



Management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society

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Management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society

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Conference Proceedings

Short Papers

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To the reader,

this volume contains the long papers of the Sinergie-SIMA 2024 Management Conference, hosted by the University of Parma on June 13th and 14th 2024.

Theory and practice in the field of management have been challenged by the emergence of sustainability and well-being as major global policy priorities. Both sustainability and well-being are complex, value-laden, and strongly interconnected; however, they tend to exist in separate realms.

Sustainability literature has recorded an evolution in the way the concept of sustainable development is understood, leading to the articulation of sustainable development as human "wellbeing" and "flourishing", rather than "needs". Nevertheless, some scholars have pointed out a lack of clarity in the conceptualization, which causes some ambiguity in terms of definition (Ronen & Kerret, 2020). Kjell (2011) observed that human needs and well-being are poorly understood, characterized, and developed by sustainability research. Along the same vein, Helne & Hirvilammi (2015) observed that the overarching goal of sustainable development (i.e., well-being) has often been narrowly interpreted, mainly in economic terms, while connections between the natural environment and human flourishing have been overlooked. More recently, O'Mahony (2022) remarked that the literature conceptualizing human well-being continues to exist largely outside sustainable development. Hence, placing well-being more clearly within the sustainability framework could be highly beneficial to sustainability.

Concurrently, the literature on well-being is almost entirely dissociated from the contributions of nature or the relationships with ecological and planetary systems (Roberts et al., 2015), and the importance of social dimensions is an emergent conclusion. Therefore, the rationale of contextual systems inherent to sustainability research (incorporating views of times, society, and biosphere) could significantly enrich well-being research, fostering a more holistic perspective on well-being and an increased awareness of the limits of individual well-being pursuits (Kjell, 2011).

In brief, though well-being has major implications for sustainable development and vice versa, the body of literature that effectively integrates sustainability and well-being remains in an embryonic stage.

The above considerations aim to act as catalysts for an interdisciplinary debate within the field of management. Enriching the conception of flourishing well-being in sustainability and the contribution of nature to well-being can produce impactful scientific research, as O'Mahony (2022) points out. Equally important is the analysis of the links between sustainability and well-being, encompassing synergies and trade-offs at the organizational level, in value chains, and in interactions with stakeholders across various industries.

The Sinergie-SIMA 2024 Management Conference welcomed contributions based on different theories, methodological approaches, and units of analysis with the potential to empower a transformation for flourishing individuals, society, and the natural world alike. More precisely, the Conference was a great occasion to discuss the research efforts of our research community within tracks related to the:

- Conference theme (Management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society),
- SIMA thematic groups (Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology Management, Intelligenza manageriale nel management, International Business, Marketing, Purpose-driven Businesses, Retailing & Service Management, Small & Family Business, Strategic Communication, Strategy & Governance, Supply Chain Management, Logistics & Operations, Sustainability, and Tourism & Culture Management),
- special tracks (Examining the social and environmental relevance of sustainable digital business models: Impact on business practices and consumers, Growing resilient Italian SMEs, and Perspectives on grand challenges in international business and implications for companies),
- Management Case Studies.

The Conference call for papers gave the opportunity to submit either short and long papers. Overall, the editorial staff received 277 submissions of which 215 short papers and 62 long papers.

For the *short and long papers*, the evaluation followed the peer review process, with a double-blind review performed by, respectively, one or two referees - university lecturers and experts about the topic - selected among SIMA and the community of Sinergie members.

In detail, the referees applied the following criteria to evaluate the submissions:

- clarity of the research aims,
- accuracy of the methodological approach,
- contribution in terms of originality/innovativeness,
- theoretical and practical contribution,
- clarity of communication,
- significance of the bibliographical basis.

The *peer review* process resulted in full acceptance or rejection of the submissions. In the case of disagreement among reviewers' evaluations, the decision was taken by the Chairs of the SIMA thematic groups or conference track. Each work was then sent back to the Authors together with the referees' reports. The suggestions received by the referees were used by the Authors during the presentation of their research works at the Conference.

The evaluation process ended with the acceptance of 211 short papers and 58 long papers. This volume proposes the papers whose Authors have authorized their publication.

All the long papers published in this volume were presented and discussed during the Conference and published online on the web portal of Sinergie-SIMA Management Conference (https://www.sijmsima.it/).

While thanking all the Authors, Chairs, and participants, we hope that this volume will contribute to advance knowledge about the management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society.

The Conference Chairs

Guido Cristini, Beatrice Luceri, Arabella Mocciaro Li Destri, and Marta Ugolini

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Dynamics of Change: A Comparative Analysis of Commitment in Family vs. Non-Family Businesses

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Abstract

The challenge of insufficient employee commitment to organizational change significantly impedes management's ability to successfully implement new strategies, a hurdle notably pronounced in family businesses due to a strong adherence to tradition. This study investigates the impact of psychological ownership and effective internal communication-or communication satisfaction-on bolstering commitment to change. This research will suggest propositions to test subsequently with statistical analysis after the collection and analysis of 501 employees' interviews across Italian family and non-family businesses. Our propositions are built on the roots of psychological ownership, and commitment to change. The study also explains how the dynamics between communication, psychological ownership, and commitment vary between family and non-family businesses. This will underscore the critical role of fostering psychological ownership and communication satisfaction in enhancing employee commitment to organizational change initiatives.

Keywords: Change management, Commitment to change, Communication, Psychological Ownership, family and non-family business

Framing of the research. In organizational studies, Moran and Brightman (2001) emphasize the importance of change management for businesses to adapt and thrive amid external pressures. Change management involves rejuvenating an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to meet stakeholder needs, necessitating updates to procedures, job content, and skills. This adaptability leads to organizational ambidexterity, as described by Tushman and O'Reilly (1996), which is crucial for maintaining stability while promoting innovation. It entails balancing exploitation (optimizing current operations) and exploration (seeking new ideas), enabling companies to manage ongoing operations efficiently while innovating for future success.

Balancing exploitation, crucial for current success, and exploration, necessary for future sustainability, presents a significant dilemma in change management (Schwarz et al., 2021). This balance is particularly relevant in family enterprises, which represent a significant segment of the global business landscape and are defined by familial ownership, management, and a vision for intergenerational transfer. Despite perceptions of their aversion to change compared to non-family firms (Dessì et al., 2023), family businesses encounter unique challenges, especially during succession, requiring a reevaluation of roles and structures (Dettori and Floris, 2023). Succession is a delicate phase where logical and emotional factors intertwine, significantly impacting business continuity. The challenge of instigating change is underscored by high attrition rates across generations, with only 30% of businesses surviving into the second generation and 10% into the third. Research indicates an innovation gap in family businesses due to their focus on long-term goals and preservation of familial legacy (Casillas & Moreno, 2010; Jell et al., 2015), a trend towards conservatism (Kraiczy et al., 2015; Naldi et al., 2007; Zahra, 2005), and lower adaptability to change (Lubatkin et al., 2007). Failure to implement change can lead to financial losses, decreased market share, and increased costs from cultural disintegration and turnover (Kromah et al., 2024).

There is a consensus in the literature that employee commitment to change is crucial for supporting management innovation; the challenge lies in deciphering the evolution of this commitment over time. This subject's centrality has propelled researchers to investigate the critical factors at both individual (Cunningham, 2006; Herscovitch & Meyer,

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2002; Judge et al., 1999; Wanberg & Banas, 2000) and organizational levels (Cunningham et al., 2002) that significantly influence employee behavior towards supporting management innovation.

In this study, we argue that Psychological Ownership (PO) serves as a crucial perspective for understanding how possessive feelings towards objects bolster individuals' commitment to change. Specifically, this research delves into the effects of PO and transparent internal communication (from now on called CS as "communication satisfaction") on commitment to change (CT from now on)⁶.

The interplay between CS, PO, and CT remains underexplored despite extensive examination of communication's role in change processes,

Purpose of the paper. CT is vital in organizational transformations, guiding individuals' adaptation. The absence of commitment often leads to the failure of change initiatives. Recognized for promoting supportive behaviors, CT involves coping strategies to handle change-related stress and uncertainty. Such strategies are critical for maintaining psychological well-being and facilitating effective change navigation, highlighting the significance of commitment in managing organizational change impacts. The construct of CT is articulated as a motivational state (a mindset) binding an individual to a particular course of action deemed essential for the fruitful execution and realization of a change initiative (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). This motivational state manifests in three distinct forms (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993): affective commitment (AC from now on), normative commitment (NC from now on), and continuance commitment (CC from now on).

Employees' support for change is influenced by their commitment type, AC, driven by a positive attitude towards change, enhances proactive support and effective coping with stress related to change. In contrast, CC, stemming from a lack of alternatives, can lead to stress and negatively affect the change process. Contextual factors such as organizational tenure, change frequency, previous change experiences, self-efficacy, participation levels, quality of information, and interpersonal relationships significantly impact CT, according to studies by Rafferty & Griffin (2006) and Wanberg & Banas (2000). The relationship between PO and CT introduces a new dimension to understanding organizational change, emphasizing the importance of employees' feelings of ownership over the change process and outcomes (Pierce et al., 2001; 2009; Dawkins et al., 2015).

Employee commitment is pivotal for adapting to and implementing change, with the absence of commitment being a major failure point for change initiatives. This commitment fosters supportive behaviors and coping mechanisms for dealing with the stress of organizational transitions (Cunningham, 2006; Parish et al., 2008). Recent studies suggest that PO, the emotional and proprietary feelings employees have towards their work and organization, contributes significantly to CT, impacting their support for change initiatives. PO functions at individual and collective levels, affecting workplace motivations, attitudes, and behaviors, and is linked to positive organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational identification, and commitment (Dawkins et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2012; Mayhew et al., 2007; Sieger et al., 2011).

Organizational change introduces uncertainty and stress, which can be mitigated by effective communication. Communication satisfaction enhances PO by deepening employees' connection to their roles and the organization, crucial for reducing resistance and fostering inclusivity during change. Based on these insights, the study hypothesizes a positive relationship between PO and CT (proposition 1). CS is positively related to commitment to change CT (Proposition 2a), and CS is positively related to PO (proposition 2b). This framework underscores the critical role of employee commitment types, PO, and CS in navigating organizational change, suggesting that fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring clear, inclusive communication are key to successful change implementation.

Methodology. This study is still in progress, and we will test our propositions through statistical analysis to investigate the dynamics among PO, CS and CT. Furthermore, we will examine how the nature of the company, whether family-owned or non-family, impacts the intensity of these relationships.

The study involved 501 questionnaires. Within the sample, 63.5% (N = 318) were men and 36.5% (N = 183) were women. They belonged both to family (N = 320, 63.9%) and non-family (N = 181; 36.1%) companies. Sociodemographic data on age were collected and expressed as intervals. Based on this, the 53% of the sample consisted of participants with "18 to 30" and "31 to 40" years old (N = 131, 26.2% and N = 134, 36.8% respectively).

Will be analyze data using IBM SPSS Statistics software, version 25. The initial steps will include exploring sociodemographic characteristics and key research variables. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be utilized to identify any statistically significant variances among the research variables, specifically to factors such as the type of company (family-owned vs. non-family) and participant gender. Additionally, we will investigate linear correlations to determine significant associations between the variables.

The data collection process will employ a separated questionnaire. The initial segment will solicit socio-demographic details from participants, while the latter will be devoted to evaluating key research constructs through three distinct scales. Each scale will be subjected to reliability analysis via Cronbach's alpha to affirm their dependability.

⁶ For easier reading, the legend of acronyms used in this paper is given here:

⁻ PO psychological ownership

⁻ CS Communication satisfaction

⁻ CT commitment to change

⁻ AC affective commitment

⁻ NC normative commitment

⁻ CC continuance commitment

- PO: To assess PO, a 10-item scale derived from Avey et al.'s (2009) research will be utilized, categorizing items into five key factors of PO: Territoriality, Self-efficacy, Accountability, Belongingness, and Self-identity.
- CS: This dimension will be measured using a scale adapted from Zwijze-Koning & de Jong (2007) and the CSQ (Downs & Hazen, 1977), comprising 24 items across six sub-dimensions that include aspects like superior-subordinate relationships and interdepartmental communications.
- CT: Employing a scale developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), this construct will be quantified using 18 items divided evenly among three facets: Affective, Continuance, and Normative commitment to change. Responses will be captured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement.

Through this methodological approach, the study aims to rigorously evaluate the interplay between PO, CS, and CT, underpinned by a reliable metric assessment.

Results. Our study is ongoing, and we anticipate the following outcomes based on preliminary analyses:

The ANOVA models are expected to reveal significant differences in the average scores of AC based on gender and the type of company. We predict that female participants will have higher AC scores compared to males, and employees in non-family businesses will show greater AC levels than those in family-owned firms.

Moreover, we believe we can find moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlations between PO and AC and NC. Similarly, moderate and positive associations are expected between CS, AC and NC. CC is not predicted to show significant correlations with any research variables.

A significant positive relationship between PO and CS is probable, suggesting that higher levels of PO are associated with greater CS.

Variations in the impact of CS and PO on AC are estimated by company type. CS may not significantly influence AC in family-owned businesses, but PO is predicted to have a positive impact. We expect an indirect effect of CS on AC through PO, indicating PO's mediation in this relationship. In non-family companies, both CS and PO are likely to significantly affect AC, with a significant indirect effect of CS on AC through PO, suggesting partial mediation by PO. The indirect effects are not expected to differ significantly between family and non-family businesses, indicating a consistent mediation role of PO across company types.

Regarding the influence on NC, both CS and PO are anticipated to have significant impacts in family-owned companies, with an expected indirect effect of CS on NC through PO, indicating partial mediation by PO. While PO is predicted to have a significant impact in non-family businesses, CS's effect might not be significant.

These expectations highlight the nuanced roles of PO and CS in shaping commitment types of AC and NC within different organizational contexts, emphasizing the potential mediation role of PO.

Research limitations. The study's principal constraints are linked to the composition of the firm sample utilized. To enhance the robustness of the proposal, future research could consider diversifying the sample to include both large and small enterprises, assessing the stability of the results across different business sizes or, even, across different countries, which may reveal interesting scenarios. Thus, the study could be extended to incorporate a cultural dimension by distinguishing between various geographical locations, thereby evaluating the cultural influence on the research outcomes. A stimulating avenue for further investigation would involve a deeper analysis of firm categories: focusing solely on family businesses could reveal how the age of the firm and its generational makeup influence the results. In contrast, an examination of non-family firms could explore how leadership styles affect the findings.

Managerial implications. The study's proposal underscores the significant managerial implications of PO in facilitating organizational change. It highlights the necessity for companies to cultivate PO among employees to mitigate resistance and promote acceptance of change. Specifically, the study advocates for an ambidextrous organizational framework that nurtures attributes conducive to individual initiative, cooperation, multitasking, and autonomy, thereby enhancing PO.

This research pinpoints the critical role of managers and employees perceiving change initiatives as personally significant, essentially endorsing the notion of PO towards change. The intricate relationship between PO and organizational attitudes towards change is influenced by several factors, notably the Sense of Control and Knowledge. Employees experience increased control when their roles offer diversity, significance, autonomy, and identity, resonating with Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory. Conversely, bureaucratic structures and centralized information flow can diminish this sense of control and hinder PO.

CS emerges as vital in reducing uncertainties and fostering a sense of control, particularly in family businesses where PO's role is profoundly mediating. CS is essential, enabling a comprehensive understanding of change objectives, processes, expected outcomes, and individual implications, thereby reinforcing PO.

Moreover, it could be interesting to identify which significant dimensions influence PO.

In essence, this study would delineate the importance of PO in shaping positive organizational change attitudes, suggesting that fostering PO through strategic organizational interventions, excellent communication, and inclusive governance can significantly enhance adaptability and manage change resistance. Transitioning towards transformational leadership and facilitating open organizational dialogues are recommended to align employee perspectives with organizational goals effectively.

Originality of the paper. Proposing a departure from existing literature (Cocieru et al., 2019), this study suggests examining the significant influence of PO on employees' attitudes toward change and their motivation for contributing to its success.

This research aims to explore the relationships among CS, PO, and CT within the context of family and non-family businesses in Italy, building on and potentially corroborating findings that highlight PO's critical role in enhancing CT aspects (Liu et al., 2012).

Drawing from the groundwork laid by Avey et al. (2009), this investigation seeks to contribute original insights by testing our propositions with the hypothesis that PO significantly and positively influences CT, especially in terms of AC and NC. This relationship is anticipated to be observable across different organizational forms, including both family-owned and non-family enterprises, with an expected stronger impact on NC. The study aims to be pioneering in showing how an intrinsic sense of ownership not only bolsters the perceived obligation towards change but also acts as a catalyst for organizational transformation.

Expanding on the seminal work of scholars such as Armenakis & Bedeian (1999), Beer & Nohria (2000), and Herscovitch & Meyer (2002), this research proposes to shed new light on the positive effects of CS on CT. It intends to uniquely demonstrate a significant, positive correlation between CS and the dimensions of AC and NC, with subsequent analyses exploring CS's critical role in shaping these types of commitment.

The study plans to highlight the transformative potential of well-communicated change, emphasizing the importance of a clear communication of change processes to employees to alleviate concerns and foster a culture ready for change. It aims to innovatively link effective communication during transitions to outcomes such as increased acceptance of change, reduced anxiety, and enhanced trust in leadership, offering a fresh perspective on change management discussions.

Additionally, this research has the potential to reveal a significant link between CS and PO, suggesting a meaningful interaction between these constructs rather than their independence. It proposes to investigate PO's mediating role in enhancing the relationship between CS and CT, particularly affecting AC and NC. The study will examine how transparent communication about change, coupled with a strong sense of ownership among employees over their work, optimally impacts their commitment to change, suggesting a nuanced interplay between communication, ownership, and commitment in the context of organizational change.

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