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**PERSPECTIVES ON INDIVIDUAL FORCES OPPOSING THE
CHANGE PROCESS IN PERIOD OF DEEP CRISIS**

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Abstract:

The work of managers is a complex and continuous one to find the best solutions to increase the overall functionality of the organization that leads it. The changes in the environment are permanent sources of generating modifications at the level of any company. The management team should respond adequately through clear, concrete, realistic actions that benefit the development of organizational processes. But the last two years, characterized by the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, have been years of deep crisis throughout humanity, and for the management of an organization, they have been an unprecedented challenge to sustain their survival.

Key words: management; crisis; pandemic; market; obstacles; change.

1. Introduction

It is demonstrated that, theoretically and practically, management is contextual, and adapting to the requirements of the organizational environment (internal and external) is the primary mission of the management team. With multiple variables and unknown elements, the current context can be categorized as at least challenging if it cannot be included in the changing chapter. We believe that the period elapsed since the onset of the COVID pandemic 19 and, until now, has required a redefinition of how managers have designed, conducted, or evaluated the management process in their organizations. Time, in form or volume, has not been the "best friend" of these managers, hard hit by the obstacles generated by the consequences of applying limitations or restrictions by authorities around the world. Despite all the difficulties, ups and downs, the economy and society do not stop but reorient or reinvent themselves, with and without the adaptation of managers.

2. Analysis of the context of contemporary organizational change

"The world will never be the same again" is the phrase most often heard in discussions between people, in public statements, or at scientific conferences. But the same expression can be found quite widely used in the early twentieth or fifteenth century, but it is essential to understand its essence from the perspective, especially, of the future - both individually and organizationally.

The transformations that organizations are subjected to result from environmental pressure made up of a sum of factors and forces. For the contemporary period, we can name the following as the most common factors:

- *“scientific and technological evolution (large-scale use of robots and increasing the implementation of artificial intelligence in various organizational processes, etc.);*



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- *rapid aging of products and services (shortening the life of products, reducing the production cycle and design period, etc.);*
- *the need for continuous improvement of working conditions (staff are offered greater comfort at work, as part of the motivation processes, etc.);*
- *changes in the labor market (increasing the share of jobs held by women, intellectualization of human resources, etc.)” [1]*

Even if the list of environmental factors is much broader, it is easy to see that managers are obliged to consider all the trends of these elements of influence to identify the best alternative to follow by their organization in the future. It is also obvious that their analysis must be thorough as the consequences will be reflected up to the level of each position in the organization, up to the level of each person working within it.

The general impact on the organization will generate the need to trigger the process of change within it and its management. As a rule, organizational change does not happen by itself, and improvements must be generated to the actions to be carried out (the algorithm for carrying out the production process based on robots leads to resizing the volume of human resources needed and/or requalification of it - aspects that do not are generally very easy to accept or implement) etc.

And one of the arguments that support the idea that change is a complex process, lasting, and quite challenging to accept may be the large number of companies that close each year on the Romanian market, especially at the level of small ones (fig. 1). Thus, the managers/owners of companies with up to 5 employees considered, most likely, that adopting the change is too expensive or too complicated to find a form of transposition in their organization.

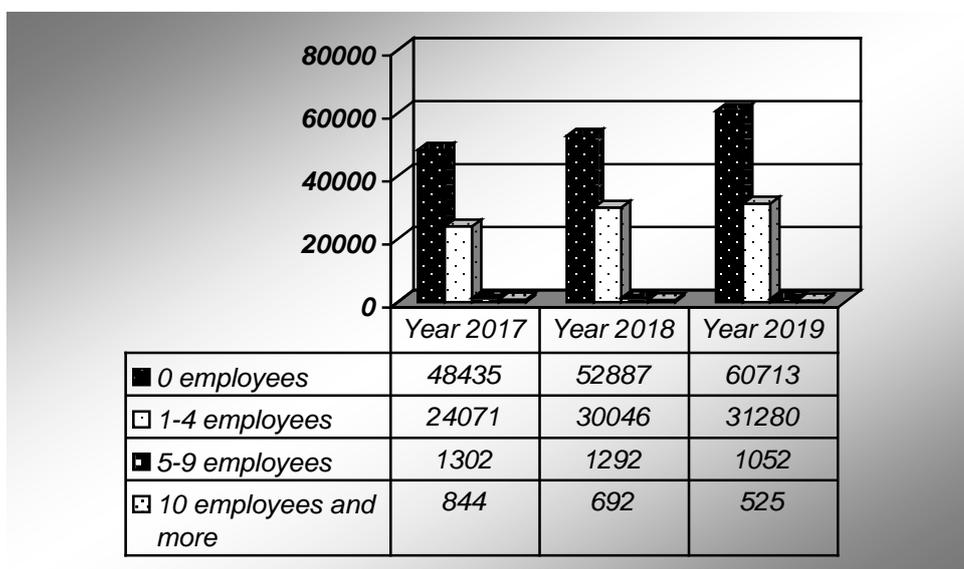


Fig.1 Number of Romanian companies disbanded [2]

The pandemic generated by the SARS-CoV-2 virus has triggered a new reinterpretation of the evolution of society and organizations. There have been fundamental changes at both the structural and procedural levels. Managers were challenged to rethink the entire management process: the objectives were restructured, the related activities were redefined, the



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communication directions were reoriented, the elements of the information subsystem were reconsidered, the performance standards were adjusted or deadlines, etc.

Eloquent is the overall economic result in Romania, "in 2019, the turnover of non-financial companies in Romania reached 1.565 billion lei, being almost 30% higher than in 2015 and 70%, compared to 2010. Compared to 2018, however, the increase was minor, of only 1%." [3]

Also, there are differences in the entire market in our country, highlighting a decrease in turnover in 2020 compared to 2019 by about 5.5%, and the increase in 2019 compared to 2018 was over 10% (Fig. 2).

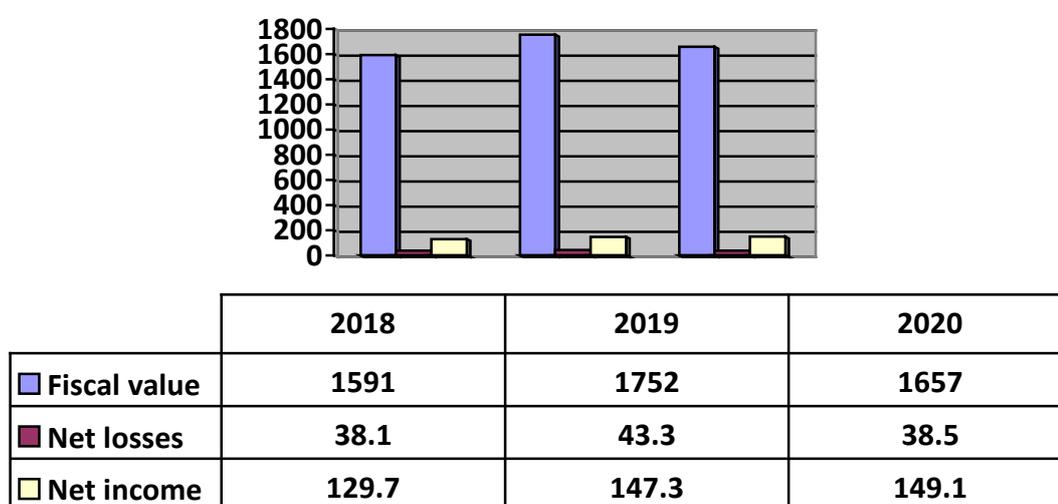


Fig. 2 Financial results of all Romanian companies (billion lei) [4]

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We can say that these results are pretty contradictory if we corroborate them with the way the activities were carried out within the organizations in these two years affected by the pandemic, as a crisis as follows:

- reconsideration of the modalities of carrying out daily activities, depending on the decisions of the competent institutions regarding the free access of the citizens outside their own living space;
- redefining the access circuits within the organizations to limit to the maximum the direct contact between the employees or between the employees and the business partners;
- the increase of the general expenses within the companies, with those expenses generated by the purchase of sanitary or other materials also for limiting the effects of the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus;
- implementation at many companies of the hybrid work system, with one part of the employees at the physical headquarters of the company, and with the other part of the employees in the telework / online system;
- reconsideration of logistics routes within the company, both in terms of the supply of equipment, raw materials, and materials, and in terms of distribution of products made within the company, etc.



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3. Current particularities of the forces that oppose change, at the individual level

Countless forces of change constantly assault organizations; we must not rule out that there are forces that oppose it, so efforts are needed to keep the organization in balance. Resistance to change is an issue that must be taken into account when implementing any organizational change. Precisely in this regard, "the sphere of resistance must be limited by multiple ways, procedures and methods that prevent the possibilities of manifestation of dysfunctional, conflicting phenomena, etc." [5]

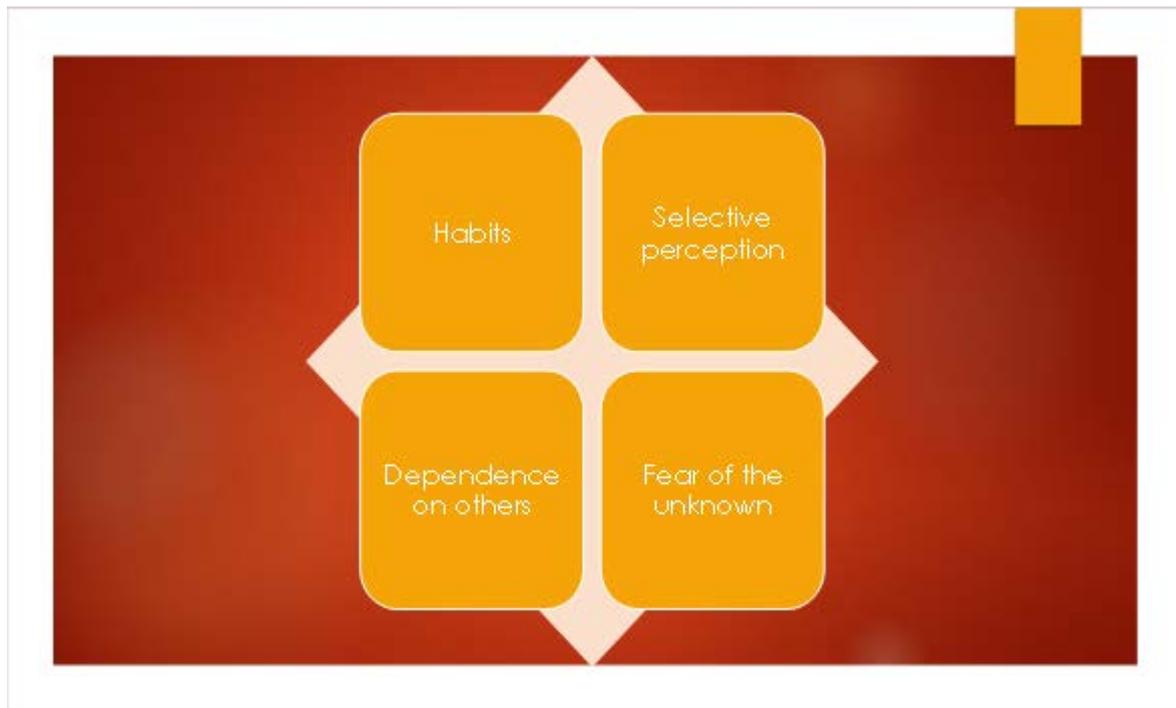


Fig.3 Forces that oppose change at the individual level

The state of affairs in these pandemic years has not led to substantial changes in specific concepts of organizational change, but we are convinced that their explanatory structure has undergone adjustments that managers have had to make. Takes into account in making the best decisions for organizations.

Changing the work schedule or the times of accomplishing certain activities are elements that have added to the force that opposes change: habits. We can agree with the idea that most of the habits that can be formed in power that opposes change have remained the same, but new ones have emerged to which managers have had to find an answer in counteracting them, for example: the habit of working at home, without wanting to physically return to work or the habit of taking children to school before the work schedule begins.

Under the same conditions of changing the rules of operation of organizations, the selective perception has also undergone adaptations to the current context, for example: changing the individual perception of the results obtained in a certain period of time, given that employees



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have not worked permanently together or the fact that the health of other colleagues is not as good/serious as it is claimed.

The trend of the 21st century in the organizational field has been to promote work and team spirit, thus implicitly increasing the degree of dependence of some on others. In the new pandemic conditions, individual reorientation is a widespread effect, each aiming to obtain results on their own in the shortest possible time, corroborated to protect themselves as much as possible from sources of risk of infection outside their own home.

The fear of the unknown has taken on other nuances in the context of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection, as information support related to both the organizational and environmental environment has changed substantially, mainly due to the spread of numerous rumors or unjustified assessments of specific actions. And due to the multitude of decisions with immediate applicability of the institutions empowered to intervene for the return of the company to normality.

4. Conclusion

The solutions are not simple and cannot be generated by a predetermined pattern. Some managers have reinvented themselves and managed the activities of the organizations under their responsibility, while others have clicked under the pressure of the new conditions and have failed to ensure a minimum level of functionality. However, an adequate reanalysis of the employees' characteristics is necessary to delimit precisely the stage of the forces that can oppose the change to design a realistic plan to implement this process throughout the organization.

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