

AI adoption and organizational change: insights from international and local perspectives

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Abstract: *This study investigates organizational change within the context of artificial intelligence (AI). It combines a comprehensive review of key theories and international research with an analysis of AI policies implemented by three IT and technology companies operating in Romania. Employing a qualitative content analysis within a multiple case study approach, the research focuses on three primary dimensions: workforce development and adaptation, organizational culture, and ethical and governance principles. The results show that the companies' policies align with global trends, through ethical and responsible use of AI and protective measures for employees. Given the characteristics of the organizations studied, this conclusion should be interpreted with caution. It is important to recognize that global trends may manifest differently across the policies of companies in various industries or of differing sizes. The study emphasizes the need for flexible, customized AI policies that are aligned with organizations' digital maturity, rather than relying on standardized objectives. Furthermore, beyond organizational culture, future research should focus on technological resources and cultural specificities of organizations to evaluate the implementation and management of artificial intelligence.*

Keywords: Organizational Change, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Workforce Development, Ethical Governance, Corporate AI Policies

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Introduction

Technological progress is closely linked to globalization and has become particularly evident through the widespread use of artificial intelligence across various sectors, and it plays an important role in relation to the unprecedented transformations in the organisational landscape that we are witnessing and that question the known order of things.

Today's society is characterized by a high level of diffusion and use of artificial intelligence in most branches of social life. It is found in the field of services (robots from telephone companies or banks), education and training (applications for learning foreign languages, for writing papers, such as ChatGPT, which raise major ethical issues), entertainment and leisure or care. The list does not stop here, and this omnipresence of artificial intelligence generates two main effects of interest on the organizational environment. On the one hand, the automation of certain operations (for example, the robot in telecommunications companies) generates changes in the way organizations operate, structure, and efficiency. Furthermore, these automations create effects at the individual level. Employees must enhance their skills or acquire new ones to adjust to evolving practices and activities, as well as to collaborate effectively with artificial intelligence. In this context, the role of measures, policies and an adapted organizational culture is vital in supporting their adaptation and reducing the negative effects associated with them.

Against this background, the present study aims to provide an in-depth examination of the main theoretical perspectives and studies on organizational change in the context of digital transition and artificial intelligence adoption. The analysis explores the international literature to identify the main trends, the impact on employees and their reaction to change, but also integrates local examples to contextualize the applications and identify possible differences and similarities.

In light of the considerations discussed, this study is designed to address the following research question: *How is organizational change facilitated in the context of artificial intelligence adoption?*

Literature review

Conceptual framework

The unprecedented technological advances, especially through the proliferation of artificial intelligence tools and robots, are generating pressures for organizational change in the business environment, both as an imperative for

market survival and to ensure operational efficiency in the new context. The demand for change can be attributed to the effects of globalization, which exerts a significant influence on the interplay between global processes and local social realities [1]. In this context, global practices (e.g., automation of repetitive tasks) are capable of transforming the local customs of a society, while conversely, individual societies can also shape the perspectives on global phenomena.

Organizational change involves modifying or reconfiguring certain processes, structures, practices, or procedures in order to adapt the organization to a continuously evolving business environment [2]. In the context presented above, an important branch of organizational change is represented by digital transformation, which refers to the changes generated by the adoption of artificial intelligence on the structures and operations of an organization [3]. With technological advances, certain tasks, especially routine or administrative ones, previously performed by employees are taken over and performed by software or artificial intelligence robots [4]. This generates both structural changes and pressures for employees, who are forced to adapt and perform other tasks, sometimes in collaboration with these tools. The implementation of these changes may adversely impact both employees and the overall efficiency of the organization if they are not accompanied by a comprehensive change management plan. It is essential that this plan is aligned with current market trends and tailored to meet the specific needs and characteristics of the organization.

Organizational change theories in the context of technological innovation

Organizational change is a reality encountered in all times and types of organizations as a result of developments in the system of values and practices, but also of technological advances. The way in which individuals react and adapt to these changes has been at the center of numerous sociological theories and studies.

According to the instrumental rationality theory [5], acceptance of change is determined by individuals' subjective perception of the degree to which it optimizes their activity. This approach is also supported by the technology acceptance model (TAM), proposed by Davis [6]. The model explains how users come to accept and use a technology, starting from two main psychological factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness (PU) refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will improve their professional performance. In the context of AI-assisted recruitment, this can be equated with the perception of AI effectiveness – that is, the extent to which recruiters believe that AI optimizes their selection process, reduces the time required, or improves the quality of selected candidates [7]. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) refers to the perception that using the technology will be effortless. This influences not only perceived usefulness, but also attitude towards use – that is, the user's overall reaction (positive or negative) to the technology.

Another important factor in understanding how individuals react to change in the context of AI adoption is organizational inertia [8]. According to this, resistance to change can arise as a result of rigid structures and a conservative organizational culture. Therefore, in the absence of organizational culture flexibility and employee adaptability, the organization will not be able to ensure optimal implementation of AI or mitigate undesirable effects.

Last but not least, regarding the acceptance of change (use of AI), according to the diffusion of innovation theory [9], it is influenced by the perception in terms of relative advantage, compatibility with existing values, complexity, testability, and visibility of benefits. In the persuasion stage, users form expectations related to the future effectiveness of the technology, which affects the decision to implement. Therefore, transparency, communication, collaboration, and highlighting the benefits seem to be useful means for effective workforce adaptation.

Empirical studies on organizational transition to artificial intelligence

Recent studies have investigated the effects of significant variables on the transition to artificial intelligence, as well as its implications. The findings underscore the individual and organizational factors that affect the adoption of AI, while also validating and enhancing established theoretical models.

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that the acceptance of change and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) are significantly influenced by an individual's perception of usefulness, their assessment of ease of use, and the level of trust they place in technology [10,11], thus confirming the premises of both the technology Acceptance Model [6] and the theory of diffusion of innovation [9].

Closely related to ease of use, another important variable in ensuring an efficient transition is literacy in the field of artificial intelligence [12]. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that perceived usefulness does not have a direct influence on technology acceptance, in the absence of the moderating role of AI literacy [13]. Therefore, user knowledge seems to have a greater contribution to an efficient adoption of AI, compared to the perception of efficiency. AI literacy is also associated with reducing technostress, which is characterized by uncertainty about AI tools, technological overload, and burnout. Thus, a wide range of digital skills among

employees allows for more effective management of complex technological challenges and can facilitate an efficient transition to artificial intelligence [14].

Other studies have approached organizational change in the context of AI implementation from a more branched perspective, targeting both structural, organizational, and individual aspects. In a study involving all employees of an organization with a high degree of interest and adoption of AI [15], the negative perception regarding the transition to AI was not considered accidental, but as an effect of the intersection of a cognitive fear (e.g., layoffs, reduced decision-making autonomy) with the lack of transparency, managerial support, and an adapted organizational structure. Also, a study conducted in public organizations suggested that the success of AI implementation depends on a combination of organizational context, technological infrastructure, and employee attitude [16].

In accordance with this approach, a qualitative study involving AI experts from business, organizational development, and research has revealed that successful change management in the sustainable integration of AI necessitates a holistic approach. This approach enhances the traditional people–process–technology model by introducing a fourth dimension: “data readiness.” The successful adoption of AI is contingent not only upon the availability of technology but also on the organization's capacity to effectively train and engage employees, adapt internal processes, and establish a robust information infrastructure. The accumulation of practical experience is instrumental in this endeavor, as it fosters trust, mitigates uncertainty, and strengthens organizational readiness [17]. In light of these insights, it is essential to conceptualize the transition to AI as a cycle of continuous strategic learning rather than a mere technical implementation. This transition is influenced by the dynamic interactions among people, processes, and AI governance systems.

Corporate AI policies in the Romanian IT/Tech sector

International literature on organizational change in the context of AI has suggested the responsible integration of these technologies in relation to the necessary infrastructure and resources, workforce training, and the promotion of an organizational culture characterized by decisional transparency, communication, collaboration with employees, and concern for their well-being. Considering the influence of global trends and practices on local dynamics, it is important to explore how these perspectives are reflected in the organizational practices within Romania.

Leading IT and technology organizations in Romania have established organizational policies that serve as a foundation for effective practices concerning their workforce, internal processes, and the services delivered to clients. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the policies implemented by companies such as Endava, UiPath, and Accenture provides valuable insights into how international perspectives are integrated and adapted within local organizational contexts. To capture these perspectives, policies will be presented in relation to three areas of interest: AI adoption, employee competency development, and ethical practices and AI responsibility.

When it comes to using AI in organizational processes, we can see slight differences between the three companies. While Endava [18] and UiPath [19] stated that they use AI mainly to automate repetitive tasks without a strong impact, Accenture [20] uses AI tools for both internal processes and for services offered to clients. While the latter has adopted a broader scope of implementation, the information available indicates that this also largely manifests in repetitive, administrative tasks. The analysis of the three companies reveals a responsible approach to AI implementation in automating administrative, repetitive tasks, software testing, and data analysis, areas with limited impact on strategic decision-making. This approach reflects adherence to international ethical principles and aims to mitigate risks associated with the premature use of AI in critical decisions.

On the other hand, for an efficient transition, Endava [21], UiPath [19], and Accenture [20] also emphasize the constant development of employee skills, especially in the digital sphere, through dedicated platforms, personalized training programs, or partnerships. The orientation towards skills development and retraining suggests that the success of the transition is not only given by a responsible adoption of AI, but must also be considered in the context of employees' adaptation needs.

As previously discussed, companies have implemented AI responsibly, limiting its use primarily to administrative tasks. This prudent implementation is accompanied by ethics and accountability policies designed to minimize any unintended effects. The comparative analysis shows that the three companies propose broadly similar principles for an effective transition and adaptation [20, 22, 23]. Among these, the most frequently mentioned are: ethical adoption, tested and monitored AI systems, human involvement in decision-making, transparent communication of changes, information regarding AI usage, and governance measures. Considering the above, the ethics and responsibility policies of the three companies align with global trends and highlight the concern for involving employees in the organizational change process and avoiding the negative effects associated with them.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, document-based research approach, combining theoretical synthesis with a case-based comparison of publicly available organizational documents to explore how AI-driven change is reflected in practice. It relies on secondary sources rather than primary data collection. A first stage involved the analysis of the main international theories and studies on organizational change in the context of AI. A second stage involved the analysis of the organizational policies of three IT/Tech companies active in Romania (Endava, UiPath, and Accenture). The companies were purposively selected based on three criteria: (1) significant presence and operations in Romania, (2) availability of policy and sustainability documents mentioning AI or digital transformation, and (3) recognized engagement in AI-driven business processes at the international level. The data comprised publicly available corporate reports, sustainability documents, and official web pages outlining strategies related to artificial intelligence. Materials were analyzed through a qualitative content analysis, around three main dimensions: the development and adaptation of the workforce, organizational culture (including structural challenges), and the ethical principles guiding the responsible use of AI. Relevant statements and passages were systematically identified and categorized according to these dimensions, following a qualitative coding approach, which allowed capturing both the nuances in how each company addresses AI-related practices and the extent to which they emphasize different aspects of AI adoption and management.

To ensure validity and analytical consistency, findings were cross-checked through conceptual triangulation — comparing theoretical insights, international studies, and the analyzed organizational documents. This process enhanced the credibility of interpretations and aligned the findings with broader discussions on AI-driven organizational transformation. The comparative analysis allows understanding how theoretical perspectives and global trends regarding AI adoption are reflected in the local organizational environment, thus providing a comprehensive perspective of the phenomenon.

Results and further discussions

Understanding organizational change within the framework of artificial intelligence requires a thorough examination of both theoretical perspectives and empirical research. Additionally, it is important to consider how these findings are translated into organizational policies at the local level.

The international literature highlights three essential dimensions for understanding how organizational change through the transition to AI can be effectively managed while reducing negative effects. These are: employee development and adaptation, organizational culture (including ethical principles), and structural challenges. The development and adaptation of the workforce, the most important resource of an organization, is considered crucial for an efficient transition. The conclusions of the studies most frequently suggest the need for reskilling and upskilling, as well as training programs to increase the degree of literacy in AI. The latter seems all the more important because it was associated with reducing technostress and uncertainty towards AI, simultaneously with increasing the ability to solve complex technological challenges. Drawing on these findings, it is evident that the development of AI skills holds significant importance. These skills can enhance the perception of ease of use, which is also associated with acceptance of change and intention to integrate new technologies into daily work activities.

In terms of organizational culture and structural challenges, studies have identified a number of factors that can pose obstacles to change and effective transition. The most important of these are: organizational inertia -characterized by rigid structures and conservative organizational culture- and poorly developed technological infrastructure. In this context, the studies also propose a series of measures and principles necessary for an efficient adaptation. One of these involves building an adapted, flexible organizational culture, characterized by decision-making transparency, communication of changes, managerial support, and collaboration with employees. Another measure proposed in the analyzed studies was the promotion of AI benefits. This measure seems to be of maximum importance in the context in which it can influence the perception of efficiency, usefulness, and ease of use, variables associated with the acceptance of change. In other words, an employee with a high level of digital skills and knowledge related to AI may have a better understanding of these technologies and their benefits, as well as a greater ability to utilize them.

As previously stated, studies have concluded that technological infrastructure can generate obstacles in organizational change regarding AI adoption. Certain theoretical and practical implications can therefore be suggested. As a theoretical implication, future studies on organizational change related to AI, should focus on evaluating implementation success, degree of adaptation, and employee reactions, not in absolute terms, but relative to the resources and technological means of each organizational context. On a practical level, the formulation of organizational policies and strategies should avoid standardized objectives and take into account the digital maturity of the organization.

Regarding the examples from the policies of the companies present in Romania, they align with the international perspectives previously mentioned. Companies have understood the need for the continuous

development of employees and prioritize it, through training programs and internal platforms, implementing AI at the level of routine tasks with the aim of minimizing risks. They also support ethical principles, such as responsible, transparent use, control of AI systems and employee protection. It's also important to mention that policies are often declarative and may not accurately reflect the actual practices within an organization. Moreover, a potential limitation of this analysis is related to the size and scope of the organizations being examined, which may affect the ability to generalize findings to other industries.

Conclusion

This study suggested that organizational change in the context of AI is determined by a series of factors, including employee development and adaptation, organizational culture, and principles of ethics and AI responsibility. The policies of the companies analyzed are in line with international trends; however, it is important to consider that, on one hand, these policies may be more declarative than actionable, and on the other hand, caution should be exercised in generalizing the conclusions to other types of organizations. The results suggest that through responsible AI implementation, consistent with digital maturity and technological infrastructure, organizations can reduce negative effects on employees and maximize organizational efficiency. Moreover, the study also highlights the need for flexible policies adapted to the organizational context, as well as future studies in which technological infrastructure and organizational specificity represent key factors for understanding the positioning of companies in relation to the implementation and management of artificial intelligence.

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