ADAPTATION MODEL FOR REDUCING THE MANAGERIAL STRESS

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Abstract *Changes are an inseparable component of the company's life cycle and they can contribute to its essential growth in the future. The purpose of this paper is to explain managerial stress caused by implementation of changes and creating an adaptation model to decrease managerial stress. How much the manager will successfully lead the project for implementation of a change and how much they will manage to amortize stress among employees, mostly depends on their expertise, knowledge and skills to accurately and comprehensively inform and integrate the employees in the overall process. The adaptation model is actually a new approach and recommendation for managers for dealing with stress when the changes are implemented. **Methodology**. For this purpose, the data presented, in fact, were collected through a questionnaire that was submitted to 61 respondents/ managers. The data were measured using the Likert scale from 1 to 7. Namely, with the help of the Likert scale, quantification of stress was made in relation to the various variables that were identified as the most important for the researched issues. An adaption model (new approach) for amortizing changes was created using the DIA Diagram application, to show the relations between manager and the relevant amortization approaches.*

Key words: adaptation model, changes, managerial stress, amortization

Clasificare JEL **: M10, O30**

Introduction
Changes, as drivers of the competitiveness of companies, are fundamental in the sphere of the economy. Companies with an established organizational culture that include strong capabilities for change, a commitment to innovation and high levels of trust have a significant advantage. [Eccles, Perkins,Serafeim, 2012]Continuing changes make the company competitive on the market in which it exists. Hence, how the changes in the company will be implemented is crucial, because it imposes certain dilemmas, i.e. whether the changes will be implemented correctly and in time, how will the employees accept them, and how they will adapt to them, i.e. whether that process will cause stress to them. In order to adapt, a company must have its antennae tuned to signals of change from the external environment, decode them, and quickly act to refine or reinvent its business model and even reshape the information landscape of its industry.[Reeves, Deimler, 2011]The state of change most often induces a high degree of stress. The change is always something new and unknown to employees, therefore adaptation is crucial in order to reduce the stress caused. When organizations implementchanges, the first outcome is the employee resistancetowards that change. In general it is expected thatwhenever the change is implement in the organization, ithas to face a lot of problems in term of resistance.[Tariq, Sohail, Aslam,2011] Whether it's internal or external change, the manager

plays the main role in their (un) successful implementation, from the first to the last stage. Which model of implementation the change will be chosen by the manager, depends on the type of change and his subjective decision, i.e. his perception of the situation and the result that is expected to be achieved with the implementation of the change, that is, the transition of the company from one to another state. How much the manager will successfully lead the project for implementation of a change and how much he will manage to amortize stress among employees, mostly depends on his expertise, knowledge and skills to accurately and comprehensively inform and integrate the employees in the overall process. The manager should have anvision into the overall situation in the company and he plays the key role in the team, especially when it comes to early identification of a stressful situation. In this context, the manager should pay attention to the following indicators, because they clearly show that there is stress in the working environment, and such are:

- Performances of the employees,
- The presence at the workplace,
- Disinterest and / or commitment to the workplace,
- Aggressive / emotional / negative behavior,
- Changes in the style of living / use of alcohol, drugs, etc.,
- Deviations and omissions in given deadlines for separate tasks.

Identifying one of the previously exposed indicators for employees in a particular company clearly shows that there is stress at workplace, and this has negative implications on the overall company performance.

If stress is not identified and not amortized on time by management (or, more specifically, by the company manager), then there are possible consequences for the overall operation of the company. Namely, in such a case, not only will the implementation of the change not be successfully implemented, but, the company will be in a much worse state than before the change initiative.Change is walking into the unknown. Trying to diminish the risks involved in organizational change, many theoreticians and practitioners developed different methodologies, guidelines, change models, in order to nurture the change process. Success is never guaranteed, but following a good guideline helps finding solutions when obstacles appear during a change process.[Tudor, Bisa, 2015]

Defining stress

What is stress? Stress is not a disease. "There is no medical term called stress, and therefore stress can be defined as a state of discomfort during a hard working day." [Holm-Nielsen,2010]Stress, in fact, is defined by many theorists as anxiety and demotivation. The occurrence of stress among employees for a short period of time can even be a stimulation, and the employee becomes more productive and alert. So, as a positive action, stress can motivate employees to accept a lot of changes and a variety of new opportunities. But in some of the employees, stress can act negatively and cause anger, frustration, distrust, withdrawal, rejection and depression. [Russell, 1999]Therefore, a clear distinction should be made between the pressure which can be positive for employees and stress, when that pressure becomes excessive, and the manager is looking for something that he has not worked on or has no potential and abilities for, i.e.skills to accomplish what is required of him. Thus, if the stress is present in the employees for a longer period of time, then it is a chronic stress, in which case the body is exposed to a permanent allergic condition, which can cause serious consequences to their health. Here, however, it should be emphasized that not every stress is negative and bad. Namely, the psychologist Selye, in his initial papers related to stress, conceptualized two categories, namely: good, desired stress (eustress); and bad or unwanted stress (distress).[Kendall, Murphy, O'Neill, Bursnall,2000] Eustress is pleasant and produces positive effects on the operation, such as, for example, the maximization of the output and the increase in creativity among employees. Ironically, but without this positive stress - in the form of stimulus - life can become contradictory, but also stressed. Distress, on the other hand, is the opposite state of the previous one and occurs when the individual loses control over the stressful situation, and this usually results in reduced productivity and

lost creativity in the work.Resistance to change is an ongoing problem. At both the individual and the organizational levels, resistance to change impairs concerted efforts to improve performance. Many corporate change efforts have been initiated at tremendous cost only to be halted by resistance among the organization's employees.[Lorenzi, Riley, 2000]According to a study by Kobasa and Maddi, it is concluded that some of the employees accept the change well and some cannot face and accept a certain kind of change. Hence, when the change begins to be implemented in the company, then employees need to ask themselves the following questions:

• Whether this is a challenge or a threat;

• Whether I am alienated or involved;

• Am I in or out of control? ... etc.

Those employees who see the change as a challenge to demonstrate their abilities and skills, and also to get involved in the implementation process in which they would have control of the situation, actually accept the change and have a very positive attitude. Unlike them, employees who perceive the change as a threat and feel alienated and out of control in the implementation process do not really accept the changes, and this situation causes negative consequences. According to the results of the research, the survey calculates that 50% of the employees experience change as a threat feel alienated or out of control, and this leads to the appearance of certain diseases. French, Kast, and Rosenzweig state that the challenge is to minimize *distress* and maintain *eustress*. They point out that the conditions of organizational life create a series of paradoxes, that demonstrate the need for balance and equilibrium.

1. Uncertainty can lead to distress, but so can certainty or over control.

2. Pressure can lead to distress, but so can limbo or lack of contact.

3. Responsibility can lead to distress, but so can lack of responsibility or insignificance.

4. Performance evaluation can lead to distress, but so can lack of feedback concerning performance.

5. Role ambiguity can lead to distress, but so can job descriptions that constrain individuality. [French, Kast, Rosenzweig,1985]

The degree of stress that the individual experiences mainly depends on two psychological mechanisms that act protectively, as follows:

•"Alarm reaction". When the individual is diagnosed with a threat, their first reaction is psychological excitement that causes tension in the muscles, breathing becomes difficult, and accelerated cardiac activity also manifests. In this state, the individual either fights and attempts to face this situation, or is left to the present state;

•"Adaptation". This psychological mechanism is a state of adaptation to the newly emerging situation, that is, what has been treated as a threat is now treated as a stimulant.[Michie, 2002]Stress occurs when these two mechanisms do not function properly, that is, when there is a certain imbalance between them.

Instruments for amortization of the stress

The managers' approach to employees plays an important role in the implementation of the changes. Not every change cause stress, but it can cause uncertainty, aversion and demotivation. That's why managers are the ones who need to amortize, reduce or eliminate stress among employees.[WorkCover, 2014]

Communication. Communication between managers and employees is one of the mechanisms for decreasing the stress. The lack of effective communication with employees can cause high levels of stress in them, and this will have a negative impact on the company's operations. But, whether it is about individual changes or changes at an organizational level, the following techniques should be observed when communicating with employees:

• Communication with employees should be managed by the manager, but he has to be previously qualified for that type of discussion;

• The employees should be explained why the specific change in the company is being implemented;

• should be explained what are the key objectives of the change and what managers expect from the employees after the implementation.

The communication between the manager implementing the protocol and employees is a very important segment of every successful implementation. Network with employees individually and as a group to get input on what they feel could be done to effectively change the organization with a minimum of drama and stress. Keep an open communication structure throughout the changing process so that individuals can come to you with questions or concerns, without feeling as though they are being bothersome or out of line.[Writing,2017]Employees in the company implementing the change can hear different rumors or speculations about what their business environments will be (for example, what kind of change will be implemented, what are the consequences of the changes that are being introduced, who will implement them , and so on.), so they can resist the change at the very beginning, without knowing the real situation about it. Hence, according to Nicholas DiFonzo and Prashant Bordia, the best solution (when such rumors will emerge among employees or when there is a feeling of uncertainty among them) managers should timely and accurately inform them what kind of change they plan to implement in the company.[DiFonzo Bordia,1998] However, very often, providing real and relevant information from reliable sources is very difficult, slowly achievable or even impossible for some managers.

On the other hand, Richardson and Denton [Richardson, Denton, 1996]emphasize the paradox in the implementation of the changes, in a situation when the stress in the company is at its highest. In that timing, employees mostly want to be informed, and managers cannot provide them with the information they need, because they themselves do not know. This phenomenon is present especially when it comes to mergers between two or more companies, or some more subtle changes in the company which, because of its nature, limits the provision of information to employees, as it may harm the final outcome.

Consultation and participation Employees should be consulted about the change at a basic level, because they are directly involved in the process, that is, they participate in changing the existing business situation. Managers also need to support employees during the entire adaptation process. The results achieved in this process should be a motivation for the employees.In this context, managers can also organize focus groups in which those employees, directly involved in the process, will provide their own suggestions and solutions to the particular problems they face in the implementation. The support and motivation of employees will help them to start giving their own ideas, initiating changes in their own work, innovating and self-promoting.

Assessment of the roles Managers need to perform roles revisions, that is, to accurately define the tasks and goals of the employees in the implementation of the changes. In doing so, there must be no confusion in the roles of employees or they overlap. The specific duty of managers is to support employees in mastering new skills in order to better respond to the newly emerging situation. It is especially important that employees have the confidence to perform tasks and know exactly what is required of them. Therefore, managers should previously prepare them for this, that is, organize and implement various forms of trainings, consultations, workshops, etc.

In addition to the technical preparedness of the employees, it is also necessary for managers to give them emotional support during the entire process of implementation of the changes. In addition to these three techniques to overcome stress and easier face-to-face changes, managers can also use REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) to relieve stress while using the ABC model.[Russell, 1999] The so-called REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) therapy is based on assumptions that emotional and behavioral responses are caused by conscientious and negligent beliefs. This therapy offers employee strategies and techniques leading to professional growth and development, improved

working relationships, less conflict situations and less stress. This therapy uses the ABC model created by the psychologist Dr. Albert Ellis to cope with the difficulties, and the acronym means:

A-Adversity- occurrence of a new situation or event

B - Belief - our belief that this situation arose

C - Consequence-emotion and behavior caused by our beliefs.

By applying this model, managers can find out what is causing stress to employees, and the aim is to depreciate or eliminate them. Stress is an abstract term, without material existence.

Namely, success depends on how each change will be implemented and what model of implementation will be used. Managers are those who, on the one hand, enjoy the benefits of their own position, but, on the other hand, have great responsibility for each decision or procedure. Regardless of what kind of change they are implementing and how it is done, the whole organization is affected by these processes, that is, all employees in the company have appropriate participation. So, in the implementation of the changes, stress is present not only among the managers, but also among the other employees in the company. The change is always something new and unknown to employees, therefore adaptation to it is crucial for the depreciation of the caused stress.

Developing an adaptation model for decreasing the managerial stress

From the survey that was conducted, in which managers from 61 companies in the Republic of Macedonia took part, and the companies were of different size, number of employees and different industries / activities, the stress was measured, using the Likert scale,

whereby the three highest values for this model were selected (they are later defined more precisely). The data were measured using the Likert scale from 1 to 7. Namely, quantification of stress was made in relation to the various variables that were identified as the most important for the researched issues.

Table 1. The Lickert scale

Lickert scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Meaning: (1 - has no influence, 2 - has very little influence, 3 - has an insignificant influence, 4 has influence, 5 - has significant ,influence, 6 - has a big influence, 7 - radically affects the investigated variable)

Lickert scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Technological changes (Absolute values)	8	5	12	11	13	6	6
In%(Relative values)	13%	8%	20%	18%	21%	10%	10%
Changes in legal regulations(Absolute values)	5	6	10	16	7	6	11
In%(Relative values)	8%	10%	16%	26%	11%	10%	18%
Changes in the organizational structure (Absolute values)	7	6	6	15	10	5	12
In%(Relative values)	11%	10%	10%	25%	16%	8%	20%
Changes in human resources (Absolute values)	6	7	11	7	17	6	7
In%(Relative values)	10%	11%	18%	11%	28%	10%	11%
Changes in business processes(Absolute values)	7	7	17	8	13	4	4
In%(Relative values)	11%	11%	28%	13%	21%	7%	7%
Product changes and new marketing strategy (Absolute values)	8	11	12	16	4	5	5
In%(Relative values)	13%	18%	20%	26%	7%	8%	8%
Decision making(Absolute values)	10	7	12	14	11	4	3
In%(Relative values)	16%	11%	20%	23%	18%	7%	5%
Perception (Absolute values)	8	12	10	10	13	4	4
In%(Relative values)	13%	20%	16%	16%	21%	7%	7%
Cognition(Absolute values)	8	13	8	13	7	4	8
In%(Relative values)	13%	21%	13%	21%	11%	7%	13%
Organization behavior(Absolute values)	3	7	13	14	16	6	2
In%(Relative values)	5%	11%	21%	23%	26%	10%	3%
Productivity(Absolute values)	11	5	7	10	16	5	7
In%(Relative values)	18%	8%	11%	16%	26%	8%	11%

Q - variable, A, B, C - selected three values, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 values from the Likert scale, i.e. 1- has no influence, 2 - has very little influence, 3- has insignificant impact, 4 - has influence, 5 - has significant influence, 6 - has a great influence, 7 - radically affects the investigated variable.

After determining the level of stress among managers, mainly implied by the implementation of the various types of changes, as well as the other variables that were explored, an adaptive visual model for relieving stress among managers has been made here. So, knowing the previously determined measurements of the stress for the listed variables, we are selecting the three highest values(listed below) for each variable, in order to create the adaption model lately.

Q1-the stress caused by the implementation of technological changes;

Q1- (А3-20%, Б4-18%,В5-21%),

Q2- the stress caused by the implementation of changes in relation to laws and legal regulations;Q2 – (А3-16%, Б4 -26%, В7-18%)

Q3-the stress caused by the implementation of changes in relation to the organizational structure of the company; Q3– (А4-25%, Б5 -16%, В7-20%)

Q4- the stress caused by the implementation of changes in human resources in the company; Q4– (А2,4,7-11%, Б3 -18%, В5-28%)

Q5- the stress caused by the implementation of changes in business processes;Q5– (А3-28%, Б4 -13%, В5-21

Q6- the stress caused by the implementation of changes in relation to the new marketing strategy in the company or when introducing a new product; Q6– (А2-18%, Б3 -20%, В4-26%)

Q7 - to what extent does stress affect managers in making decisions in companies? Q7– (А3-20%, Б4 -23%, В5-18%)

Q8 - to what extent does stress affect the perception of company managers? Q8– (А2-20%, Б3,4 -16%, В5-21%)

Q9 - to what extent does stress affect cognition in company managers? Q9– (А1,3,7-13%, Б 2,4 - 21%, В5-11%)

Q10 - to what extent stress affects the organizational behavior of the company; Q10– (А3-21%, Б4 -23%, В5-26%)

Q11- to what extent stress affects the productivity of managers and the company, in general. Q11 – (А1-18%, Б4-16%, В5-26%);

Diagram 1 shows the results of the survey, where you can see the selected highest three values - as more significant, the radical values are singled out and certain recommendations are given (which will be explained in detail in the text). This is done in order to develop a model by which, in implementing different types of changes, the stress can be reduced to the lowest possible level.

Diagram1
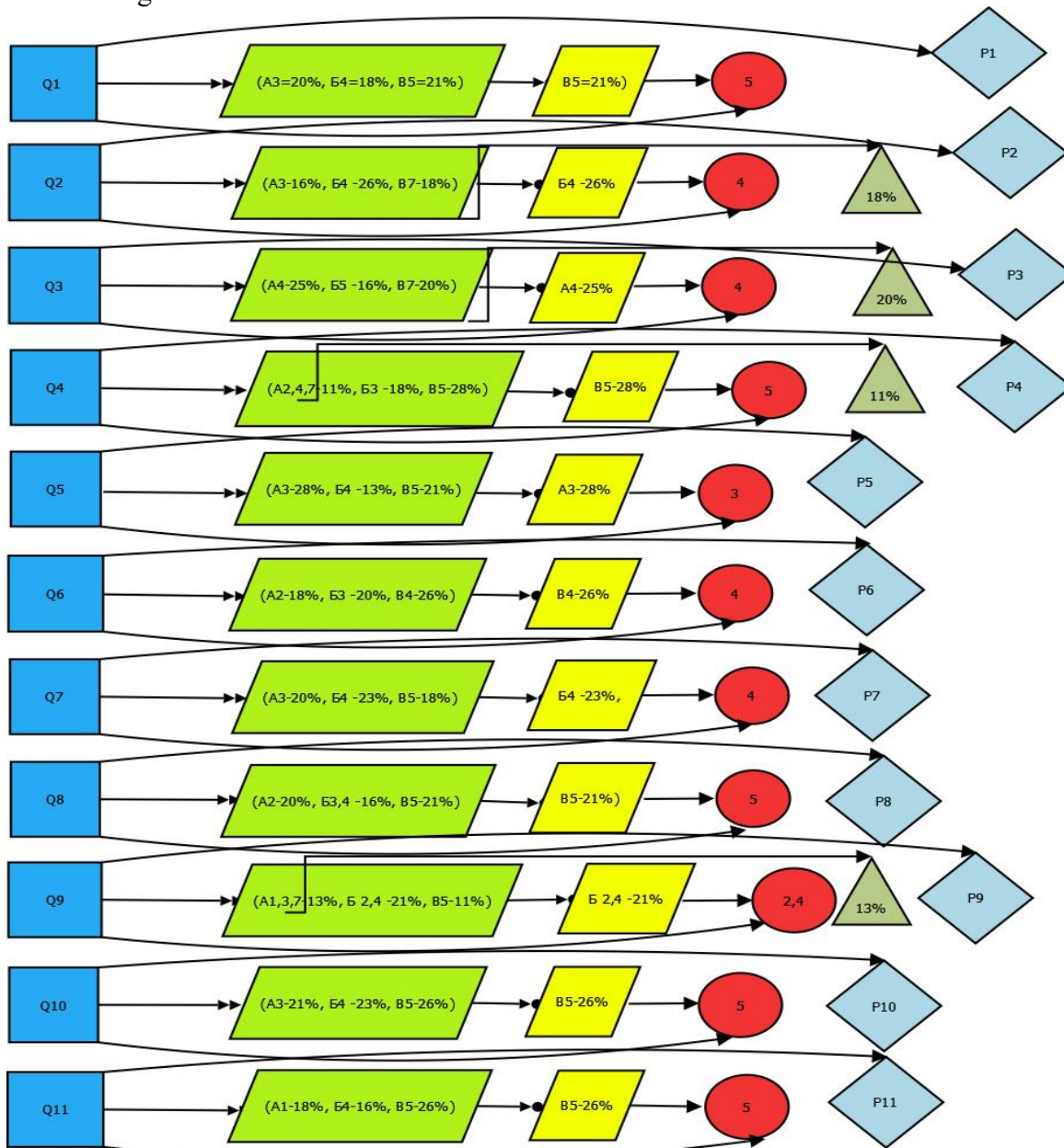
P1. From the diagram 1 it can be noted that the implementation of technological changes in companies causes stress among managers, but not in some radical form. Highest value, i.e. Significant stress from this type of changes can be seen among employees in small and micro companies. Radical values in terms of stress in the implementation of technological changes occur among the medium-sized companies, i.e. where there are more employees. In order to reduce stress in the implementation of technological changes, the manager should initially support the employees (initial, but also continuous during the further process). In addition, it should organize training for the new technology, establish regular communication with them, that is, constantly get acquainted with the features of modern technology. So, the manager's communication with the employees should start before the implementation of the new technology, and the training should be postponed for later, that is, until the moment when the

employees themselves will have to access the new system of work. Two things are especially crucial for employee training, and they are: to learn how to use the system and to motivate them to do so (recommendation: through two-way communication, proper training, ongoing support).

p2. In the implementation of new laws and changes in legal regulations, as can be seen from the diagram, in most companies this process has an impact on managers. Namely, the emerging radical value of 18% shows that managers face the highest level of stress in these changes, in the textile and food industry, in the wholesale trade, etc. Because these changes are continuously present, managers from the specified areas should commit to reducing stress, which means: (recommendation) intensive arrangements for carrying out specific trainings and different types of workshops, using appropriate literature and foreign experiences that would help relieve, reduce or eliminate stress.

P3. When changing the organizational structure in the company, managers experience a significant level of stress. The indicators conclude that the highest level of stress, with 20%, according to the answers of the examined managers, occurs most often in the medium-sized companies. Changes in the organizational structure affect all employees, although some of them accept them positively, however, some are manifested by a high level of stress. Hence, managers should first inform all employees concerned of the changes they will follow, to give them support, to oblige them to facilitate their work through training, and, finally, to offer them career development opportunities within the new organizational structure. So, the most important is: (recommendation) fast and accurate information, two-way communication, well-organized training, career options, roles revision,

P4. Human resources managements also cause a significant level of stress among managers, because the 5 (five) indicated is the highest value. In this case, the highest degree of stress is manifested by managers, expressed as a percentage of 11%. This situation is significant for medium and large companies, precisely because of the size, i.e. number of employees. Managing human resources in every company is a particularly complex task that normally causes stress. The changes are permanent, because the development processes impose new needs of specialized personnel in the companies. To overcome the vacuum situation and to relativize the role of stress here it is recommended: to provide appropriate information, tactics, training for a new position, strategy, roles revision, etc.

P5. Business processes in companies are constantly changing and are part of the employees' practice, so, according to the indicators in the diagram it can be noted that in most of the managers these changes have little impact, i.e. they do not cause stress. Often stress from these changes is encountered in medium and large companies. The recommendation on how to reduce the stress among managers during the change in the business processes is: timely informing the employees, their training and, of course, their participation in the processes and decision making, in order to better fulfill their business obligations.

P6. The introduction of a new product and changes in marketing strategy cause stress among managers, but it does not have any great intensity (4). With the greatest percentage of stressful situations in this case, according to managers' responses, micro companies are distinguished. That is why it is recommended: familiarizing employees with the new marketing strategy, i.e. timely and accurate informing about the introduction of a new product, where appropriate tactics for reducing the stress of the employees should be used.

P7. Stress has an impact on managers when it comes to making decisions in the company. The most affected by stress are the managers of companies that perform IT services, banking services, consulting services, those in the construction industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the

food industry and so on. The highest level of stress in decision-making, according to the indicators and carried out research, is met with managers in large and medium-sized companies. Making decisions, especially when it comes to unpromised, that is, strategic decisions that affect the system or human life causes a considerable level of stress among the managers. What can be recommended is: to consult with everyone involved in the processes that are affected, to collect and analyze experiences, to consult experts in the area of decision-making, in order to reduce the level of stress.

P8. The manager'sstress is changing the perception of company and overall performance, consequently.Thus, as many as 21% of company managers said that small companies are most affected by this situation, and the perception is changing at a high level of stress among mid-size managers. Here, as a recommendation, suggestions can be made: managers to reduce stress through direct communication with employees and try to present the actual situation in the company.

Q9. The level of stress also affects the managers' cognition (thinking process), but not with any great intensity. Although the emergent radical value (i.e. 13%) testifies to this conclusion, companies' managers have responded that they can deal with stress in order not to disturb their cognitive abilities. This situation is present in the medium and large companies. Hence, it is recommended, in addition to communication, that managers make a complete analysis of all segments of the company's operations to detect the factor that will contribute to reducing stress from the unknown.

P10. The level of stress has a significant impact when it comes to organizational behavior, because the highest value is 5, because 26% of the examined managers gave exactly that answer. One of the obligations of the manager is to examine the positive and negative effect of the business climate in the company, i.e. the organizational behaviour on the employees. He is responsible for creating a favorable business environment that will accumulate in the company and through corporate culture will influence the behavior of employees. From the current experiences it can be concluded that stress can be reduced by means of positive thoughts, through conversations on selected topics, motivation of employees, close communication, etc

Q11. The same values are immanent in the productivity of managers, that is, the level of stress significantly affects their productivity. Specifically, as stress develops, productivity decreases. Most often this answer was present with the managers of the medium and large companies. The level of stress among managers seriously affects their productivity, which is why it is suggested that they develop specific tactics to reduce it, which means a short break at certain intervals of working hours, consultations with colleagues, correspondence with managers from other similar or the same companies etc.

Diagram 2Recommendation for decreasing the managerial stress
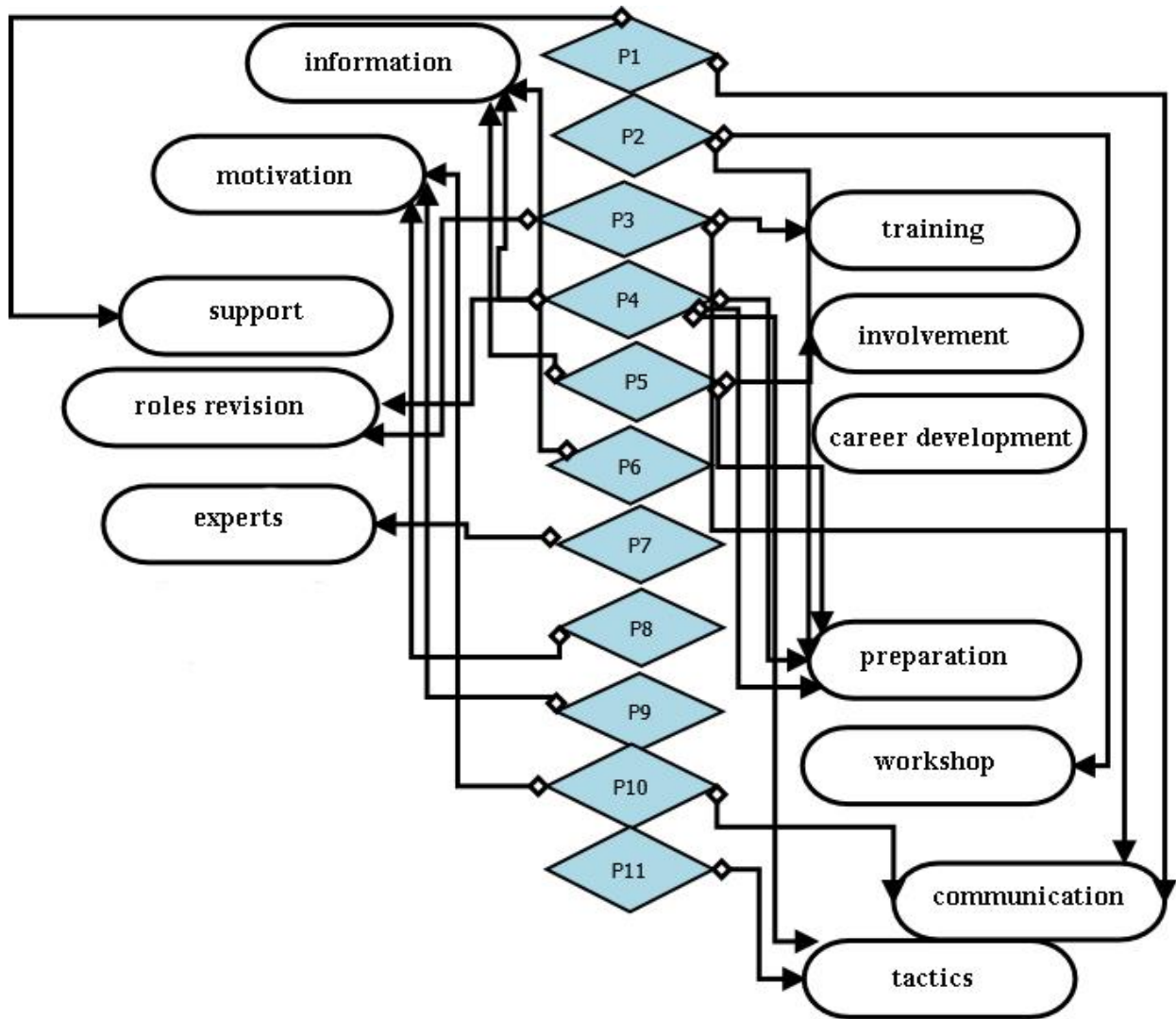
P1-P11 (recommendations for relieving stress among managers in implementing change, and reducing the level of stress relative to the variables being surveyed). As can be visually noticed, informing employees of the implementation of change, the communication of managers with the teams in charge of change and other employees, support in the processes, as well as trainings are most important for reducing the stress and achieving the goals

Diagram3
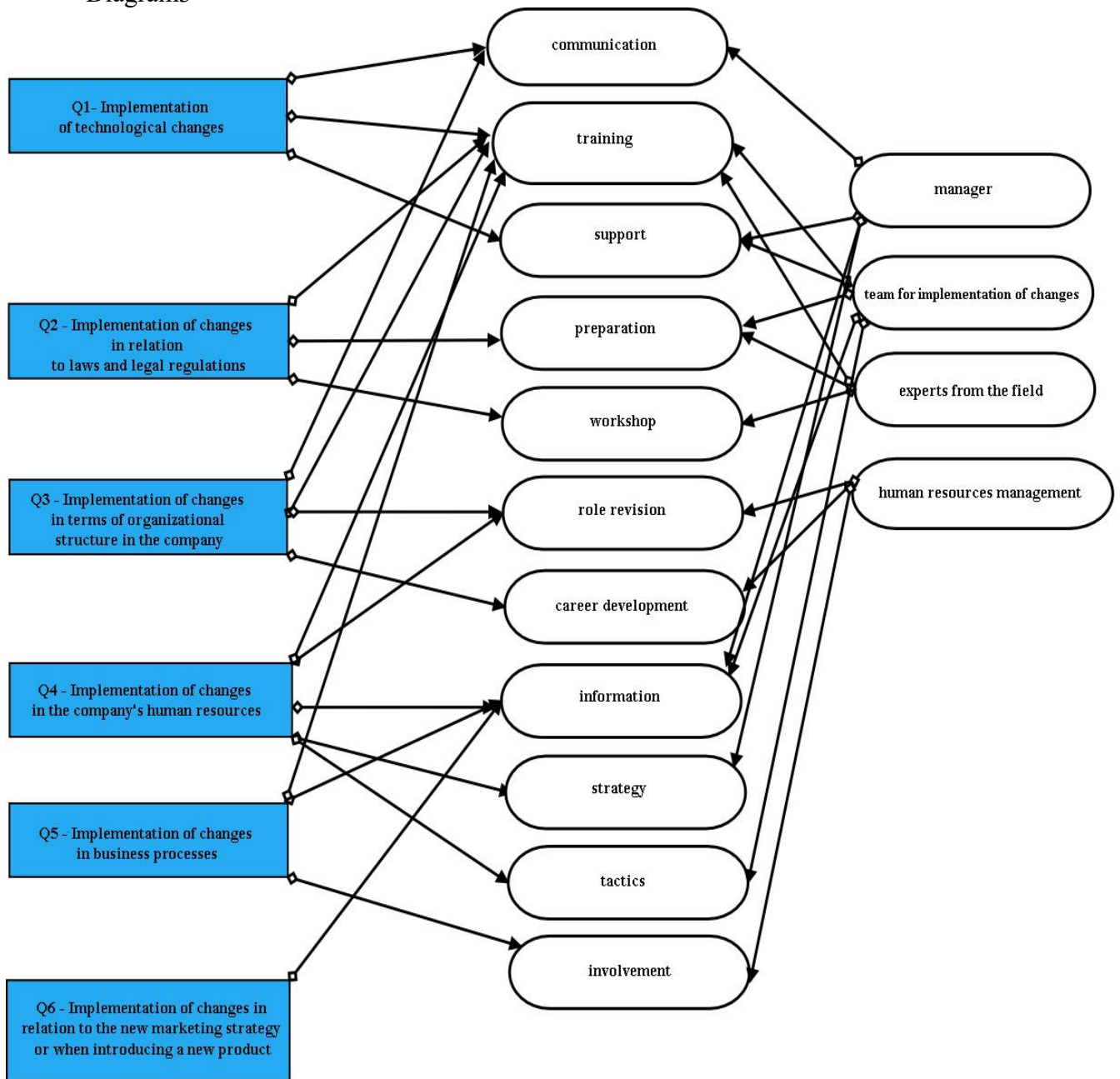
In diagram 3, one can observe which of the changes that managers implement in companies, how they are depreciated, i.e. which of the recommendations are used and who in fact should be responsible for the implementation to be successful. As it can be concluded the manager has a greater part in the task and responsibility in terms of communication with the employees, their support, strategy and information. The team in charge of implementing the changes is tasked with informing employees, supporting them, implementing tactics, and conducting training. Experts from the region prepare trainings, organize trainings and workshops. Lastly, human resources management is usually required to be responsible for

employee participation in the process of change, role revision and career development opportunities.
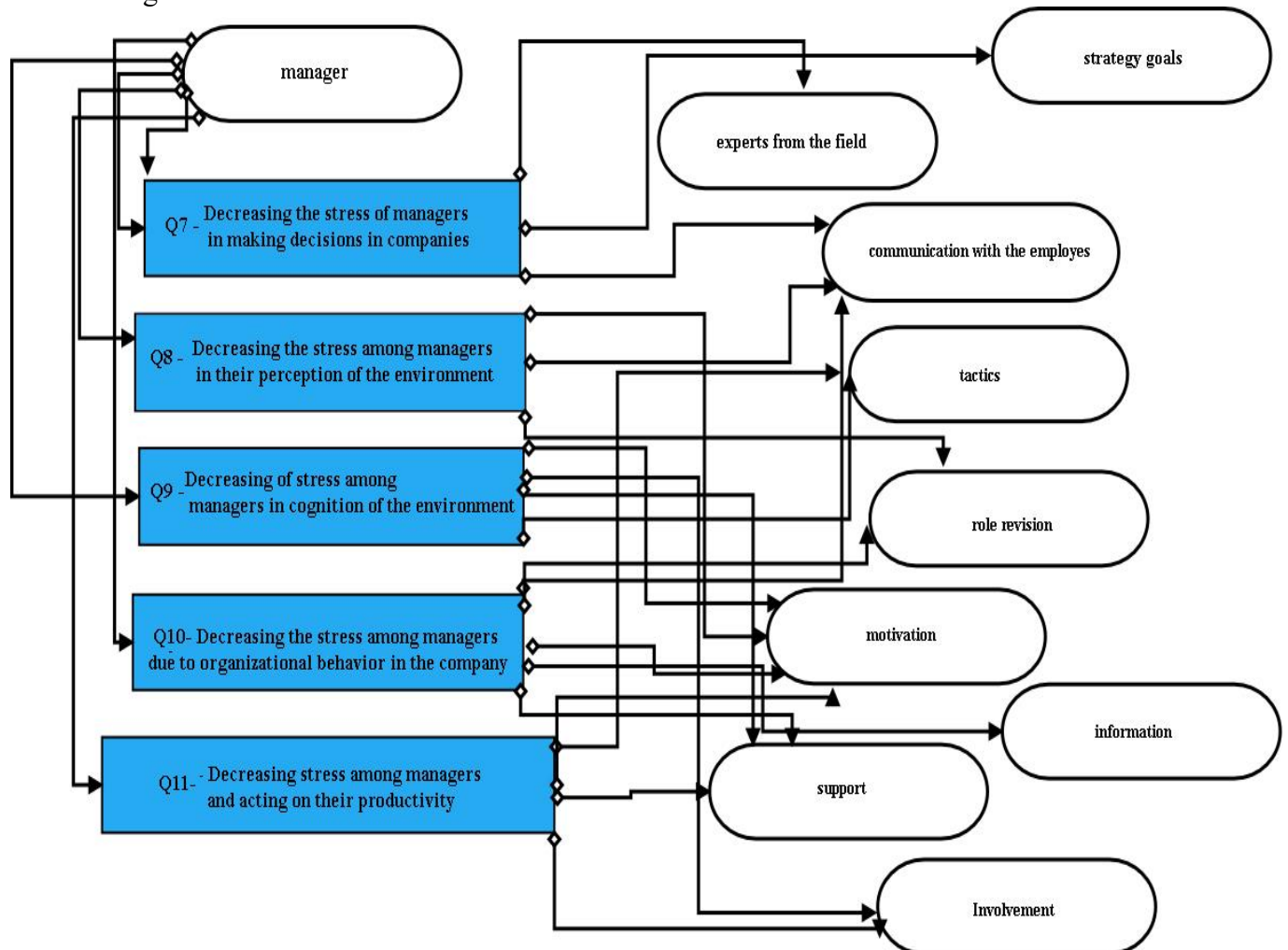
Diagram 4

Diagram 4 shows the problems that the manager faces in their day-to-day work and what are the ways to reduce the stress in him in order to achieve the company's goals. When making decisions that are important for the company, the manager can reduce the pressure and the stress he feels, he can consult with some of the staff he thinks would help him, he can also consult with the experts in the area to which the decision applies and of course to follow the strategic goals of the company. Regarding the perception of the environment (as the manager visually observes things, employees, processes, etc.) in which the manager functions, the stress will decrease if there is continuous communication with the employees, motivation, and performing a revision of the roles if he considers that there is a need. Cognition is an important process for managers, because through that process managers try to know what is in the head of the employees. In theory, there is also the term cognitive economy, which is part of the behavioral economy, and it refers to information of expectations, hypothetical choices, attitudes of employees, etc. The manager in this case should be proactive and communicate with the employees, motivate them, give them support, and of course participate in the work. Organizational behavior is very important for a company. The interaction between employees is a special task of the manager, so to reduce his / her stress caused by the negative climate, it is necessary to communicate with the

employees, to revise the roles, to inform them about each change, to motivate them, etc. Finally, in terms of productivity, i.e. how to increase it, and at the same time to reduce stress, it is necessary to motivate, support, participate and use tactics.

Conclusion:

Changes are an inseparable component of the company's life cycle and they can contribute to the company's competitiveness. How much the manager will successfully lead the project for implementation of a change mostly depends on his expertise, knowledge and skills, but almost always that process leads to stress. Managers should control the stress among the employees in order to implement changes successfully and to reduce stress and the pressure that they felt. There are many models and approaches for reducing stress, and some of them were explained here. Mainly, the adaptation model for reducing the managerial stress that was introduced here, due to a previous quantification of the stress is consisted of several segments that were previously explained. Communication and informing the employees about the changes, their participation and involvement in the process, as well as knowing how to motivate them are crucial to reduce the managerial stress. Also, organizing the training, workshops and consulting experts in the field of particular changes help managers to have more prepared employees. This model can be further developed into more complex details.

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