

The Dynamics of Change Management and Human Resource Responses to Organizational Disruption: A Phenomenological Study at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan

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Abstrak. Penelitian fenomenologis ini menginvestigasi dinamika manajemen perubahan dan respons sumber daya manusia terhadap disrupsi organisasi di PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan. Menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif, penelitian melibatkan 15 partisipan dari berbagai level organisasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen selama September-Oktober 2025. Hasil penelitian mengungkap tiga tema utama: (1) mekanisme resiliensi organisasi dalam menghadapi transformasi digital dan volatilitas pasar, (2) pola adaptasi psikologis dan perilaku karyawan selama perubahan disruptif, dan (3) strategi kepemimpinan dalam memfasilitasi perubahan. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan manajemen perubahan memerlukan pendekatan holistik yang mengintegrasikan kesiapan teknologi, transformasi budaya, dan pengembangan modal manusia. Faktor kunci keberhasilan mencakup komunikasi transparan, pengambilan keputusan partisipatif, pembelajaran berkelanjutan, dan kepemimpinan yang suportif. Kontribusi teoretis penelitian ini terletak pada bukti empiris dari konteks organisasi Indonesia yang menyoroti pengaruh budaya kolektif terhadap respons perubahan. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya keterlibatan karyawan, pengembangan kepemimpinan adaptif, dan struktur organisasi yang fleksibel. Keterbatasan studi meliputi fokus pada satu organisasi dan konteks budaya spesifik. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan melakukan studi komparatif lintas industri dan budaya untuk memperluas generalisasi temuan.

Kata kunci: Manajemen Perubahan; Gangguan Organisasi; Adaptasi Sumber Daya Manusia; Studi Fenomenologis.

Abstract. This phenomenological study investigates the dynamics of change management and human resource responses to organizational disruption at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan. The research employs a qualitative phenomenological approach, involving 15 participants from various organizational levels. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis conducted from September to October 2025. The findings reveal three major themes: (1) organizational resilience mechanisms in facing digital transformation and market volatility, (2) psychological and behavioral adaptation patterns of employees during disruptive changes, and (3) leadership strategies in facilitating organizational change. The study demonstrates that successful change management requires a holistic approach integrating technological readiness, cultural transformation, and human capital development. Key factors contributing to effective change implementation include transparent communication, participative decision-making, continuous learning initiatives, and supportive leadership. The research contributes to change management theory by providing empirical evidence from an Indonesian organizational context, particularly highlighting the role of collective culture in shaping change responses. Practical implications suggest that organizations undergoing disruption should prioritize employee engagement, invest in adaptive leadership development, and establish flexible organizational structures. The study's limitations include its focus on a single organization and the specific cultural context of Medan, North Sumatra. Future research should explore comparative studies across different industries and cultural settings to enhance generalizability of findings.

Keywords: Change Management; Organizational Disruption; Human Resource Adaptation; Phenomenological Study.

Introduction

Contemporary organizations face unprecedented levels of disruption driven by technological advancement, market volatility, and evolving consumer expectations (Kotter, 2012; Nadler & Tushman, 2021). The concept of organizational disruption has evolved beyond traditional change management frameworks, encompassing radical transformations that fundamentally alter business models, operational processes, and competitive landscapes (Christensen *et al.*, 2015; Wessel *et al.*, 2021). In Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra's industrial sector, companies are experiencing accelerated pressure to adapt to digital transformation while maintaining organizational stability and employee well-being (Hidayat & Rahman, 2023). PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan, a prominent manufacturing company in North Sumatra, exemplifies the challenges faced by traditional Indonesian enterprises in navigating disruptive changes. Established in 1985, the company has undergone significant transformations in response to market pressures, technological innovations, and competitive dynamics. The organization's journey through digital transformation, restructuring initiatives, and cultural adaptation provides a rich context for understanding how human resources respond to organizational disruption in an Indonesian cultural setting (Sari & Wijaya, 2022).

Change management literature has extensively documented the critical role of human resources in organizational transformation success (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; By, 2005; Cummings & Worley, 2015). However, most existing research originates from Western organizational contexts, with limited exploration of how cultural dimensions influence change responses in collectivist societies (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010; Taras *et al.*, 2020). The Indonesian organizational context, characterized by high power distance, strong collectivism, and hierarchical structures, presents unique challenges and opportunities for change management (Abdullah, 2016; Irawanto *et al.*, 2011). Recent studies highlight the importance of understanding employee

psychological experiences during organizational change, including emotional responses, cognitive processing, and behavioral adaptations (Fugate *et al.*, 2012; Oreg *et al.*, 2018; Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Phenomenological research approaches offer valuable insights into lived experiences of organizational members, revealing the subjective meanings and interpretations that shape change responses (Giorgi, 2009; Van Manen, 2016). Despite growing recognition of phenomenology's contribution to organizational studies, few investigations have applied this methodology to examine change management in Indonesian enterprises. This research addresses critical gaps in change management literature by investigating the dynamics of organizational change and human resource responses through a phenomenological lens in an Indonesian organizational context. Specifically, the study examines: (1) How employees at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan experience and interpret organizational disruption, (2) What psychological and behavioral adaptation patterns emerge during disruptive changes, (3) How leadership strategies influence change implementation effectiveness, and (4) What organizational factors facilitate or hinder successful change management. The research objectives are threefold. First, to explore and describe the lived experiences of employees navigating organizational disruption at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan.

Second, to identify key factors influencing human resource responses to disruptive changes within the organizational context. Third, to develop theoretical insights and practical recommendations for managing organizational change in Indonesian enterprises. By examining these phenomena through participants' perspectives, this study contributes to both theoretical understanding of change management and practical knowledge for organizational practitioners. The significance of this research extends across multiple dimensions. Theoretically, it contributes to change management literature by providing empirical evidence from an understudied context, enriching understanding of how cultural factors shape organizational change dynamics. Methodologically, it demonstrates the

value of phenomenological inquiry in uncovering nuanced aspects of organizational experiences that may be overlooked by quantitative approaches. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and change management consultants working in Indonesian or similar cultural contexts. Furthermore, the research addresses timely concerns about organizational resilience and adaptive capacity in an era of continuous disruption (Linnenluecke, 2017; Williams *et al.*, 2017).

Research Methodology

Research Design and Philosophical Orientation

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach grounded in the interpretive paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Phenomenology, as both philosophy and method, seeks to capture the essence of lived experiences by exploring how individuals perceive and interpret phenomena (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2016). Guided by Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological framework, the study emphasized systematic description of participants' experiences through epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Finlay, 2011). This orientation ensured methodological rigor and reflexivity in revealing employees' meanings of organizational change.

Research Setting and Context

The research was conducted at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan, a medium-sized manufacturing company in North Sumatra, Indonesia, employing about 350 workers. Founded in 1985, the company has undergone major transformations ERP implementation, restructuring, process automation, and market expansion over the last five years. The site was purposefully selected due to its ongoing change initiatives, accessibility, leadership support, and relevance to Indonesia's manufacturing context. Formal organizational consent and ethical clearance were obtained before data collection.

Participant Selection and Sampling

Participants were chosen using purposeful and maximum variation sampling (Patton, 2015; Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). Inclusion criteria required at least two years of employment, direct involvement in change initiatives, willingness to participate, and informed consent. The final sample included 15 participants representing different hierarchical levels three senior managers, five middle managers, four supervisors, and three frontline employees from departments such as production, HR, finance, marketing, and IT. This diversity enhanced the depth and breadth of perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected over six months (September–October 2025) through semi structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Denzin, 2012; Flick, 2018). Fifteen in-depth interviews lasting 60–90 minutes were conducted in private settings using open-ended questions to elicit detailed narratives (Bevan, 2014). Supplementary data came from 40 hours of observation and review of internal documents such as reports, memos, and training materials (Bowen, 2009). Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and de-identified. Data saturation was reached when no new insights emerged (Guest *et al.*, 2006).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed Giorgi's (2009) four-step descriptive phenomenological method: (1) reading to gain a holistic understanding, (2) identifying meaning units, (3) transforming natural expressions into phenomenological-psychological language, and (4) synthesizing essential structures of experience (Finlay, 2011). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) complemented this process to identify and organize patterns of meaning. NVivo 14 software supported data organization and coding, while an audit trail documented analytical decisions and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) ensured

research rigor. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Transferability was enhanced by thick contextual description (Geertz, 1973). Dependability was supported by a transparent audit trail reviewed by an external expert, while confirmability was maintained through reflexive journaling and bracketing (Finlay & Gough, 2003).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board prior to data collection. All participants provided written informed consent after receiving detailed information on research aims, procedures, risks, and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and withdrawal was permitted at any time without consequences. Data confidentiality was ensured through anonymization, secure data storage, and pseudonyms. Interviews were conducted privately, and no identifiable information was shared with management. The research posed minimal risk, and participants' well-being was prioritized throughout the process.

Results and Discussion

Results

The phenomenological analysis revealed three interrelated themes reflecting the dynamics of organizational change and human resource responses at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan:

- 1) Organizational Resilience and Adaptive Mechanisms
- 2) Psychological and Behavioral Transformation Processes
- 3) Leadership and Relational Dynamics in Change

Facilitation Together, these themes illustrate that effective change management depends on the integration of technological, structural, psychological, and relational dimensions.

Organizational Resilience and Adaptive Mechanisms

This theme reflects how the organization responded to disruptive pressures through four adaptive processes:

- 1) Technological transformation and digital readiness.
- 2) Structural flexibility and process redesign.
- 3) Knowledge integration and learning systems.
- 4) Resource mobilization strategies.

The ERP implementation in 2020 marked a turning point in digital transformation, altering workflows and decision-making (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Leonardi, 2011). While younger employees adapted quickly, older workers experienced identity threats and anxiety. Training programs, mentoring, and a “digital champion” system fostered collective learning (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003; Burton-Jones & Gallivan, 2007). Structural redesign introduced lean management and cross-functional teams, improving agility but generating uncertainty about roles and authority (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; D’Adderio, 2008). Informal communities of practice emerged to bridge gaps between formal training and workplace realities (Wenger, 1998; Brown & Duguid, 2001). Resource constraints remained a key tension, balancing productivity with adaptation (Repenning & Sterman, 2002).

Psychological and Behavioral Transformation Processes

This theme captures employees’ internal adaptation journeys, encompassing emotions, cognition, identity, and behavior. Initial reactions ranged from enthusiasm to anxiety, shaped by trust in leadership and prior experiences. Transparent communication reduced uncertainty, while sudden announcements fueled resistance. Employees engaged in sense-making (Weick, 1995; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014) through collective discussions and informal networks. Change acceptance was stronger when rationales aligned with lived experiences (Bartunek *et al.*, 2006). Many employees underwent identity reconstruction, redefining competence and self-worth amid new technological demands. Behavioral responses varied from proactive engagement to passive resistance, influenced by self-efficacy and peer support. Collective meaning-making via group narratives and opinion leaders played a decisive role in shaping departmental responses (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012; Kwon *et al.*, 2020).

Leadership and Relational Dynamics in Change Facilitation

Leadership behaviors and interpersonal relationships emerged as pivotal enablers of effective change. Transformational leadership articulating vision, modeling adaptability, and offering individualized support enhanced employee trust and motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Authentic and transparent communication built credibility, while inconsistent messaging amplified confusion (Elving, 2005; Bordia *et al.*, 2004). Meaningful participation in decision-making fostered ownership and empowerment, but tokenistic involvement produced cynicism (Lines, 2004; Oreg *et al.*, 2011). Strong social capital and supportive networks provided emotional and informational resources for adaptation (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Integrated Discussion: Toward a Holistic Understanding

The three themes are interdependent. Organizational resilience (Theme 1) shapes the structural context; psychological transformation (Theme 2) reflects human adaptation; and leadership-relational dynamics

(Theme 3) provide the social infrastructure for successful change. Key insights include:

- 1) **Holistic Integration:** Effective change demands concurrent attention to technological, psychological, and relational dimensions. Neglecting the human side results in resistance and inefficiency.
- 2) **Temporal Dynamics:** Change adaptation unfolds through stages anticipation, encounter, adjustment, and normalization requiring phase-specific interventions.
- 3) **Cultural Context:** Indonesia’s collectivist culture emphasizes harmony, hierarchy, and shared meaning-making (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010; Irawanto *et al.*, 2011). This underscores the value of participative and empathetic leadership.
- 4) **Individual Variability:** Diverse experiences highlight the need for differentiated support strategies tailored to role, tenure, and learning orientation.

Resilience as a Multilevel Capability: Organizational resilience emerges from the interplay of individual flexibility, social support, and adaptive systems (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2011; Williams *et al.*, 2017).

Table 1. Summary of Major Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme	Sub-Themes	Key Insights / Supporting References
1) Organizational Resilience & Adaptive Mechanisms	Digital transformation; Structural flexibility; Learning systems; Resource mobilization	ERP adoption created disruption and capability growth (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008); Social learning via peer support (Venkatesh <i>et al.</i> , 2003)
2) Psychological & Behavioral Transformation	Emotional responses; Sense-making; Identity reconstruction; Behavioral adaptation; Collective meaning-making	Emotions shaped by trust and communication (Weick, 1995); Identity shifts required professional redefinition (Bartunek <i>et al.</i> , 2006)
3) Leadership & Relational Dynamics	Transformational leadership; Authentic communication; Participative empowerment; Social capital	Transformational and transparent leadership fostered trust and engagement (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Adler & Kwon, 2002)



Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Interconnected Change Dynamics

Explanation of the Conceptual Framework
 Figure 1 illustrates the integrated conceptual framework of organizational change dynamics at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan. The model demonstrates how three interdependent components Organizational Resilience, Psychological and Behavioral Transformation, and Leadership and Relational Dynamics collectively drive Holistic Organizational Adaptation, leading ultimately to Sustainable Change and Resilience.

- 1) Organizational Resilience represents the structural and systemic foundation for managing disruption. It encompasses technological readiness, process flexibility, organizational learning, and effective resource allocation. These elements enable the organization to withstand external shocks and adapt proactively to environmental changes.
- 2) Psychological and Behavioral Transformation captures the human dimension of change, emphasizing employees' emotional reactions, identity reconstruction, and meaning-making processes. This stage highlights how individual and collective sense-making shape adaptive behavior within organizations undergoing disruption.
- 3) Leadership and Relational Dynamics denote the social infrastructure that supports effective change. It includes transformational leadership practices, authentic communication, participative decision-making, and the development of social capital. These relational mechanisms foster trust, collaboration, and collective commitment to change goals.

The bottom section, Holistic Organizational Adaptation, integrates all three dimensions, illustrating that sustainable transformation requires alignment between technical systems, human behavior, and social relationships. When these dimensions interact synergistically, organizations achieve sustainable change and long-term resilience, ensuring their ability to thrive amid continuous disruption.

Discussion

This study provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of change management and human resource responses to organizational disruption at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan. The key findings align with previous research emphasizing the integration of technological, structural, and psychological aspects in successful change management. As noted by Armenakis & Harris (2009) and Cummings & Worley (2015), successful change management is not solely reliant on technology implementation but also on employees' readiness and adaptability to change. This study shows that employees who respond more positively to change tend to have a clearer understanding of the reasons behind the change and feel included in decision-making processes, which mirrors Lines (2004) findings, emphasizing the importance of participation in strategic changes to reduce resistance. Organizational resilience also emerged as a critical factor in dealing with disruption, supporting Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2011) who argue that organizational resilience is built through individual flexibility, social support, and adaptive systems. This study adds a cultural dimension, particularly in the Indonesian context, where collective culture plays a significant role in how employees adapt to change. This is consistent with Irawanto *et al.* (2011), who highlighted that in more collectivist societies like Indonesia, empathetic leadership and open communication are central to facilitating change. Moreover, the role of transformational leadership in building trust and motivation, as discussed by Bass & Riggio (2006), was also found to be significant in this study, where authentic and transparent leadership helped reduce uncertainty and foster employee involvement in the change process.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the importance of a holistic approach to change management that not only focuses on the technical aspects but also considers the psychological dimensions and interpersonal dynamics within the organization. This is in line with Weick's (1995) concept of collective sense-making in the face of change and adaptation. The study also opens up further avenues for exploring how specific cultural contexts influence change responses across different industries in Indonesia, as suggested by Sari & Wijaya (2022) in their research on organizational transformation in Indonesian companies.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study examines the dynamics of change management and human resource responses to organizational disruption at PT. Sentosa Deli Mandiri Medan. The findings underscore that successful change management is a multifaceted process, necessitating technological readiness, structural flexibility, psychological adaptation, relational support, and effective leadership. Three central themes emerged from the analysis: organizational resilience and adaptive mechanisms, psychological and behavioral transformation, and leadership and relational dynamics in facilitating change. The study contributes to the body of change management theory by providing empirical evidence from an Indonesian context, emphasizing the impact of cultural factors on change dynamics and the significance of collective processes in organizational adaptation. From a methodological perspective, this research expands the use of phenomenology by uncovering the subjective meanings and lived experiences of employees as they navigate organizational transformation. Practically, the study highlights the critical importance of transparent, two-way communication, employee involvement in the change design process, integrated technical and psychological support systems, enhanced social relationships within the workplace, and the development of transformational leadership, characterized by empathy and authenticity.

However, the study is limited by its focus on a single organization and a relatively small sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to further explore long-term adaptation processes and conduct cross-cultural comparisons. Ultimately, organizational change is a complex and adaptive phenomenon, and successful transformation depends on an organization's capacity to integrate technological, structural, psychological, and relational dimensions in a holistic manner. By deeply understanding the lived experiences of employees, organizations can develop change strategies that are not only technically effective but also psychologically meaningful and socially supportive, thus fostering organizational resilience and enhancing employee well-being amidst continuous disruption.

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