 2006)
<i>7 Stage Model of Change</i> by Ronald Lippitt (1958)	(Barrow, Annamaraju, & Toney-Butler, 2021; Kritsonis, 2004)
<i>Bullock and Batten's Planned Change Model</i> (1973)	(Bamford, 2006; Cameron & Green, 2012; Karasvirta & Teerikangas, 2022; Kennedy, Lewa, Maingi, & Mutuku, 2020; Rosenbaum, More, & Steane, 2018; Ullah, 2021)
<i>Kotter's 8-Step Change Model</i> (1995)	(Čuturić, 2005; Henry et al., 2017; Janićijević, 2002, 2004; Kotter, 1995, 1998; Kotter & Ratgeber, 2007; Passenheim, 2010; Stojanović-Aleksić, 2007; Stojković, 2006; Stouten, Rousseau, & Cremer, 2018; Toor et al., 2022)
<i>Judson 5-step Change Model</i> (1991)	(Cheung, 2010; Stouten et al., 2018)
<i>Kanter et al. - The Challenge of Organizational Change</i> (1992)	(Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992; Stouten et al., 2018)
<i>Galpin's Change Wheel</i> (1996)	(Cheung, 2010; Galpin, 1996; Green-Wilson, 2011)
<i>Readiness for Organizational Change</i> by Achilles Armenakis, Hubert Feild, and Stanley Harris (1999)	(Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 2000)
<i>Luecke's Model of Teamwork and Change</i> (2003)	(Luecke, 2003)
<i>Janićijević-Babić Organizational Change Process Model</i> (1998)	(Čuturić, 2005; Janićijević & Babić, 1998)
<i>Janićijević's Model of Organizational Change Management</i> (2004)	(Janićijević, 2004; Petković, Janićijević, & Bogičević-Milikić, 2012)

Source: Authors' research

**Table 5** Structural models of organizational change: classification

Model name	Reference
<i>Leavitt Diamond Model</i> (1965)	(Blumberg, Cater-Steel, Rajaeian, & Soar, 2019; Burke, 1994; Coffie, Boaten, & Asombala, 2018; Čuturić, 2005; Janićijević & Babić, 1998)
<i>McKinsey 7-S Model</i> (1980)	(Čudanov, Dulanović, & Jevtić, 2005; Javied, Deutsch, & Franke, 2019; Manktelow & Carlson, 2014, 2014; Passenheim, 2010; Recklies, 2014, 2014; Waterman Jr, Peters, & Phillips, 1980)
<i>Weisbord's Six-Box Model</i> (1976)	(Burke, 1994; Burke & Litwin, 1992; Javera, Muhammad, & Waseef, 2018; Kontić, 2012; Stahl, 1997; Weisbord, 1976)
<i>Burke &amp; Litwin Model of Organisational Change</i> (1992)	(Burke, 1994; Burke & Litwin, 1992; Coruzzi, 2020; Egitim, 2022; Filej, Skela-Savić, Vicic, & Hudorovic, 2009; Olivier, 2018)
<i>Friedlander &amp; Brown Model</i> (1974)	(Cvijanović, 1992; Friedlander & Brown, 1974; Janićijević, 1993; Jaško, 2000; Stojković, 2006)

Source: Authors' research



Presented structural models of organizational change are based on the theory of open systems, i.e. they provide an answer to the question of what should be influenced during change and to some extent how to implement a given organizational change.

### 3.3. Integrated models of organizational change

Integrated models of organizational change are a combination of structural and process models and were created based on theory and practice. Each of the authors of the following models (Table 6) worked for some time as an organizational consultant, but they pursued an academic career also.

**Table 6** Integrated models of organizational change: classification

Model name	Reference
<i>Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model</i> (1980)	(Burke, 1994; Nadler & Tushman, 1980; Sabir, 2018; Tushman & Anderson, 1997; Walton & Nadler, 1994; Zakić, 2007)
<i>Denning's Model</i> (1968)	(Cvijanović, 1992; Denning, 1968)
<i>Cvijanović's Model</i> (2004)	(Cvijanović, 2004)

Source: Authors' research

Compared to the number of process models (14 are discussed in the paper) and structural models (the analysis included five of them), the theory of organizational change lacks more integrated models (only three have been identified and explained). This is because changes in previous decades have been viewed through the prism of processes or content, however, the modern age requires an integrated approach.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Theories of organizational change have mainly descriptive functions. They describe organizational changes and reveal their causes, course, and consequences. Theories and perspectives of organizational change are of academic character and their basic mission is to expand knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon that is in their focus.

Based on theories of organizational change, individuals can understand change, but they are not able to lead it. Theories and perspectives of organizational change are, for the most part, not practical enough. They are descriptive and seek to describe changes, and do not contain recommendations on how to report them.

On the other hand, models of organizational change are of a practical nature. Their mission is more prescriptive rather than descriptive, they seek to prescribe rather than describe the organizational change. The models contain practical knowledge in the form of recommendations on what needs to be done for the changes to take place effectively.

Process models of organizational change, initially with Lewin's since the middle of the previous century, are mostly sequential - steps, stages, phases - and are very useful for planning and managing the change process. Sequential planning in a linear and causal sense can be very useful: if we do A, B will follow; if Y occurs, it is probably due to X. Thus, they help us understand the meaning and logic of complex and seemingly unrelated organizational behaviors. However, on the other hand, if this approach is taken literally, unplanned outcomes may follow. It is necessary to keep in mind that when organizational changes really happen,

they are always more complex, ambiguous, and more complicated than the models show. For this reason, the process of implementing organizational change is nonlinear and often unpredictable.

As for structural models of organizational change, they can be helpful when it is necessary to conduct a quick and simple diagnosis in the company, but when a deeper and more complicated diagnosis of organizational condition and change is needed, only identified organizational elements are simply not enough.

The first integrated model of organizational change, a pragmatic congruence model, such as the Burke & Litwin model, presents the organization as an open (input, transformation, output), dynamic and social system whose purpose of existence will be more effectively achieved if there is a match between organizational factors. When applying the model, special attention should be paid to the relationship between strategy and environment, more precisely, their coherence, as well as the concordance of organizational components (tasks, employees, formal structures, and informal structures and processes). The model serves as a great reminder to leaders that discord and chaos in one part of the company will be reflected in other parts of the organization because one of the most obvious reasons for the failure of organizational change is focusing on one part of the company and neglecting others. Denning's model mainly classifies different schools of organizational theory and does not provide ways to identify problems, as well as strategies for overcoming them during change. Cvijanović's model perfectly articulates the impact of the environment on the company (internal and external), as well as the impact on employees. However, it does not answer the question of what is the content of the changes themselves, what are the vital organizational elements of the company, and how they are connected (such as the 7S model, the Six box model, and the Burke & Litwin model).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper is achieved since 22 of the most influential organizational change models from 1950 to 2020 were identified. Furthermore, these models are classified into three groups and further discussed. Special focus in the paper is given to answering the question of why theoretical organizational change models are useful and what their limitations are.

The outcomes of the study have important implications for the managers who lead the change since the models are based on certain theories and concepts of organizational change and translate them into good practice. Also, in addition to theoretical knowledge in some models, there is a lot of working experience from their authors infused into them. These are usually experienced consultants who have participated in the real changes of a large number of companies. The best models of change combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience, they include activities that managers or agents of change need to undertake in order to successfully implement change. These activities are usually grouped by phases, steps, orders, wedges, strategies, etc.

Organizational change models identified in this study could be valuable in improving the actions and decisions required for the successful execution of organizational change projects. Furthermore, the findings may enable managers to concentrate their efforts and resources on the critical issues that must be addressed in order for organizational change management to be successful. As a result, managers can improve the performance of organizational change initiatives by applying the findings of the study to design better strategies for improving

change management maturity inside their businesses. Finally, the findings of this study could be used to construct a new organizational change management model.

There are certain limitations to this study that should be addressed in future research. Despite conducting a thorough literature review with an emphasis on the most influential organizational change models published in reference journals, certain practical success elements may have been ignored. Future studies could identify additional important models that could lead to change success using other available research dealing with organizational change and make theoretical analysis more complete. These findings could be compared to the models and the findings of this study.

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## **NAJUTICAJNIJI MODELI UPRAVLJANJA ORGANIZACIONIM PROMENAMA OD 1950. DO 2020. GODINE**

*U savremenoj svetskoj ekonomiji, opstanak organizacije sve više zavisi od sposobnosti menadžmenta da razume i upravlja promenama. Organizacija je stalno u pokretu i ništa ne treba smatrati statičnim. Mnogi različiti faktori utiču na promene, a malo njih je pod kontrolom organizacije. Zadatak menadžmenta je da razume prirodu promena, prihvati ih i usmerava. Međutim, ne postoji opšteprihvaćen model u oblasti upravljanja organizacionim promenama. Mnogi istraživači i praktičari nisu uspeali da postignu konsenzus o tome koji model je efikasniji da bi organizaciona promena bila uspešna. Ovaj rad ima za cilj da identifikuje najuticajnije modele organizacionih promena od 1950. do 2020. godine. U cilju njihovog identifikovanja izvršena je analiza 16 vodećih časopisa. Prvih 10 časopisa navedeno je na listi Financial Times 50 kao najuticajni u poslovanju i menadžmentu i odabrani su za analizu na osnovu njihove relevantnosti i užeg naučnog područja (upravljanje organizacionim promenama). Ostalih 6 časopisa odabrano je za analizu, jer ih izdaju prestižne svetske akademske institucije i imaju veliki uticaj na oblast organizacionih promena. Urađena je analiza časopisa u periodu od 1950. do 2020. godine i izdvojeno je 19 modela upravljanja organizacionim promenama koji su relevantni za ovo istraživanje. Potom je izvršen pregled domaće literature. Tu su identifikovana tri dodatna referentna modela pomoću ključnih reči: „model“ i „promena“ u okviru pretraživanja baze podataka COBIB.SR. Identifikovani modeli organizacionih promena su zatim dalje analizirani i podeljeni u tri grupe – procesni modeli koji se fokusiraju na stvarne korake ili faze promene – 14 modela, strukturni modeli koji razmatraju faktore promene – 5 modela; i integrisani modeli koji koriste kombinaciju prethodna dva pristupa – 3 modela.*

*Ključne reči: Organizacija, Najuticajniji modeli upravljanja promenama u organizaciji, Procesni modeli promena, Strukturni modeli promena, Integrisani modeli promena*