

## INTEGRATING MEASUREMENT AND MEANING IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses the central challenge in organizational transformation: integrating analytical measurement with human-centered meaning-making to drive sustainable change. Based on an empirical study of 147 senior managers across eight Georgian business organizations, the research initially identifies a critical disconnect. While quantitative awareness of the need for change exists, local management practices are hampered by core deficiencies, including organizational procrastination, managerial inertia, and the inconsistent application of standardized methodologies (PDCA, PESTEL, SWOT). To bridge this gap, the study introduces the Integrated Self-Diagnosis and Measurement Framework (ISDMF) first. This framework is designed to move beyond external compliance, aiming to internalize disciplined change by fostering self-accountability and continuous, systematic measurement. The core contribution lies in reframing change as a process where measurement informs meaning, and meaning activates measurement. This ensures that change is seen not merely as a procedural or metric-driven transformation, but as a lived process of alignment alignment between objective organizational data and subjective, deeply-held individual awareness. By connecting quantitative rigor (Measurement) with a human-centered, symbolic perspective (Meaning), the study offers a novel lens for developing resilient leadership cultures and overcoming inertia in transitional economies.

**Keywords:** organizational change, measurement and meaning, leadership, change management, transformation, self-accountability, integrated framework.

### Introduction to Organizational Change Management

Change management, in its definition, emphasizes that the existing image is not relevant to the existing reality, and therefore, changes are inevitable. Every new stage requires a vision and analysis different from the old, already existing method, which should not only be a new standard acceptable to the company (Jones, 2004). Change management has always been an integral part of organizational management. Several change management models or processes are available. Most models have certain phases: preparing for the change, including analyzing, planning, and strategy development; managing change implementation; and consolidating and institutionalizing the change, including change review, feedback analysis, corrective action, stabilizing the implemented change (King, 1995).

Any change to be carried out or introduced in management should be the result of complex work, as it necessary for all those involved in the daily life of the company to participate in it. However, every rank of employee, starting from the CEO of the company, has their scope of responsibility and action (Lewin, 1947). This study is premised on the critical need to explore and conceptualize a comprehensive framework for managing organizational change, specifically tailored to the unique economic and operational landscape of *Georgian business organizations*. Focusing on this context provides a crucial, context-specific lens to evaluate the adaptability, challenges, and success factors of change practices within transitional economies (Rhodes, 2004).

### Change Management Problematic in Georgian Business Organizations

Organizational change management in Georgia presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. As a transitional economy, the country exhibits characteristics shaped by its post-Soviet

history, including hierarchical management structures, low institutional trust, and varying degrees of adaptability across public and private sectors. While Georgian organizations increasingly adopt international management frameworks, the practical implementation of these models often encounters structural, cultural, and procedural obstacles.

Recent surveys indicate that the understanding of change management principles remains limited among many mid-level managers, while senior executives tend to adopt a top-down approach that prioritizing formal compliance over participative engagement. This combination results in fragmented implementation and, in many cases, postponed or superficial changes (Babbie, 2017). A critical prerequisite for developing a locally relevant change framework is a deep understanding of the unique socio-economic and organizational constraints prevalent in the target region. This work establishes the contextual problematic that differentiates change management in Georgian business organizations, particularly as a transitional economy. The success rate of change initiatives in Georgia is often influenced by ingrained structural and cultural characteristics that deviate significantly from those found in developed Western economies. These include structural and cultural impediments (Cummings, 2015):

The implementation of successful organizational change in many contexts is profoundly hampered by deeply ingrained structural and cultural barriers. Structurally, the prevalence of rigid hierarchies and centralized authority concentrates decision-making at the top, effectively stifling bottom-up initiatives and significantly slowing the pace of necessary adaptation, particularly concerning technological change, while actively discouraging the broad participation essential for transitional success. This structural rigidity is often compounded by pervasive low-trust environments, both internal (management-employee relations) and external. Internally, this low trust fuels employee resistance, obstructs effective delegation, and renders the transparent communication required by robust change models (such as Kotter's 8-Step) nearly impossible to execute effectively. Furthermore, organizational cultural norms frequently prioritize adherence to tradition and the avoidance of risk over innovation and experimentation, creating a fundamental clash with the core requirement of transformational change—the willingness to embrace uncertainty (Bryman, 2018). These challenges are exacerbated by a limited managerial change leadership capacity, where a deficit in crucial soft skills such as emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and the ability to articulate a compelling vision for change (Goleman)—hinders the ability to effectively address the "People" and "Process" dimensions. Finally, a persistent focus on content over culture leads to an over-reliance on tangible changes (e.g., new technology or policy) while critically neglecting the mindset and cultural imperatives necessary to sustain behavioral shifts, causing initiatives to fail in the long run due to a lack of genuine organizational adoption. (Nadler, 1980).

### **Research goal and Objectives**

The main primary objective of this research is to examine the current state of change management practices in Georgia, encompassing the both public and private sectors. The study aims to determine the extent to which Georgian organizations comprehend the essence and necessity of change, and whether they perceive change implementation as a means of improving processes and achieving higher organizational performance. Furthermore, the research seeks to examine whether various types of changes—including organizational, structural, or digital—are viewed by managers as having a subjectively meaningful (Meaning) and positive impact on future operations. It also aims to precisely identify the specific criteria and metrics (Measurement) used to assess the effectiveness of change initiatives and to determine whether implemented changes achieve their intended, quantifiable goals. Finally, the study seeks to identify the key factors that determine success by linking measured outcomes (Measurement) with the perceived value and sustainability (Meaning) of the change. This process allows the extraction of lessons that can inform better planning and management of future change processes, promoting a stronger integration of analytical rigor and human-centered purpose in the Georgian context.

The primary goal of this research is to define the essence of organizational change and review associated change management models, in order to assess the level of understanding of change management concepts and the organizational perception of the necessity of change within Georgia's public and private sectors. The study explores the most common types of changes undertaken in Georgian organizations (organizational, structural, digital, etc.) and analyzes how organizations evaluate the effectiveness and impact of implemented changes (Measurement), determining whether they achieve their intended quantifiable outcomes and objectives. Building upon this, the paper seeks to identify the key success and failure factors (Meaning) influencing change management results, develop a tailored organizational change management framework with associated tools and measurement criteria, and ultimately formulate evidence-based recommendations for enhancing change management practices and ensuring more effective future implementation.

### **Respondent Involvement in the Study**

The involvement of respondents from the eight selected organizations was critical to this study, as it enabled a comprehensive assessment of change management practices across diverse organizational types and sectors. The organizations—LTB, PSP, the National Agency of Public Registry, Georgian Railway, the audit firm Loyalty, Georgian State Electric System, the construction company Knauf, and the electrical retail chain Elite—differ in sectoral specificity and organizational scale, thereby providing a robust basis for a diverse and comprehensive analysis of change management practices. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire comprising nine core questions, each with five response options, from which respondents selected one answer per question. Prior to distribution, verbal communication was conducted with respondents to clarify the research scope and objectives, ensure voluntary participation, and guarantee anonymity. The analysis of questions and responses facilitated the testing of six null hypotheses, which served as primary indicators for evaluating the effectiveness and perception of change management practices.

This methodology ensures empirical reliability, enables accurate data collection from decision-makers, and establishes a foundation for multi-level analysis of change management practices ultimately deriving robust conclusions. A total of 147 participants were included, all of whom held managerial or senior managerial positions, thereby ensuring that the data reflected informed, practical, and decision-relevant perspectives. The positions of respondents were diverse and included:

- Directors of operations and production;
- Heads of logistics, administration, and marketing departments;
- Directors of finance and sales;
- Heads of legal, analytical, and IT departments.

In each organization, participant selection was carefully aligned with the organizational structure, targeting individuals whose opinions and decisions significantly influence strategic and operational processes. In several organizations, HR directors were also included, underscoring the critical role of human resource management in facilitating successful organizational change.

This diversity of roles and alignment with organizational hierarchies lent significant analytical strength to the study. It enabled not only the evaluation of managerial perceptions and practices but also the examination of decision-making processes, organizational influence, and the strategic rationale behind the adoption of tools and methodologies. By capturing perspectives from multiple managerial levels and functional areas, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of how change is planned, executed, and institutionalized across diverse organizational contexts.

**Respondent Inclusion and Analytical Implications** The structured inclusion of respondents from both operational and strategic roles enhances the robustness and validity of the research findings, yielding insights that are both theoretically grounded and practically relevant. This methodological approach highlights the importance of engaging key decision-makers to capture an accurate representation of organizational change dynamics, thereby enhancing the study's contribution to the literature on change management in transitional economies, such as Georgia.

While the empirical data derive from general Georgian business organizations (N = 147), the prevalence of centralized control and bureaucratic inertia suggests distinct pathways of resistance across sectors:

- Private Sector Resistance Resistance primarily arises from low-trust environments, inadequate strategic communication, and an overemphasis on Content over Culture. Despite intense competitive pressures, the persistence of rigid, top-down decision-making structures often results in change initiatives that fail due to insufficient cultural adoption and employee buy-in.
- Public Sector Resistance (Inferred) In the public sector, resistance is likely amplified by entrenched bureaucratic structures and politicization, which foster a culture of inaction and prioritize status quo preservation over strategic transformation. Stringent legal and political constraints—while necessary—can institutionalize risk aversion, further stifling the innovation required for effective change (Likert, 1932)

The failure of Georgian organizations to implement change management effectively—as evidenced by the absence of structured planning (H6) and sustained process improvement (H4)—directly contributes to national economic underperformance. When organizations consistently neglect change management standards, the consequences are systemic:

- Reduced Competitiveness: Reliance on outdated “historical views” rather than proactive adaptation to environmental imperatives (e.g., rapid technological advancements) erodes international competitiveness.
- Resource Inefficiency: Failed change initiatives (H4) result in wasted resources, diminished productivity, and elevated turnover.

The core issue is not the absence of models but the lack of disciplined adoption. This research addresses this challenge directly through the development of a context-specific Integrated Strategic Disciplined Management Framework (ISDMF), which enforces internal accountability and bridges the gap between global theory and local practice.

#### *Sector-Specific Dynamics*

Recent surveys confirm that mid-level managers exhibit a limited understanding of change management principles, while senior executives tend to favor top-down approaches prioritizing formal compliance over participatory engagement. This dynamic leads to the implementation of fragmented, delayed, or superficial changes.

Georgian public institutions in the public sector are characterized by high bureaucratic rigidity and strict adherence to formal procedures, which significantly hinder change initiatives. Administrative inertia, political interference, and procedural complexity hinder strategic decision making and erode program effectiveness. Transparency International (2023) notes that accountability mechanisms remain weakly enforced, fostering an environment where reforms are symbolic rather than transformative.

Hierarchical decision-making further discourages initiative among lower-level staff and inhibits collaborative problem-solving. Fear of political or supervisory repercussions fosters risk aversion, thereby exacerbating resistance and hindering organizational agility.

In contrast, private organizations—particularly those exposed to international markets or foreign investment—demonstrate greater flexibility and are more likely to adopt modern frameworks, such as Lean, Agile, or Total Quality Management (TQM). However, challenges persist. Success hinges on organizational culture, leadership competency, and employee engagement.

Cultural dimensions—such as high uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and hierarchical orientation—can generate resistance or slow down the adoption process. Leaders with high cultural intelligence (CQ) are better equipped to address employee concerns, articulate the rationale for change, and align staff with shared goals (Tichy, 1986).

This disconnect highlights the pressing need for contextually tailored frameworks that integrate global best practices with local constraints. Without such adaptation, change processes remain delayed, incomplete, or ineffective—limiting competitiveness, innovation, and sustainable growth.

### Methodology, Research Hypotheses, and Empirical Testing Protocol

This section formalizes the study's core assumptions through six null ( $H_0$ ) and alternative ( $H_1$ ) hypotheses, designed to empirically evaluate prevailing change management practices in Georgian organizations. The testing protocol, including data collection, validation criteria, and statistical method (Student's t-test), is outlined below.

*Formalized Research Hypotheses: The hypotheses are formulated as follows:*

$H_{01}$ : Risks are not assessed during organizational change initiatives.  $H_1$ : Risks are assessed during organizational change initiatives.

$H_{02}$ : Employee expectations are not considered during organizational change.  $H_2$ : Employee expectations are considered during organizational change.

$H_{03}$ : External environmental factors are not analyzed in the context of organizational change.  $H_3$ : External environmental factors are analyzed in the context of organizational change.

$H_{04}$ : Organizational work processes are not improved as a result of change initiatives.  $H_4$ : Organizational work processes are improved as a result of change initiatives.

$H_{05}$ : The role of a dedicated change manager is not recognized by organizations.  $H_5$ : The role of a dedicated change manager is recognized by organizations.

$H_{06}$ : Standard change management methodologies (PDCA, PESTEL, SMART, SWOT) are not deployed; organizations rely primarily on historical experience rather than structured frameworks.

$H_6$ : Standard change management methodologies (PDCA, PESTEL, SMART, SWOT) are deployed; organizations do not rely solely on historical experience.

**Statistical Testing:** Student's t-test To test the hypotheses and assess statistical significance, the study employs the one-sample Student's t-test. This method determines whether the mean response from the sample differs significantly from a neutral or theoretically expected value (typically 3.0 on a 5-point Likert scale, representing "neutral" or "no systematic practice").

Each of the nine survey items corresponds to a specific hypothesis. For each item:

The mean ( $M$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD$ ) are computed.

The sample mean is compared against the reference value ( $\mu_0 = 3.0$ ).

A significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  is applied ( $p < .05$  indicates rejection of  $H_0$ ).

This approach ensures a reliable, interpretable, and replicable evaluation of whether observed practices deviate significantly from neutral or expected benchmarks.

Each organization employs more than 250 staff, with several public entities exceeding 1,500 employees. This variation in size and sectoral specificity enables a heterogeneous analysis of change management practices across operational and institutional contexts.

The inclusion of both public and private entities—spanning regulated monopolies, competitive markets, and administrative bureaucracies—strengthens the generalizability of findings and reveals cross-sectoral patterns in change adoption, resistance, and effectiveness.

### Research Design and Data Collection

The study adopted a quantitative methodology to empirically assess change management practices across Georgian organizations. All 147 respondents held senior leadership roles (CEOs, board members, functional directors), ensuring that insights reflect strategic decision-making authority over the full change lifecycle: planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation.

A nine-item, five-point Likert-scale questionnaire was administered (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Each item is mapped to one of the six hypotheses. Respondents selected one response per item. Prior to distribution, verbal briefings were conducted to clarify objectives, secure informed voluntary consent, and guarantee anonymity.

**Table 1. Results of hypotheses**

	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2	Hypothesis 3	Hypothesis 4	Hypothesis 5	Hypothesis 6
n	35	61	87	82	41	15

mean	3.828571429	3.704918033	3.862068966	3.012195122	2.731707317	3.266666667
s	0.984757787	1.295431232	1.339666861	1.094248741	1.140710091	1.387014608
t(n-1)	1.690924255	1.670648865	1.662765449	1.663883913	1.683851013	1.761310136
t	4.97776686	4.250002394	6.002122055	0.100919948	-1.506001739	0.744617651
Decision	Reject H_0	Reject H_0	Reject H_0	Do not reject H_0	Do not reject H_0	Do not reject H_0

## Results and Research Novelty

The primary contribution of this study is the development of the Integrated Self-Diagnosis and Measurement Framework (ISDMF)—a multi-dimensional, internally driven change management system specifically tailored to the Georgian organizational context.

Designed as a sustainable countermeasure to organizational inertia, managerial procrastination, and over-reliance on external consultants, the ISDMF enables organizations to self-assess, self-correct, and institutionalize disciplined change practices without ongoing third-party intervention (Aiken, 2009).

**Table 2. The Self-Diagnosis and Action (SDA) Cycle**

Stage	Focus Area	Mandatory Action	Outcome/Procrastination Countermeasure
1.DIAGNOSE (The ‘Unfreeze’ Phase)	Confronting Reality & Risk	Internal teams must conduct PESTEL (External Factors), SWOT (Internal Resources), and Formal Risk Assessment (H1).	Forces the start; avoids delaying the unpleasant truth by mandating a structured analytical output (countering H6).
2.DESIGN (The ‘Plan’ Phase)	Expectation Alignment	Translate analysis into clear goals (SMART criteria) and create an Employee Expectation Survey (EES) to align goals with staff input (H2).	Creates buy-in; ensures planning is not top-down but integrated with main players’ motivations.
3.DEPLOY (The ‘Do’ Phase)	Execution & Oversight	Appoint a Change Champion (internal equivalent of H5) to manage communication and execution; break execution into small, ‘frog-eating’ tasks with non-negotiable deadlines.	Ensures momentum; tasks become manageable, directly fighting the Procrastination tendency.
4.DEVELOP (The ‘Check & Act’ Phase)	Internalization & Adaptation	Conduct mid-term feedback sessions and compare results to initial SMART goals; the Change Champion documents lessons learned and updates internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).	Achieves sustainability; institutionalizes the learned experience, preventing the organization from being left ‘alone with problems’ after the cycle concludes.

The SDA Cycle is a closed-loop, self-reinforcing model that institutionalizes continuous cultural monitoring and corrective action, directly countering behavioral rigidity, toxic inertia, and resistance to change. By transforming the organization into its own primary agent of transformation, the cycle moves beyond episodic interventions to enable sustained, internally driven improvement.

The SDA Cycle represents the operational core of the ISDMF. It shifts Georgian organizations from awareness without action to disciplined, self-sustaining transformation — a locally grounded, globally informed mechanism for lasting change.

## The Integrated Self-Diagnosis and Measurement Framework (ISDMF)

The primary contribution of this work is the development of the Integrated Self-Diagnosis and Measurement Framework (ISDMF)—a prescriptive, internally driven system that directly counters the systemic inertia, procrastination, and resource inefficiency revealed by the empirical findings (H<sub>04</sub>–H<sub>06</sub>). Unlike transient external interventions, the ISDMF institutionalizes change discipline by integrating proactive behavioral diagnosis with rigorous, data-informed measurement, thereby eliminating costly and unsustainable reliance on external consultants.

## *The Integrated Change Measurement Framework (ICMF)*

The ICMF provides the comprehensive, multi-dimensional metrics required to rigorously evaluate ISDMF effectiveness. It transcends traditional financial KPIs by measuring emotional, behavioral, and cultural outcomes—ensuring that change success is holistic, sustainable, and internally validated. The ICMF is structured around four synergistic pillars, which converge into the Holistic Change Effectiveness Index (HCEI)—a composite score that quantifies overall transformation maturity.

**Table 3. Holistic Change Effectiveness Index (HCEI)**

CMF PILLAR	MEASUREMENT FOCUS	KEY INNOVATIVE METRIC
1.Behavioral Shift (BAS)	Actual adoption of new work habits and processes (Digital Traces of Change).	Collaboration Heatmaps: Measures the frequency of ‘cross-functional’ activity on digital platforms (countering H6 inertia).
2.Emotional & Cognitive Adaptation (EAI)	Employee readiness and emotional tone during transition (Acceptance vs. Fear).	Emotional Adaptation Index (EAI): Based on Micro-Pulse Surveys and sentiment analysis (countering H2 resistance).
3. Process & System Effectiveness (PEG)	The measured efficiency gains from the new system/process.	Process Efficiency Gain (PEG): Metrics like time saved, error reduction rates, and system utilization frequency (H4 proof point).
4.Strategic & Lagged Impact (ILI)	Long-term, sustainable impact on core business goals.	Impact-Lag Index (ILI): Measures the specific time required for the positive change impact to appear in hard KPIs (e.g., ROI, talent retention).

The empirical and theoretical synthesis of this work culminates in the Holistic Change Effectiveness Index (HCEI)—a unified, multidimensional diagnostic instrument that enables organizations to quantify the success of cultural transformation and assess underlying organizational resilience. Far from a mere academic construct, the HCEI is a practical management tool that translates complex change dynamics into a single, actionable composite score, empowering Georgian organizations to move from subjective impressions to evidence-based cultural governance.

### The Unique Contribution of the ISDMF

The ISDMF represents a contextually grounded, next-generation change management system that explicitly embeds behavioral discipline into the operational fabric of Georgian organizations. Its three defining innovations are as follows.

First, mandatory internal accountability enforces standardized planning, diagnosis, and measurement through designated internal roles and transparent dashboards, thereby eliminating the need for external consultants. This mechanism directly counters the procrastination and ownership deficits revealed by H<sub>06</sub> and H<sub>05</sub>.

Second, multimodal measurement via the Integrated Change Measurement Framework (ICMF) and Holistic Change Effectiveness Index (HCEI) integrates emotional (Psychological Safety Index), cognitive (Leadership Congruence Score), and operational (Organizational Adaptability Rate) data into a single composite index. By transcending conventional financial KPIs, it addresses the behavioral gaps identified in H<sub>02</sub> and H<sub>04</sub>.

Third, the action-oriented closed-loop cycle (Self-Diagnosis and Action, SDA) structures change into diagnose-act-re-evaluate phases.

#### Practical Extensions of the ISDMF

- The Best Practices Journal of Organizational Change (Georgian Case) establishes a confidential, cross-organizational platform for anonymous submission of SDA Cycle outcomes, quarterly curated reports of anonymized case studies, and sector-specific working groups. By breaking down knowledge silos, it converts individual experiments into collective intelligence, enabling LTB's process innovations to inform Elite and Public Registry risk protocols ultimately benefiting the Georgian Railway.
- The Guideline for Change Management in Georgia is a culturally calibrated playbook that adapts global models (Kotter, Lewin, PDCA) to Georgian hierarchical norms, respect

networks, and transitional realities. Key adaptations include framing urgency as a national duty and family legacy, leveraging informal elder advisors in coalition building, and celebrating short-term wins through public recognition rituals aligned with Georgian hospitality traditions. Delivered as a bilingual visual handbook with one-page SDA templates and an HCEI calculator, it is distributed free of charge through partnerships with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry of Economy, and universities.

The two initiatives operate in synergy to cultivate a sustainable culture of change in Georgia. The Guideline provides the strategic roadmap for culturally conscious transformation, while the Journal supplies the empirical learning loop and continuous refinement. Together they form a living national cycle: Guideline → Implementation → Measurement → Shared Learning → Continuous Improvement.

The integrated suite of instruments—the Integrated Self-Diagnosis and Measurement Framework (ISDMF), Self-Diagnosis and Action (SDA) Cycle, Holistic Change Effectiveness Index (HCEI), Best Practices Journal, and Georgian Change Management Guideline—creates a convergent ecosystem where knowledge, measurement, and culture reinforce one another. This constitutes the future of change management: success measured not only by outcomes, but by the depth of learning and evolution embedded in the process itself.

## Final Conclusion

This work establishes that successful organizational change in Georgia hinges on transcending external dependency and internal procrastination through mandated discipline and measured self-accountability. The Integrated Self-Diagnosis and Measurement Framework (ISDMF)—with its Self-Diagnosis and Action (SDA) Cycle and Holistic Change Effectiveness Index (HCEI)—delivers a self-contained, replicable system that transforms change management from a reactive crisis response into a proactive, institutionalized competency (George, 2007). By integrating internal rigor, cultural calibration, and national learning, the ISDMF equips Georgian organizations not only to execute change, but to master its evolution.

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