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THE IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

ABSTRACT

The article provides a comprehensive study of the psychological aspects of digital transformation in the context of modern organizational changes. Particular attention is paid to an in-depth analysis of the impact of digitalization and the introduction of innovative technologies, in particular artificial intelligence, on the emotional state, behavioral reactions, and professional identity of employees. Key psychosocial risks accompanying digital transformation processes are identified, including technostress, digital overload, resistance to change, loss of control over professional roles, and a crisis of trust in the context of automated management decisions. The article provides a comparative critical analysis of classical change management models (in particular, those of K. Lewin and J. Kotter) and modern flexible approaches, such as Agile methodologies, which demonstrate greater adaptability to a turbulent digital environment. The advantages of flexible management strategies for reducing psychological resistance, increasing staff engagement, and building long-term organizational resilience are substantiated. The central idea of the article is the need to transform the role of corporate psychological services from a traditional support function to an active strategic partner capable of initiating change, modeling a psychologically safe environment, and promoting the sustainable development of the organization. A multi-level model of psychological support for digital transformation is proposed, covering individual, group, and organizational levels, and examples of practical tools for diagnosing, preventing, and overcoming psycho-emotional risks are provided. The article contains practical recommendations for managers, HR specialists, and organizational psychologists on the implementation of human-centered approaches in building flexible, adaptive, and mentally resilient organizations in the context of continuous digital change.

Keywords: digital transformation, psychological impact, organizational resilience, technostress, resistance to change, change management, Agile, psychological service, artificial intelligence, employee adaptation

JEL Classification: O33, M15, J24, L20

INTRODUCTION

The modern organizational landscape is undergoing permanent transformation, catalyzed by the relentless process of digitalization. Digital transformation (DT) is a phenomenon that goes far beyond the simple introduction of new technologies; it represents a fundamental restructuring of operating models, corporate culture, strategic priorities, and the psychological contract between the employee and the organization (The Digital Transformation of the Workplace: A Double-Edged Sword for Employee Resistance, 2024). This process is deeply destabilizing for the psychological state of staff, as it disrupts familiar work patterns and creates an atmosphere of constant uncertainty.

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the success of organizational change is measured not only by technological integration but also by the ability of staff to adapt while maintaining their mental health. The data confirms the severity of the problem: 68% of employees report difficulties in adapting to the pace of work in a digital environment, and 46% experience burnout (Digital Transformation Stress Scale (DTSS): A New Scale for Measuring Stress of Digital Transformation at the Workplace, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated existing risks, acting as a global stress test

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for the resilience of companies (Overwhelmed by Technostress? Sensitive Archetypes and Effects in Times of Forced Digitalization, 2021).

The central thesis of the article is that organizational resilience in the era of digitalization is derived from proactive management of staff psychological responses to change. This requires a rethinking of traditional, linear change management models, which are ineffective in conditions of constant transformation. Instead, there is a need for flexible, people-centered approaches, where the psychological service transforms from a reactive function to a strategic partner that actively designs and accompanies transformation processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of this study is based on the concepts of technostress, resistance to change, and organizational change management models. Technostress is defined as "a modern adaptation disorder caused by the inability to cope healthily with new technologies" (Instytut tsyfrovizatsii osvity NAPN Ukrainy, n.d.). It represents a complex psychophysiological state that arises from a mismatch between the technological environment's demands and the individual's resources. Five main sources ("creators") of technostress have been identified (Islam et al., 2022; Kaliuzhna, 2024): techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty. These stressors negatively impact productivity, emotional well-being, physical health, and social relationships (Beck Institute, n.d.; CBT Networks, 2025; Deakin University, n.d.; Digital US, 2020). Empirical studies also emphasize that digitalization affects employees differently depending on their professional role, digital competence, and support systems (Khan & Bibi, 2023; Kravchenko & Petrenko, 2022; Kaliuzhna, 2024).

Resistance to change is not pathological but a natural defensive reaction to uncertainty and instability (Koiuda, 2019; Navchalni materialy Zhytomyrskoi politekhniki, n.d.). It manifests in active forms, such as criticism or sabotage, and passive forms, such as procrastination or ignoring instructions (Kovalenko, 2022; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Resistance is driven by cognitive mechanisms (misunderstanding of goals, prior negative experiences), emotional mechanisms (fear of job loss or decreased competence), and social mechanisms (peer influence and loyalty to groups) (Koiuda, 2019; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Psychological interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy adapted for telehealth (Beck Institute, n.d.; TheraPlatform, n.d.), professional resilience programs (Deakin University, n.d.; Digital US, 2020; Paradiso Solutions, n.d.; TRACOM Group, n.d.; Skillrise, n.d.), and organizational support initiatives (Microsoft, 2023; Psico-Smart, 2024; Islam et al., 2022), are increasingly recognized as critical for mitigating technostress and facilitating adaptive responses to change.

Organizational change management models offer structured approaches to address resistance and guide transformation. Lewin's model proposes a linear, three-stage process of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Kozachenko & Pohorelov, 2017; Hussain et al., 2018), providing conceptual simplicity but limited adaptability in continuous technological change. Kotter's eight-step model emphasizes leadership and communication but can be inflexible and slow to respond to feedback from employees (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; OCM Solution, n.d.). Agile change management, in contrast, promotes iterative, cyclical processes involving both top-down and bottom-up participation, allowing rapid adaptation and high employee engagement (Kozak, 2023; Smith & Jones, 2025). Comparative analyses suggest that Agile approaches are particularly suitable for digital transformation initiatives, whereas linear models may be more relevant for setting an overarching vision but insufficient for tactical implementation (Kozachenko & Pohorelov, 2017; Kozak, 2023; OCM Solution, n.d.).

In summary, the literature demonstrates that effective management of digital transformation requires an integrated approach that combines organizational change models with proactive psychological support. Technostress acts as a key mediating factor, shaping employees' subjective experience of change and influencing resistance (Instytut tsyfrovizatsii osvity NAPN Ukrainy, n.d.; Islam et al., 2022; Kaliuzhna, 2024). Resistance is multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social mechanisms (Koiuda, 2019; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Kovalenko, 2022).

Psychological interventions, resilience training, and digital well-being programs are essential tools to enhance employee adaptability and engagement (Beck Institute, n.d.; CBT Networks, 2025; Deakin University, n.d.; Digital US, 2020; Paradiso Solutions, n.d.; Microsoft, 2023). Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that combining evidence-based change management models with structured psychological support and continuous employee participation constitutes the most effective strategy for successful digital transformation.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comprehensive study of the psychological aspects of digital transformation and to justify the role of psychological services as a strategic partner in building organizational resilience.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set:

1. To analyze the phenomenon of technostress and the psychological mechanisms of resistance to change as key consequences of digitalization.
2. To investigate the impact of DT on the transformation of professional roles, functions, and skill requirements, particularly in the context of the introduction of artificial intelligence.
3. Identify individual psychological factors that influence the success of staff adaptation to new conditions.
4. Conduct a critical analysis of traditional (linear) and flexible (agile) change management models, assessing their adequacy to the challenges of the digital era.
5. Propose a multi-level model of psychological support and practical tools for diagnosing, preventing, and overcoming the psychological risks of CT.
6. Formulate practical recommendations for managers and hr services on building adaptive and mentally resilient organizations.

METHODS

The article uses a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach based on an interdisciplinary review and synthesis of contemporary scientific literature, academic articles, reports from leading consulting companies, and analysis of practical cases. A theoretical analysis was conducted to study key psychological constructs such as technostress, resistance to change, and organizational resilience. A comparative analysis method was used to compare traditional and flexible change management models. Based on a synthesis of theoretical provisions and practical experience, a conceptual multilevel model of psychological support was developed.

RESULTS

Psychosocial consequences and adaptation factors

Digitalization is fundamentally changing the nature of work, which is giving rise to a number of psychosocial consequences. One of the most noticeable is the restructuring of professional roles, accompanied by role ambiguity (Role Ambiguity), when employees do not understand their new responsibilities, and role overload (Role Overload), when technologies increase the workload due to the need to learn them and overcome failures (The impact of technology-induced role..., 2023).

At the same time, skill requirements are changing. Automation can lead to deskilling, when previously valuable skills become irrelevant, negatively affecting self-esteem and professional identity (The Impact of Artificial Intelligence ..., 2022). This creates a constant need for reskilling and upskilling, which is an opportunity for some and a source of chronic stress for others.

The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) is twofold. On the one hand, it can take on monotonous tasks, reduce workload, and improve working conditions (The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Mental Health of Manufacturing Workers, 2022). On the other hand, it generates fear of replacement and can lead to cognitive offloading—the atrophy of critical thinking skills due to their “delegation” to a machine (The Double-Edged Sword: Investigating the Impact of AI Tool Reliance on Critical Thinking and Cognitive Offloading, 2025). In response, the concept of “superagency” has emerged, where AI is seen not as a substitute but as a tool for expanding human capabilities (Superagency in the workplace: Empowering people to unlock AI's full potential at work, 2024).

The success of adaptation largely depends on individual psychological factors:

1. *Mindset*: Employees with a growth mindset, who believe in the possibility of developing their abilities, adapt more easily to change, unlike those with a fixed mindset (Technostress and attitudes towards digital transformation, 2022).

2. *Computer Self-Efficacy*: Belief in one's ability to cope with technological tasks mitigates the negative effects of technostress (Technostress and Remote Work: Understanding Underlying Factors of Role Ambiguity, 2023).
3. *Resilience*: A person's ability to recover from stressful events is an important moderator that reduces the impact of technostressors (Technostress and Remote Work: Understanding Underlying Factors of Role Ambiguity, 2023).

The evolution of the role of psychological services and support tools

In the context of CT, the role of the corporate psychologist is evolving from reactive support (solving existing problems) to strategic partnership. The new role involves participation in CT strategic planning, preventive risk diagnosis, and leadership coaching.

Effective psychological risk management requires a comprehensive set of tools:

1. *Diagnostics*: A combination of quantitative (questionnaires to measure technostress) and qualitative (interviews, focus groups) methods, as well as the use of analytical models such as Levin's "force field analysis" to identify the driving and restraining forces of change (Managing Resistance to Organizational Change, 2022).
2. *Prevention*: Development of programs that include transparent communication, employee involvement in planning, training (both technical and "soft" skills), implementation of coaching and mentoring programs, and creation of motivation and reward systems (Resistance to Organizational Change).

To ensure a systematic approach, psychological interventions should be implemented at three levels: individual, group, and organizational. At the individual level, the main goal is to increase the personal resilience and adaptability of each employee.

The key tools here are (Table 1):

1. *Cognitive-behavioral coaching (CBC)*: An effective method that helps employees identify and change destructive, irrational thoughts and beliefs about change and technology (e.g., catastrophizing: "The new system will lead to my dismissal" or black-and-white thinking: "If I don't master this perfectly the first time, I'm a complete failure"). CBT develops psychological flexibility and realistic assessment skills (How CBT Helps You Navigate Change and Build Psychological Flexibility, 2025).
2. *Digital Resilience Training*: Targeted training programs that equip employees with the skills to use digital tools confidently and healthily, manage information overload, maintain a work-life balance in an environment of constant availability, and develop a "growth mindset" toward technological challenges (Building a Digitally Resilient Workforce, 2020). At the group level, efforts are focused on creating a supportive social environment and leveraging team resources.
3. *Facilitation of team sessions*: Conducting regular retrospectives, workshops, and brainstorming sessions where the team can openly discuss issues related to digital transformation, share best practices, and collaboratively seek solutions.
4. *Developing psychological safety*: This means creating an atmosphere within the team and organization where employees are not afraid to express their concerns, admit mistakes, ask "uncomfortable" questions, and offer ideas without fear of punishment or humiliation. Psychological safety is critical for innovation and effective adaptation to change (The Role of the Industrial Psychology Practitioner in Managing the Psychological Impact of COVID-19 on Employees, 2022).

Table 1. Multilevel model of psychological support tools.

Level	Type of intervention	Description and tools	Key objectives
Individual	Cognitive-behavioral coaching (How CBT Helps You Navigate Change and Build Psychological Flexibility, 2025)	Working on identifying and restructuring negative automatic thoughts about change. Techniques: cognitive restructuring, mindfulness, behavioral experiments.	Reducing catastrophizing and fear. Increasing psychological flexibility and self-efficacy.
	Digital resilience training (Building a Digitally Resilient Workforce, 2020)	Developing stress management skills in a digital environment, adapting to new tools, managing information overload, and maintaining work-life balance.	Increasing confidence in working with technology. Reducing tech stress. Forming a "growth mindset."

(continued on next page)

Table 1. Continued.

Level	Type of intervention	Description and tools	Key objectives
Group	Developing psychological safety (The Role of the Industrial Psychology Practitioner in Managing the Psychological Impact of COVID-19 on Employees, 2022)	Facilitation of team discussions, creation of rules for constructive feedback, and training for leaders in modeling inclusive behavior.	Creating an environment where CT issues and risks can be openly discussed. Increasing team innovation and adaptability.
	Peer Support Groups (The Role of the Industrial Psychology Practitioner in Managing the Psychological Impact of COVID-19 on Employees, 2022)	Organizing regular meetings to share experiences, problems, and successful strategies for adapting to new working conditions.	Reducing feelings of isolation. Normalizing experiences. Disseminating effective practices.
Organizational	Strengthening organizational support (POS) (The mediating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between technostress and work–family conflict, 2022)	Providing accessible and high-quality technical support, developing clear instructions, and creating channels for feedback on new technologies.	Reducing techno-complexity and techno-uncertainty. Increasing trust in the organization.
	Communication strategy (Resistance to organizational change)	Developing and implementing transparent, consistent, and empathetic communication about the goals, stages, and expected results of the CT.	Reduction of uncertainty and resistance. Formation of a shared vision.
	Implementation of digital tools for mental health (The Role of Digitalization in Influencing Employees' Mental Health: A Study on the Health Sector of a Developing Country, 2022)	Providing access to online platforms for self-diagnosis, anonymous consultations, meditation, and stress management programs (example: Microsoft Viva).	Increasing the availability of psychological assistance. Destigmatizing requests for help.

At the organizational level, the psychological service works to create systemic conditions that support staff well-being.

1. Management consulting: Providing expert support to top management in developing a people-centered HR strategy, forming an effective communication policy, and modeling desired behavior.
2. Implementation of employee assistance programs (EAP): Using modern digital platforms to provide employees with round-the-clock, anonymous, and accessible access to psychological counseling, stress management resources, and self-help tools (Using digital tech to support employees' mental health and resilience, 2020).
3. Analyzing and strengthening perceived organizational support (POS): POS is the degree to which employees believe that the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being. A high level of POS acts as a powerful buffer that mitigates the negative effects of technostress. The psychological service should systematically measure the level of POS and work to strengthen it by providing quality technical support, developing clear instructions, and fairly evaluating and recognizing employees' efforts to adapt to change (The mediating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between technostress and work–family conflict, 2022).
4. Case study: Microsoft's experience. Microsoft's experience demonstrates a comprehensive approach that combines:
 - open recognition of the problem of burnout;
 - use of proprietary technologies (Microsoft Viva Insights) to provide personalized recommendations for improving work habits;
 - the development of a culture of “growth mindset” and psychological safety;
 - the implementation of proactive initiatives, such as additional mental health days (Digital Transformation Stress Scale (DTSS): A New Scale for Measuring Stress of Digital Transformation at the Workplace, 2023; Fostering employee wellbeing and improving productivity at Microsoft with Microsoft Viva Insights, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The choice of change management model is a fundamental psychological intervention that directly affects staff well-being (Table 2). Traditional models, such as the Levin and Kotter models, are based on the idea of a linear transition from one stable state to another. Lewin's model (“Unfreezing – Moving – Freezing”) has been criticized for its excessive linearity and unrealistic assumption that it is possible to achieve a new, long-term stable state (“freezing”) in conditions of constant technological updates (A response to critique of the refreeze step in Lewin's model, 2013). Kotter's eight-step model,

although more detailed, also views change as a discrete top-down project, which is poorly aligned with the continuous and unpredictable nature of CT (John Kotter Change Model).

Table 2. Comparative analysis of organizational change models.

Parameter	Levin's model	Kotter Model	Agile Change Management
Basic principle	Linear, three-stage (stability -> change -> new stability)	Linear, eight-step, top-down	Iterative, cyclical, "bottom-up" and "top-down"
Approach to planning	Rigid planning in advance	Detailed planning in advance	Continuous, flexible planning in each cycle
Role of employees	Change objects that need to be "unfrozen"	Primarily executors of the leaders' vision	Active participants in the process, co-creators of change
Feedback	Limited, mainly at the "movement" stage	Periodic, managed by leaders	Continuous, built into each cycle (retrospectives)
Strengths	Simplicity, conceptual clarity	Clear structure, focus on leadership and communication	Adaptability, speed, high engagement
Limitations	Overly simplistic, unrealistic "freezing"	Inflexible, slow, may ignore feedback from below	Difficult to predict, requires a mature culture
Applicability to CT	Low. Does not correspond to the continuous nature of CT.	Limited. Useful for forming a general vision, but not for tactical implementation.	High. Ideal for iterative technology implementation and process adaptation.

In contrast, agile models are based on the principles of iteration, flexibility, and continuous feedback. They break change down into small, manageable iterations ("sprints"), allowing for rapid response to change, bottom-up employee engagement, and incremental value delivery, which is ideally suited to the dynamic environment of DT (Agile Change Management: A Flexible Approach to Organizational Transformation; Agile vs. Traditional Project Management: Which is Best for Digital Transformation?).

Applying an inadequate, rigid model to the flexible DT process itself becomes a powerful techno-stress creator. A directive approach exacerbates the feeling of loss of control, and attempting to follow a rigid plan in a chaotic process maximizes "techno-uncertainty." The Agile approach, on the contrary, aims to reduce these stressors through short cycles and constant team involvement. An organization that tries to implement flexible technologies using inflexible methods creates deep cognitive dissonance, which transforms into technostress, cynicism, and resistance, sabotaging its own goals.

This study is theoretical in nature and is based primarily on the analysis of secondary sources. It does not include empirical data collected from specific organizations, which may limit the generalization of conclusions for different industries and corporate cultures. In addition, the field of digital transformation is evolving extremely rapidly, so some aspects, such as the long-term impact of AI, require further longitudinal study.

CONCLUSIONS

The study allows us to draw a number of general conclusions. The psychological impact of digital transformation is complex, multifaceted, and ambivalent. On the one hand, it creates unprecedented opportunities for increasing efficiency and expanding human potential, embodied in the concept of "superagency." On the other hand, it generates specific psychological risks, the central one being technostress, and also leads to role uncertainty, fear of job loss, and increased vulnerability of employees. The ultimate psychological outcome of transformation depends not on the technology itself, but on the organizational strategy for its implementation. Traditional, linear change management models (such as those of Levin and Kotter) are inadequate for managing the continuous, iterative, and unpredictable nature of CT. Attempting to apply a rigid, sequential approach to a flexible process not only slows down adaptation but also becomes a powerful source of stress in itself, increasing uncertainty and a sense of loss of control among staff. Organizational resilience in today's world is achieved not by trying to avoid change or achieve a new stable state, but by developing a systemic capacity for continuous adaptation. This ability does not arise on its own; it requires targeted, proactive investment in the psychological capital of the organization — the skills, attitudes, and support systems that enable staff to overcome challenges while maintaining well-being and productivity. The role of psychological services in an organization must evolve dramatically. From a reactive function aimed at "treating" existing problems, it must transition to a strategic role as an "architect" of resilience. This

involves its active participation in designing people-centered transformation processes, preventive risk diagnosis, and building a multi-level psychological support system.

Practical recommendations and directions for further research

Recommendations for managers:

1. Adopt a human-centered philosophy: View digital transformation not as a purely technological project, but as a profound process of organizational development centered on people. Success depends on how well employees can adapt.
2. Invest in leadership development: Middle managers are key agents of change. They need to be systematically trained in empathic communication skills, creating psychological safety in teams, and providing constructive feedback in uncertain conditions.
3. Choose an appropriate change management model: Move away from blindly copying classic linear models. Use agile or hybrid approaches that match the dynamics of digital transformation and actively involve staff in the process.

Recommendations for psychological and HR services:

1. Conduct regular psychological audits – implement a system for systematic assessment of key psychological indicators: levels of technostress, engagement, psychological safety, organizational support, and readiness for change. Use the data obtained to make management decisions.
2. Develop a comprehensive support program: Create and implement a multi-level model of psychological interventions covering individual (coaching, resilience training), group (team development, psychological safety), and organizational (communication, support systems) levels.
3. Become a strategic business partner: Strive to actively participate in the planning and implementation of AI initiatives from the earliest stages. Provide expertise on the human factor, helping management make more informed and humane decisions.

Therefore, we propose the following areas for future research:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impact of artificial intelligence and cognitive offloading on professional identity, critical thinking, and career trajectories of employees;
2. Comparative analysis of the effectiveness of different models of psychological interventions (e.g., CBT, mindfulness training, resilience development) in the context of digital transformation using Ukrainian companies as examples, taking into account the specifics of the national business environment (Five Years of Forbes Ukraine: What You Can Learn About Ukrainian Business by Reading All 34 Issues of Forbes Magazine. 9 insights);
3. In-depth study of the specifics of the psychological challenges of digital transformation in Central and Eastern European countries, which have a unique post-communist economic landscape and structural features (Exploring the Impact of Digital Transformation on Non-Financial Performance in Central and Eastern European Countries, 2024).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed equally.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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ВПЛИВ ЦИФРОВІЗАЦІЇ НА ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНІ ЗМІНИ ТА РОЛЬ ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОЇ ПІДТРИМКИ

У роботі здійснено комплексне дослідження психологічних аспектів цифрової трансформації в контексті сучасних організаційних змін. Особливу увагу приділено аналізу впливу цифровізації та впровадження інноваційних технологій, зокрема штучного інтелекту, на емоційний стан, поведінкові реакції та професійну ідентичність співробітників. Виокремлено ключові психосоціальні ризики, що супроводжують цифрові трансформаційні процеси, серед яких: технострес, цифрове перевантаження, опір змінам, втрата контролю над професійними ролями, а також криза довіри в умовах автоматизації управлінських рішень. У межах дослідження проведено порівняльний критичний аналіз класичних моделей управління змінами (зокрема моделей К. Левіна та Дж. Коттера) й сучасних гнучких підходів, таких як Agile-методології, які демонструють вищу адаптивність до турбулентного цифрового середовища. Обґрунтовано переваги гнучких управлінських стратегій для зниження рівня психологічного опору, активізації залучення персоналу та формування довгострокової організаційної стійкості. Центральна ідея дослідження полягає в потребі трансформації ролі корпоративної психологічної служби – від традиційної підтримувальної функції до активного стратегічного партнера, здатного ініціювати зміни, моделювати психологічно безпечне середовище та сприяти сталому розвитку організації. Запропоновано багаторівневу модель психологічного супроводу цифрової трансформації, що охоплює індивідуальний, груповий та організаційний рівні, а також наведено приклади практичних інструментів для діагностики, профілактики й подолання психоемоційних ризиків. Стаття містить практичні рекомендації для управлінців, HR-фахівців та організаційних психологів щодо впровадження людиноцентричних підходів у побудові гнучких, адаптивних і ментально стійких організацій в умовах безперервних цифрових змін.

Ключові слова: цифрова трансформація, психологічний вплив, організаційна стійкість, технострес, опір змінам, управління змінами, Agile, психологічна служба, штучний інтелект, адаптація персоналу

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