

# THE FACTORS IMPACTING EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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**Abstract.** In the financial sector, the need for organizational change is impacted by the consequences of pandemic, changes in consumer needs, competition, climate change, and increasing number of financial technology start-ups. The banks play a vital role in the economies of countries, so the changes taking place in them are undoubtedly important, and the commitment of employees to change is considered a necessary condition for the successful implementation of change. However, the studies, investigating how different factors contribute to the employees' commitment to change in the Lithuanian banking sector, are scant. Therefore, the aim of this article is to determine how transformational leadership style, organizational change goals, communication quality, and certainty affect employees' commitment to change in banking sector organization. The results of the study demonstrate that transformational leadership style, quality of change communication, clarity of goals, and certainty increase employees' commitment to change, and transformational leadership style increases employees' commitment to change by acting as a mediator between organizational communication, clarity of organizational change goals, and other information that increases employees' feeling of certainty. The findings provide insights for managers who want to support employees and seek the success of organizational changes.

**Keywords:** organizational change, commitment to change, transformational leadership style, organizational change goals, quality of change communication, certainty.

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## 1. Introduction

Organizations and employees constantly must adapt to new work conditions, environmental, and technological changes, so it is extremely important to properly manage organizational change. Organizational change is a widely discussed topic in various research articles. Levovnik and Gerbec (2018) define organizational change as a variation or the result of it in any area of the organization. Hussain et al. (2018) defines organizational change as the movement of an organization from a current state to a desired future state. In this article, organizational change is defined as the process of moving from one state to another to achieve a desired outcome. The successful outcome of organizational change determines adaptation of organization to the changing and competitive environment. Organizational change involves complex processes reaching many different levels of the organization and thus, are not always successful. According to scholars, the studies conducted since 1970 show that about 60–70% of organizational changes are unsuccessful (Men et al., 2020).

Organizational changes are directly related to the employees working in the organization and their response to the changes. The phenomenon that defines the desire and readiness of employees to understand, accept, and undertake changes is called employees' commitment to change (Albrecht et al., 2020). Employees' commitment to change is not the only phenomenon, determining a positive employee behavior in the context of organizational change. However, considering related concepts such as employee motivation or job satisfaction, employee commitment to change is the most important phenomenon that impacts success of organizational change (Seggewiss et al., 2019; Men et al., 2022).

Notably, various factors that help to increase employees' commitment to change lead to successful outcomes of organizational change. The employees who identify themselves with organizational and change goals and who demonstrate engagement and feel positive about the organizational changes will be more likely to accept and implement changes (Ouedraogo et al., 2023). Scientific

literature suggests that the most common reasons for resistance to organizational change are the following: fear of the uncertainty (Islam et al., 2021), lack of communication (Shrivastava et al., 2022), and lack of managerial support (Albrecht et al., 2020). Clarity of organizational change goals and communication quality can reduce feelings of uncertainty (Bordia et al., 2004) and the probability that organizational change will be rejected by employees due to ignorance and lack of information (Warrick, 2022). Employee dissatisfaction and low engagement in change can be reduced through the actions of manager, and the employees trust in manager and the change he communicates. The transformational leadership style adopted by managers is characterized by integrity, effective communication, influence, demonstration of inclusive decision-making, and the ability to convey a vision (Kim et al., 2021). Transformational leadership style is usually associated with a greater commitment of employees to change during organizational change (Islam et al., 2021).

Recently, the financial services sector has been affected by various external factors related to financial technology start-ups that threaten the traditional banking business model, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing needs of consumers, digital transformation and climate change. The role of banks in facilitating transactions, providing credit, supporting investment, and implementing monetary policy define their importance in promoting economic growth and stability. The banks play a vital role in the economies of countries, so the changes taking place in them undoubtedly remain in the center of attention of academia and practitioners. Therefore, the aim of this article is to determine how transformational leadership style, organizational change goals, communication quality, and certainty affect employees' commitment to change in banking sector organization. The investigation sheds light on employee commitment to change in Lithuanian banking sector.

The theoretical background, which provides a foundation for the subsequent discussion is presented in Section 2. Section 3 presents the research methodology applied in this study. Section 4 presents the results, followed by a discussion of the implications of these results in Section 5. Conclusions, limitations, and possible directions for future research are presented in the final section.

## 2. Theoretical background

Employees' commitment to change is a frequently investigated phenomenon in the scientific articles on organizational change and its implementation. The conducted studies show that the success of organizational changes depends on the extent to which employees support the change and demonstrate supportive behavior (Seggewiss et al., 2019). In addition, various studies reveal that employees do not always accept changes positively. Khaw et al. (2022) argues that change increases stress, decreases commitment, and loyalty. The scholars note that due to the uncertainty caused by innovation, employees

feel fear, demonstrate burnout, and lower engagement (Islam et al., 2021). Moreover, the resistance to change is perceived as a behavioral barrier to implementation of change (Wang, 2022). Thus, resistance to change can lead to negative feelings among employees, and at the same time is an unfavorable phenomenon for the organization, especially when it comes to the successful implementation of change. The scientific literature provides various reasons for resistance to change. Zwick (2002) identified organizational reasons such as communication, organizational norms and values, human resource practices and involvement of managers in change activities. Zhang et al. (2018) mentioned individual reasons, such as the psyche of the individual, personal characteristics, attitude, personal values and motivation. The scholars have emphasized that planning organizational change should consider both the implementation of change and the impact of organizational change on employees (Men et al., 2022). Therefore, the factors that help solve the most common causes of employee resistance to change and increase their commitment to change become extremely important.

*Transformational leadership style and employees' commitment to change.* Active support from the manager during organizational change is an important basis for the success of organizational change. The essential purpose of change leaders is to communicate about ongoing changes in ways that are acceptable to employees, to receive feedback, to motivate employees to seek changes, to promote faster implementation of changes, to manage arising conflicts, and to develop the readiness of the organization and its employees for changes (Korsakienė et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Albrecht et al. (2020) argue that when a leader actively represents and supports organizational change, he directly and indirectly influences the ability of organization to implement change, organizational culture, climate, and employees' commitment to change. Transformational leadership style is one of the most frequently discussed topics in the literature and is related to positive results for both organization and employees. Transformational leadership is understood as a process in which managers and subordinates change each other; it is stimulation and inspiration to achieve common goals, additional results, and increase leadership competencies through challenges and individual support (Stelmokienė & Endriulaitienė, 2009). Transformational leadership style can also be defined through the four dimensions of leadership such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention (Luu & Phan, 2020). Notably, behaviors and actions common to transformational leadership style are associated with greater employees' commitment to change (Islam et al., 2021) and is suitable for effective management of organizational change. The comparison of different styles revealed that transformational leadership style is related more to employees' commitment to change, especially when changes have a significant personal impact on employees (Luu & Phan, 2020). Transformational leadership style is associated with effective leadership, which influences operational results and alleviate the tensions among employees (Kim et al., 2021). Furthermore, transformational

leadership style is associated with successful communication (Cole et al., 2006), which is particularly important in the context of organizational change, both in communicating organizational change goals and improving change outcomes (Shrivastava et al., 2022). The positive influence of transformational leader on the employee's commitment to change is also supported by scientific research (Bagga et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021). Transformational leaders not only communicate and support change effectively but also inspire dedication among employees, making them crucial to the success of change initiatives. Thus, understanding how transformational leadership style is related to employees' commitment to change is important for empowering employees in the workplace and encouraging to adopt changes.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H1. Transformational leadership style is positively related to employees' commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment) to change.*

*Quality of organizational change communication and employees' commitment to change.* Communication is especially important tool in any organization when it comes to organizational change. Since changes are associated with newness and uncertainty, they can cause feelings of uncertainty and fear. Liu et al. (2022) argue that employees who feel fear of change may resist to it. Meanwhile, Zwick (2002) highlights the fear of job loss, which arises from the novelty of the future and possible demands for employees. Joseph (2010) notes that personal characteristics may cause why employees feel differently prepared and willing to adapt to changes. Notably, the changes influence feelings of uncertainty, which can be the reason for employees to react negatively and resist changes (Zwick, 2002). Communication of organizational changes is an important factor that allows employees to understand what results the change is aiming for and how the change will affect them personally, what to expect from the change, and therefore, can have a positive effect on employees' commitment to change. The positive impact of the quality of organizational change communication on the commitment to change is also justified by scientific studies (Shrivastava et al., 2022; Ramos-Maçães & Román-Portas, 2022). Therefore, communication quality appears to be important factor in organizational change. Communication quality assures accuracy, purposefulness of official information, achievement and involvement of employees in the process of implementing change, and the content of information, which includes the reasons for the organizational change and the personal concerns of employees related to the organizational change (Bordia et al., 2004). The understanding how quality of communication is related to employees' commitment to change is important for change success. Thus, the hypothesis is formulated:

*H2. The quality of organizational change communication is positively related to the commitment of employees to change.*

*Clarity of organizational change goals and employees' commitment to change.* The organizational change vision reflects the totality of information about the change and the expected result. Errida and Lotfi (2021) state that the change vision must describe the main characteristics of the desired state/result, the reasons why the change is needed, what the change's purpose and results are. The scholars suggest that clarity of organizational goals is directly related to employees' commitment to change (Albrecht et al., 2022). Haque et al. (2016) found a statistically significant relationship between communicated vision of change, which included clarity of goals, and employees' readiness for change. The scholars emphasize that the goals of organizational change, such as providing information on time, their concreteness, consistency, and disclosure of what is expected, have a direct impact on employees' commitment to change (Albrecht et al., 2020; Oreg et al., 2018). Therefore, without a clear understanding of how the change will be implemented, what the direction and goals of the change are, and what lies ahead, employees can experience uncertainty, anxiety, and other negative emotions. Clarity of organizational change goals is also associated with employees' commitment to change through perceptions of employee about the benefits of organizational change. Chebbi et al. (2020) argue that communication of change goals provides opportunity to explain the necessity of organizational change and to assess what lies ahead. Oreg et al. (2018) emphasize that if the employee accepts the change as matching his personal expectations and needs, he/she will see value in the change and be more willing to undertake it. Thus, when employees clearly know the goals of organizational change, they can see the benefits that are relevant to them and become more committed to change. The clarity of organizational change goals includes the clarity of the future direction of organization, the goals and desired results of organizational changes, the knowledge of the links between organizational changes and the long-term plans and direction of organization's activities (Albrecht et al., 2022). It is important to get insights on how clarity of organizational change goals is related to employees' commitment to change. Thus, the hypothesis is formulated:

*H3. Clarity of organizational change goals is positively related to employees' commitment to change.*

*Employees' feeling of certainty and employees' commitment to change.* In the context of organizational change, the uncertainty becomes a feeling common to employees. Uncertainty can cause various feelings ranging from stress and fear to dissatisfaction and reluctance to engage in change. Notably, employees experience uncertainty related to various aspects, ranging from the lack of knowledge what the goal of the change is, how the process will be implemented, to not knowing what the consequences of the change may await (Allen et al., 2007). Thus, uncommunicated change goals and desired results can create a feeling of uncertainty. Bordia et al. (2004) found a statistically

significant negative relationship between the quality of organizational change communication and the amount of uncertainty associated with organizational change. The studies suggest that the better employees can cope with stress, the more inclined they will be to accept change and commit to change (Oreg et al., 2018). Furthermore, the concept of uncertainty is associated with the aspect of knowledge about change, which directly creates benefits for the employee. Oreg et al. (2018) emphasize that if employee accepts the change as matching his/ her personal expectations and needs, he/she will see value in the change and be more willing to undertake it. Errida and Lotfi (2021) argue that the benefits created by the change, which are close to the employee, will encourage them to believe and engage in the change more. Also, the studies reveal that the more organizational change brings a feeling of certainty, the greater is employees' commitment to change. For example, Albrecht et al. (2022) found a statistically significant positive relationships between the clarity of work-related information that reflects employees' needs and commitment to change. Employees' feeling of certainty defined as clarity of employee's concerns related to the workplace, functions, adaptation to the new organizational culture, colleagues, the probability of promotion and compensation in change context and required new skills during the implementation of organizational change (Bordia et al., 2004). It is important to understand how employees' feeling of certainty is related to employees' commitment to change. Thus, the hypothesis is formulated:

*H4. Employees' feeling of certainty is positively related to employees' commitment to change.*

*Transformational leadership style as a mediator.* The review of the scientific literature presented above reveals that transformational leadership style chosen by the manager helps ensure successful change results. Transformational leadership takes a crucial role in bridging the gap between the quality of communication and employees' commitment to change. When transformational leaders communicate change initiatives clearly and compellingly, they inspire trust and motivation among employees. Furthermore, transformational leaders develop environment of support and encouragement, which enhances employees' confidence in their ability to adapt to change. Transformational leadership relates employees' commitment to change goals. These leaders articulate change goals in a way that is easy perceived by employees, making the objectives not only clear but also meaningful. They inspire a shared sense of purpose and urgency, which motivates employee to commit to the change. Transformational leaders communicate the vision and rationale behind the change in a way that is both compelling and easy to understand. This helps to reduce uncertainty and fosters a sense of stability among employees. Therefore, it can be assumed that transformational leadership style mediates the relationship between change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, certainty, and employees' commitment to change during organizational

change. On the other hand, a lower expression of transformational leadership style may limit the impact of organizational change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, and certainty on employees' commitment to change. Thus, the hypotheses are formulated:

*H5. Transformational leadership style mediates the relationship between quality of organizational change communication and employees' commitment to change.*

*H6. Transformational leadership style mediates the relationship between clarity of organizational change goals and employees' commitment to change.*

*H7. Transformational leadership style mediates the relationship between employees' feeling of certainty and employees' commitment to change.*

### 3. Methodology

A survey was used for empirical research, aiming to verify the hypotheses. The survey data were collected in September 2023–October 2023 in one of the banking sector organizations in Lithuania. A questionnaire was developed aiming to collect data and consisted of demographic questions (respondent's age, gender, position, and length of service) and questions measuring perceived transformational leadership style, quality of organizational change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, employees' feeling of certainty and employees' commitment to change. An email inviting 391 employees of the banking sector organization to complete a questionnaire with a link to the survey was sent. The answers from 252 respondents were received for further analysis.

#### *Variables and measures*

*Employees' commitment to change (ECC).* This is a dependent variable that measures employees' commitment to change through three dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment to change. To measure this variable, Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) Employees' Commitment to Change Scale was used. The scale consists of 18 statements, six statements for each dimension of employees' commitment to change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is completely disagree with the statement, 5 – completely agree with the statement. The reliability of the Employees' Commitment to Change Scale is high, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha coefficient,  $\alpha = 0.85$  (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

*Perceived transformational leadership style (PTLS).* This is an independent variable that defines the manager's transformational leadership style. To measure this variable, the Lithuanian version of the General Transformational Leadership Scale was used (Carless et al., 2000, as cited in Stelmokienė & Endriulaitienė, 2009). The scale consists of 7 statements describing the behavior of the manager, which the respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to



5, where 1 – the behavior of the manager does not occur, 5 – the behavior of the manager occurs very often. The reliability of the Lithuanian version of the General Transformational Leadership Scale is very high, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha coefficient,  $\alpha = 0.925$  (Stelmokienė & Endriulaitienė, 2009).

*Quality of organizational change communication (QOCC).* This is an independent variable that defines perceived quality of communication during organizational change. To measure this variable, the Questionnaire of Change communication was used (Bordia et al., 2004). The questionnaire consists of 7 statements defining such components of communication quality as, for example, informativeness and accuracy (Bordia et al., 2004). Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is completely disagree with the statement, 5 – completely agree with the statement. The reliability of the Questionnaire of Change communication is high, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha coefficient,  $\alpha = 0.89$  (Bordia et al., 2004).

*Clarity of organizational change goals (COCG).* This is an independent variable that defines clarity of organizational change goals. To measure this variable, Albrecht et al. (2022) presented 4 statements used as a scale. Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is completely disagree with the statement, 5 – completely agree with the statement. The reliability of the clarity of organizational change goals scale is very high, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha coefficient,  $\alpha = 0.94$  (Albrecht et al., 2022).

*Employees' feeling of certainty (EFC).* This is an independent variable that responds to the needs of employees related to stress, well-being, living conditions, measuring how much feeling of certainty in these aspects is provided by the organizational change. To measure this variable, Bordia et al. (2004) presented 9 statements used as a scale. Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is completely defined / clear, 5 – completely undefined / unclear. The reliability of the employees' feeling of certainty scale is high, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha coefficient,  $\alpha = 0.89$  (Bordia et al., 2004).

### Analytical approach and data analysis

To confirm the suitability of the research measuring instruments, the reliability of the quantitative research scales and the consistency of their internal structure were evaluated using Cronbach alpha. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) varies between 0 and 1 (Pakalniškienė, 2012). A scale or group of questions can be considered consistent if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.70 or more (Pakalniškienė, 2012).

Construct validity was also assessed, which answers the question whether the test, scale or methodology measures what is intended (Pakalniškienė, 2012). To determine the validity of the used scales, an exploratory factor analysis was performed, which is usually used to assess the validity of the used scales and questionnaires (Pakalniškienė,

2012). To check whether the data are suitable for exploratory factor analysis, Bartlett's test of sphericity was calculated, which shows whether there are statistically significant correlations between the variables and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was calculated, which shows whether the correlations of pairs of variables are explained by other variables (Pakalniškienė, 2012). The data are suitable for factor analysis when Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant (significance level  $p < 0.05$ ) and the KMO measure is equal to 0.6 or more, if the KMO measure is less than 0.5, then the data are not suitable for factor analysis (Pakalniškienė, 2012). During the exploratory factor analysis, the "Direct Oblimin" factor axis rotation method was used, because the constructs are related to each other (Pakalniškienė, 2012).

To check the distribution of data, the Shapiro-Wilk test was calculated. This coefficient allows checking whether the data in the sample is normally distributed (Hanusz et al., 2016). If the significance level of the Shapiro-Wilk test is less than 0.05, then the data are not normally distributed (Pakalniškienė, 2012).

To assess whether there are differences between respondents according to gender and position, the Student's t-test criteria was calculated for independent samples, which is used for analysis if there are two different groups for comparison (Bekešienė, 2015). Differences between groups exist if the significance level of the Student's t-test criteria is lower than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Čekanavičius & Murauskas, 2015). To assess whether there are differences between the respondents according to their age and length of service in the organization, one-factor Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed and the Kruskal-Wallis test for non-parametric criteria was calculated (Bekešienė, 2015). Differences between respondents in terms of age and length of service in the organization will be significant if the significance level of the Kruskal-Wallis test is lower than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Čekanavičius & Murauskas, 2015).

To determine the relationships between the constructs, according to the hypotheses 1–4, the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient was calculated, since the data are not normally distributed and the relationship of ordinal data is measured (Čekanavičius & Murauskas, 2004). The data analysis was performed by using statistical analysis software "SPSS Statistics".

To test hypotheses 5–7, the analysis of the mediating variable was performed. This method allows to evaluate the effect of a variable considered as a mediator on the relationship between dependent and independent variables (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). Calculations to test the hypotheses were performed with the SPSS using the Process macro, according to the Model 4, which is designed for simple mediation analysis with one mediator, one independent variable and one dependent variable (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). The first relationship (a) is determined between the independent variable (X) and mediator (M), the second relationship (b) is determined between mediator (M) and the dependent variable (Y), the third relationship (c') is determined between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable

(Y), considering the mediator (M), this relationship is called the direct effect (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). The total effect of mediation (c) is the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y), plus the indirect effect resulting from the product of the first two relationships a and b (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). A mediation model is statistically significant when all mentioned relationships are statistically significant, significance level is greater than 0.01 ( $p > 0.01$ ) (Igartua & Hayes, 2021). Mediation analysis requires the use of normally distributed data to be accurate. Since the data in this study are not normally distributed ( $p < 0.05$ ), Bootstrapping was used for mediation analyses. With the help of this resampling method, the sample is repeatedly formed using the same data many times, each time estimating the indirect effect of the independent variable (Igartua & Hayes, 2021).

### 4. Results of the research

The survey was completed by 252 respondents. The demographic data of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic data

Demographic characteristics	Variables	Number of respondents (N)	Percentage of respondents in the sample (%)
Position	Specialist	188	74.60%
	Manager	64	25.40%
Length of service (year)	1–2	23	9.13%
	2.1–5	59	23.41%
	5.1–10	55	21.83%
	10.1–20	52	20.63%
	> 20	63	25.00%
Age (year)	18–30	20	7.94%
	31–40	88	34.92%
	41–50	61	24.21%
	51–60	63	25.00%
	61 and more	20	7.94%
Gender	Male	100	39.68%
	Female	152	60.32%
	Other	0	0.00%

To confirm the suitability of the research measuring instruments, the reliability of the scales and the consistency of their internal structure were assessed and the validity of the construct was assessed. It was also calculated whether the data were normally distributed. The reliability of the research scales (Appendix, Table 11), internal structure consistency and construct validity were confirmed (Appendix, Table 12, Table 13). It was found that the data are not normally distributed (Appendix, Table 14).

To assess whether there are differences between respondents according to gender and position, the Student's t-test criteria was calculated for independent samples.

**Table 2.** Results of the analysis of groups by position, gender

Construct	Position	Standard deviation	Significance level	Gender	Standard deviation	Significance level
PTLS	Specialist	0.540	0.264	Female	0.575	0.562
	Manager	0.718	0.207	Male	0.649	0.560
QOCC	Specialist	0.461	0.114	Female	0.521	0.366
	Manager	0.746	0.106	Male	0.599	0.359
COCG	Specialist	0.402	0.023	Female	0.299	0.956
	Manager	0.274	0.033	Male	0.361	0.956
EFC	Specialist	0.535	0.953	Female	0.602	0.938
	Manager	0.871	0.952	Male	1.089	0.938
ECC	Specialist	0.745	0.084	Female	0.765	0.569
	Manager	1.089	0.063	Male	1.060	0.578

Table 2 shows that, the significance levels of most Student's t-test values Significance level are greater than 0.05, so there are no statistically significant differences between the groups by gender and position. However, there is a statistically significant difference between groups of specialists and managers and the clarity of organizational change goals ( $p = 0.033 < 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.023 < 0.05$ ). The averages of the clarity of organizational change goals according to groups of specialists and managers are presented in Table 3, which shows that, statistically significantly, the group of managers perceives the organizational change goals as clearer, compared to the group of specialists.

**Table 3.** Averages of clarity of organizational change goals by specialist and manager groups

Construct	Position	Average	Significance level
COCG	Specialist	11.22	0.023
	Manager	12.34	0.033

To assess whether there are differences between the respondents according to their age and length of service in the organization, one-factor Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed and the Kruskal-Wallis test for non-parametric criteria was calculated.

**Table 4.** The results of the analysis of groups according to the length of service and age

Construct	According to the length of service		According to the age	
	Value of Kruskal-Wallis test	Significance level	Value of Kruskal-Wallis test	Significance level
PTLS	11.486	0.022	20.414	<0.001
QOCC	4.459	0.347	7.425	0.115
COCG	1.745	0.783	3.035	0.552
EFC	5.610	0.230	5.935	0.204
ECC	3.350	0.501	3.154	0.532

Table 4 shows that, significance levels of many Kruskal-Wallis test values are greater than 0.05, so there are no statistically significant differences between the groups according to the length of service and age. However, there is a statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of length of service in the organization and perceived transformational leadership style ( $p = 0.022 < 0.05$ ). There is also a statistically significant difference between age and perceived transformational leadership style ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). Table 5 and Table 6 present differences of the perceived transformational leadership style between the groups according to the length of service and age.

**Table 5.** Assessment of perceived transformational leadership style based on length of service

Groups by length of service (year)	Value of Bonfferoni test	Standard deviation	Bonfferoni-adjusted significance levels
> 20 – 5.1–10	27.561	13.415	0.399
> 20 – 10.1–20	30.603	13.620	0.246
> 20 – 2.1–5	37.782	13.170	0.041
> 20 – 1–2	45.551	17.710	0.101
5.1–10 – 10.1–20	-3.042	14.060	1.000
5.1–10 – 2.1–5	10.222	13.625	1.000
5.1–10 – 1–2	17.990	18.051	1.000
10.1–20 – 2.1–5	7.180	13.827	1.000
10.1–20 – 1–2	14.948	18.204	1.000
2.1–5 – 1–2	7.768	17.869	1.000

Table 5 shows that, there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of length of service – those working for more than 20 years and working from 2.1 to 5 years ( $p = 0.041 < 0.05$ ). According to the presented average evaluations of the perceived transformational leadership style in groups according to length of service (Table 7), respondents working in the organization for more than 20 years rate the perceived transformational leadership style statistically significantly lower, compared to respondents working in the organization from 2 to 5 years.

**Table 6.** Assessment of perceived transformational leadership style based on age groups

Groups by age (year)	Value of Bonfferoni test	Standard deviation	Bonfferoni-adjusted significance levels
51–60 – 61 and more	-22.306	18.657	1.000
51–60 – 41–50	31.004	13.620	0.228
51–60 – 18–30	45.931	18.657	0.138
51–60 – 31–40	51.681	11.762	0.000
61 and more – 41–50	8.698	19.127	1.000
61 and more – 18–30	23.625	22.987	1.000
61 and more – 31–40	29.374	17.852	0.999
41–50 – 18–30	14.927	19.127	1.000
41–50 – 31–40	20.676	12.494	0.979
18–30 – 31–40	-5.749	17.852	1.000

Table 6 shows that, there is a statistically significant difference between two groups of respondents, respondents aged 51–60 and respondents aged 31–40 ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). According to the presented average evaluations of the perceived transformational leadership style in groups according to age (Table 8), respondents aged 51–60 rate statistically significantly lower perceived transformational leadership style compared to respondents aged 31–40.

**Table 7.** Average evaluations of the perceived transformational leadership style in groups according to length of service

Groups by length of service (year)	Number of respondents (N)	Average evaluation
1–2	23	146.72
2.1–5	59	138.95
5.1–10	55	128.73
10.1–20	52	131.77
more than 20	63	101.17

**Table 8.** Average evaluations of the perceived transformational leadership style in groups according to age

Groups by age (year)	Number of respondents (N)	Average evaluation
18–30	20	140.73
31–40	97	146.47
41–50	52	125.80
51–60	63	94.79
61 and more	20	117.10

To determine the relationships between the constructs, according to hypotheses 1–4, the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient was calculated. All calculated Spearman correlations are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), except for the correlations of employees' continuance commitment to change and perceived transformational leadership style, quality of organizational change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, employees' feeling of certainty constructs ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 9). The lowest statistically significant positive correlation obtained is between perceived transformational leadership style and employees' normative commitment to change ( $r = 0.260$ ). The highest statistically significant positive correlations were obtained between the clarity of organizational change goals and employees' affective commitment to change ( $r = 0.588$ ), employees' commitment to change ( $r = 0.517$ ).

During the mediation analysis of variables, in all three cases the mediator was the perceived transformational leadership style, the dependent variable was the employees' commitment to change, the independent variables were: quality of organizational change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, employees' feeling of certainty. The obtained results of the analysis of mediation models are presented in Table 10. Here, the symbol B represents the product of mediator and the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. SE

**Table 9.** Spearman correlations between constructs

Spearman correlation coefficients and significance levels				
Constructs	Employees' commitment to change	Employees' affective commitment to change	Employees' continuance commitment to change	Employees' normative commitment to change
Perceived transformational leadership style	0.318*	0.369*	-0.019	0.260*
Quality of organizational change communication	0.394*	0.481*	-0.017	0.306*
Clarity of organizational change goals	0.517*	0.588*	0.006	0.390*
Employees' feeling of certainty	0.391*	0.512*	-0.065	0.284*

Note: \*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 10.** Results of the mediation analysis of variables

Indirect X effect on Y through a mediator – perceived transformational leadership style					
Dependent variable (Y)	Independent variable (X)	B	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Employees' commitment to change	Quality of organizational change communication	0.1464	0.0486	0.0583*	0.2484*
Employees' commitment to change	Clarity of organizational change goals	0.1576	0.0878	-0.0169*	0.3329*
Employees' commitment to change	Employees' feeling of certainty	0.1351	0.0461	0.0471*	0.2291*

Note: \* The lower-level and upper-level confidence intervals (LLCI, ULCI) are not equal to 0, indicating that the mediation is statistically significant.

represents the standard error estimate. The LLCI and ULCI are confidence intervals that indicate whether the mediation analysis is statistically significant.

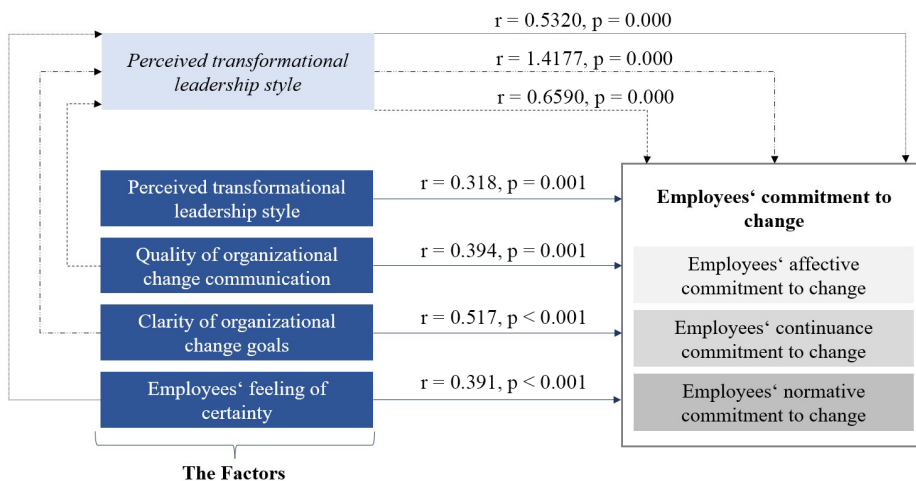
The mediation analysis shows that the perceived transformational leadership style, as a mediator, has a statistically significant indirect effect and strengthens the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, in all cases where the independent variables are the quality of organizational change communication, the clarity of organizational change goals, the employees' feeling of certainty, and the dependent variable is employees' commitment to change.

### 5. Discussion

The results of this empirical study reveal an interaction model between the selected factors impacting employee commitment to change, i.e., perceived transformational

leadership style, clarity of organizational change goals, quality of organizational change communication, employees' feeling of certainty and employees' commitment to change during organizational change (Figure 1).

The results of an empirical study conducted in the banking sector organization show that perceived transformational leadership style ( $r = 0.318, p < 0.001$ ), quality of organizational change communication ( $r = 0.394, p < 0.001$ ), clarity of organizational change goals ( $r = 0.517, p < 0.001$ ) and employees' feeling of certainty ( $r = 0.391, p < 0.001$ ) significantly increase employees' commitment to change. These results are similar to other studies results reviewed in this article. Obtained statistically significant correlations show, that the clarity of organizational change goals has the greatest influence on employees' commitment to change in the banking sector organization.



**Figure 1.** Confirmed model



Perceived transformational leadership style statistically significantly increases the overall commitment of employees to change. Also, transformational leadership style influences employees' affective commitment to change ( $r = 0.369$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and employees' normative commitment to change ( $r = 0.260$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Contrary to other studies (Kim et al., 2021), the study did not find a statistically significant relationship between perceived transformational leadership style and employees' continuance commitment to change ( $p = 0.767 > 0.05$ ). In a study conducted by Ramos-Maçães and Román-Portas (2022), a transformational leader increases employees' commitment to change primarily by ensuring that employees accept the change through personal values, an emphasized relationship between managers and employees, and personally accepted organizational change vision and goals. We have defined a transformational leader in this article as one who, by his behavior, promotes the acceptance of the future vision, internal motivation, involvement, cooperation and support of common goals and trust. Meanwhile, continuance commitment to change is more reflective of and based on the perceived cost associated with resistance to change (Luu & Phan, 2020). The influence of the transformational leadership style through increasing intrinsic motivation and commitment, rather than through the communication of perceived cost of resistance, may have led to the absence of a statistically significant relationship between perceived transformational leadership style and employees' continuance commitment to change.

Notably, perceived transformational leadership style plays a significant mediating role and strengthens the positive influence of quality of organizational change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, employees' feeling of certainty on employees' commitment to change. The obtained results let us suggest that the behavior of managers, which is close to the characteristic of transformational leadership style, is particularly important to implement an effective organizational change. First, managers, who adopt transformational leadership style can increase employees' commitment to change through conveying a clear vision of the future, encouraging, and supporting employees, motivating, recognizing employee achievements, creating a cooperative and inclusive team climate, and building trust. Second, managers, who adopt transformational leadership style act as mediators between the communication and information provided by the organization to employees, about the goals of organizational change, and issues of concern to employees. The results suggest that it is especially important to provide managers with the necessary information and clear guidelines so that they can properly and qualitatively perform the role of mediator, to achieve even greater employees' commitment to change, and at the same time, successful organizational change.

The differences between groups by demographic characteristics are worth to be discussed. The results show that the goals of the organizational change are understood as clearer by the group of managers as compared to the

group of specialists. The explanation resides in several aspects. First, in most cases, organizational change is initiated by managers, so they can better understand the goals of organizational change. Second, it is possible that the organization's communication about the goals of the organizational change is more focused and directed towards the management group. This aspect could be viewed positively, as the results of the study show that managers act as mediators between the clarity of organizational change goals and employees' commitment to change. When organization concentrates the communication about the goals of organizational change on the group of managers, it can influence the successful implementation of organizational change. On the other hand, if employees do not know or understand the goals of organizational change, they may be less committed to and involved in the change (Albrecht et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to consider and target the communication of organizational change specifically to the group of specialists.

The employees who have been working in a banking sector organization for more than 20 years rate the transformational leadership style statistically significantly lower, compared to the group of employees whose length of service is between 2 and 5 years. Meanwhile, respondents aged 51–60 rate statistically significantly lower perceived transformational leadership style compared to respondents aged 31–40. Employees' age and length of service in the organization can influence how employees perceive manager's support and how they think and behave in the organization (Kim et al., 2021). The study conducted by Shore et al. (2003), considered differences between older, therefore longer working in organization employees and younger, shorter working in organization employees and their job satisfaction and commitment to change. The results revealed that the job satisfaction of older and longer working in organization employees is not statistically significantly different from that of younger, shorter working in organization employees, but older and longer working in organization employees are statistically significantly less committed to change (Shore et al., 2003). Ouedraogo et al. (2023) also found that employees who have been working longer in the organization are statistically significantly less committed to change. The employees who have been working longer may be too accustomed to the existing organization, work tasks and routines (Ouedraogo et al., 2023) and thus, they may not want organizational change and do not accept a manager with a transformational leadership style who invites to believe in the vision of change, the goals, encourages commitment to change and organization. Also, employees who have been working longer may unfavorably evaluate the behavior of a transformational style manager, because he/she, promoting change, in a certain sense also voices the necessity of future uncertainty or a different result, so employees may feel the fear that they will not be able to acquire the necessary competencies. Since the actions demonstrated by the transformational style manager are evaluated less favorably by respondents who have worked longer and who are

older, it can be assumed that increasing the employees' commitment to change belonging to such demographic groups may be more difficult through the transformational behavior of the manager. Considering the results of this study and the differences between the groups in terms of age and length of service, it is important to assess the length of service and age of the team members before the manager takes actions and to discover such actions that involve all employees in the organizational change.

## 6. Conclusions

The results of this study revealed that leaders demonstrating a transformational leadership style, timely, accurate and targeted organizational change communication, the presentation of organizational change goals and providing employees with relevant information that increases feeling of certainty are success factors that increase employees' commitment to change and are necessary for successful organizational change implementation in the banking sector organization.

Transformational style managers play a pivotal role in the context of implementing organizational changes in the banking sector organization, because they influence commitment of employees to change and act as mediators between organizational change communication, clarity of organizational change goals, and other information that increases employees' feeling of certainty and commitment of employees to change.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as the position, may have an influence on the perception of the clarity of organizational change goals, which statistically significantly differed between the employees holding managerial and specialist positions. The results showed that the organizational change goals are understood as clearer by the group of managers compared to the group of specialists in the banking sector organization.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age and length of service, can influence the evaluation of the transformational style manager. The results of the study revealed that the employees of the banking sector organization, who are older and have been working longer, rate the transformational manager who invites them to believe in the vision of change, the goals, and encourages commitment both to changes and to the organization, less favorably than younger employees who have been working for a shorter period. Therefore, a transformational leader may have less influence on increasing employees' commitment to change in these groups.

The obtained results of the empirical study contribute to the prevailing scientific discussion and have practical implications. However, the study is not without limitations. The study was conducted in a specific banking sector organization, which adopt different work practices from other organizations, in terms of operational goals and performance. Therefore, it would be useful to repeat the future studies in other organizations, aiming to compare results. To achieve even greater practical application of the

results, the future studies can include other factors relevant for quality of organizational change communication and clarity of goals.

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**APPENDIX**

**Table 11.** Results of internal reliability analysis of research constructs

*End of Table 11*

Construct	Statement code	Adjusted statement correlation coefficients	Value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Perceived transformational leadership style (PTLS)	PTLS1	0.821	0.961
	PTLS2	0.872	
	PTLS3	0.871	
	PTLS4	0.871	
	PTLS5	0.850	
	PTLS6	0.885	
	PTLS7	0.862	
Quality of organizational change communication (QOCC)	QOCC1	0.772	0.923
	QOCC2	0.673	
	QOCC3	0.812	
	QOCC4	0.748	
	QOCC5	0.838	
	QOCC6	0.766	
	QOCC7	0.723	
Clarity of organizational change goals (COCG)	COCG1	0.803	0.925
	COCG2	0.819	
	COCG3	0.821	
	COCG4	0.865	
Employees' feeling of certainty (EFC)	EFC1	0.512	0.857
	EFC2	0.646	
	EFC3	0.485	
	EFC4	0.507	
	EFC5	0.475	
	EFC6	0.720	
	EFC7	0.539	
	EFC8	0.716	
	EFC9	0.635	
Employees' affective commitment to change (EACC)	EACC1	0.808	0.912
	EACC2	0.790	
	EACC3	0.699	
	EACC4	0.741	
	EACC5	0.760	
	EACC6	0.743	

Construct	Statement code	Adjusted statement correlation coefficients	Value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Employees' continuance commitment to change (ECCC)	ECCC1	-0.153 (rejected, because it results low Cronbach's alpha)	0.463 / 0.866 (value after removing statements ECCC1, ECCC2)
		-0.262 (rejected, because it results low Cronbach's alpha)	
	ECCC3	0.553 / 0.720 (value after removing statements ECCC1, ECCC2)	
		0.578 / 0.797 (value after removing statements ECCC1, ECCC2)	
	ECCC5	0.606 / 0.846 (value after removing statements ECCC1, ECCC2)	
	ECCC6	0.357 / 0.518 (value after removing statements ECCC1, ECCC2)	
Employees' normative commitment to change (ENCC)	ENCC1	0.498	0.866
	ENCC2	0.515	
	ENCC3	0.415	
	ENCC4	0.561	
	ENCC5	0.519	
	ENCC6	0.440	





**Table 14.** Analysis of the distribution of a data set

Construct	Construct code	Shapiro–Wilk test	Shapiro–Wilk test significance level
Perceived transformational leadership style	PTLS	0.886	<0.001
Quality of organizational change communication	QOCC	0.984	0.005
Clarity of organizational change goals	COCG	0.984	0.005
Employees' feeling of certainty	ECF	0.984	0.005
Employees' affective commitment to change	EACC	0.972	<0.001
Employees' continuance commitment to change	ECCC	0.972	<0.001
Employees' normative commitment to change	ENCC	0.980	0.001