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ON THE FACTORS OF RESISTANCE TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE AND WAYS TO COUNTER THEM

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The implementation of new technologies in organizations constitutes a change that involves both new opportunities and threats, causing natural resistance among some employees to its introduction. The aim of this work is to present a model for overcoming resistance among employees to new digital technologies based on artificial intelligence. A critical literature analysis was used as the research method. The starting point for the model developed here is the latest work by Golgeci et al. (2025), presenting three resistance factors: affective (fear and aversion to new technologies) and cognitive (sense of ineffectiveness). Based on the research results and the psychological mechanisms behind the presented resistance factors, possible ways of overcoming it at the individual and organizational level were selected. The first group includes a positive change in attitude towards work and an increase in the level of identification with technologies based on artificial intelligence among their users. The second group includes a democratic management style and improving employee competences in terms of using artificial intelligence in the workplace. The model presented here is a preliminary proposal and can be supplemented with additional elements, both in terms of resistance factors and ways of counteracting them; at the same time, it can serve as a conceptualization for future research.

Keywords: model, artificial intelligence, resistance factors, individual level, organizational level

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of new digital technologies is systematically increasing in almost every area of human functioning, led by the workplace. The use of tools based on artificial intelligence reduces labour costs and contributes to the productivity and efficiency

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of HR staff by streamlining some tasks (e.g. recruitment and hiring, performance management, employee onboarding). Next-generation technologies can also be used to improve safety and comfort at work. According to Eightfold (2022), a survey of at least senior managers from HR departments in US companies found that the vast majority are already taking advantage of the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence. Systems based on it are being implemented in the field of human resources management (78%), recruitment and hiring (73%), performance management (72%) and employee onboarding (69%). In terms of the future use of artificial intelligence, as many as 92% of HR leaders plan to do so in at least one of the five management areas mentioned.

However, despite the many advantages of modern digital technologies, their implementation in organizations generates mixed feelings among employees. The results of a survey by the Pew Research Center (2025) show that some are looking to a future with artificial intelligence with hope (36%), and even excitement (29%). On the other hand, approximately half of the US's workers are worried about AI's impact on their professional future, with a third believing that in the long run, artificial intelligence will lead to a reduction in their employment opportunities. In another survey, the percentage of respondents experiencing anxiety about the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace was as high as 71%, and nearly half of respondents said they were more concerned about the impact of artificial intelligence on their jobs than they were a year earlier (Ernst & Young, 2023).

Resistance to change is not something new in the field of management. It arises whenever changes are made that directly affect employees. A factor also associated with resistance is natural psychological mechanisms designed to protect the individual from unthinking adjustment to changes that may be disadvantageous to them. Employee resistance to AI can be defined as the refusal or unwillingness to engage with and use AI-based technologies in the workplace, which manifests as fear, a sense of ineffectiveness, and employee aversion toward digital technologies (Golgeci et al., 2025).

To date, there have been relatively few studies dealing with the topic of resistance to new technologies. The purpose of this study is to develop a model for overcoming resistance to new digital tools based on artificial intelligence. A critical literature analysis was used as the research method. The model presented in the present study is a modified version by Golgeci et al. (2025). Three factors of resistance were included in the model: fear and aversion to new technologies and a sense of ineffectiveness. Then, taking into account the psychological mechanisms underlying the distinguished factors, ways of breaking employee' resistance to new technologies were adjusted, at the individual and organizational level. Unlike Golgeci et al., the author's intention was to include practical ways of dealing with employee resistance. The developed model of breaking resistance to new digital technologies can serve as a basis for strategies to implement artificial intelligence-based tools in the organization, as well as for the conceptualization of future research.

2. FACTORS TO RESISTANCE TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

2.1. Fear

Feelings of fear are perhaps the most widely analysed affective states in the field of psychology. Experiencing them is not pleasant, which is why they are categorized as negative emotions. On the other hand, they are considered to perform one of the most important functions in the life of individuals, determining their survival. Fear is a basic element of the stress response: it is a mechanism for releasing energy to face adversity and obstacles. It arises when an individual is faced with loss or the threat of loss, but also in a challenging situation where he or she may gain something, albeit with uncertainty (Lazarus, Folkman, 1984). Fear of AI-based technologies touches on these two situations: threat and challenge.

The fear of new technologies is neither new nor surprising. About 50 years ago, with the proliferation and introduction of primarily personal computers into organizations, but also new and previously unknown devices such as printers, photocopiers, fax machines, etc., the concept of "technostress" emerged. It was introduced and described by the American therapist Craig Brod in his book entitled "The Human Cost of the Computer Revolution" (1985). In the first decade of the current millennium, technostress began to take on a new meaning, however. It is currently defined as a form of occupational stress related to information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, mobile devices, and social media (APA, 2018).

One of the most widely cited concepts of technostress is that of Tarafdar et al. (2007), according to which technostress can be divided into five categories of stressors: techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-uncertainty and techno-threat. In relation to artificial intelligence-based technologies, this type of threat is considered by some researchers to be one of the greatest threats to employees (Murugesan et al., 2023).

A concept similar to techonostress is technophobia, defined as "an irrational fear or anxiety caused by side effects of advanced technologies" (Osiceanu, 2015, p. 1139), or "an irrational fear and/or anxiety that individuals form as a response to a new stimulus that comes in the form of the technology", which translates into avoidance and/or passive behaviours (Khasawneh, 2018). These terms are very similar in meaning, and the line between them is somewhat blurred. However, technostress seems to be a more natural reaction to the new and unfamiliar. The concept of technophobia, on the other hand, would more likely refer to dysfunctional behaviours requiring psychological or even psychiatric intervention.

2.1.1. Uncertainty as the primary source of fear of artificial intelligence

The primary factor in resistance to change are the emotions of fear and anxiety, which are rooted in uncertainty about an individual's future. Employees' concerns about the development of artificial intelligence are mainly related to uncertainty concerning their own professional future (Nam, 2019). Most (65%) worry that they will lose their jobs due to the implementation of new technologies, that their salary will be reduced (72%), and they will have no chance for promotion due to the lack of knowledge about using AI. According to the vast majority of employees (75%), some professions will become obsolete (Ernst & Young, 2023). These concerns about the emergence of artificial intelligence are not entirely unfounded; according to a report by the investment bank Goldman Sachs, artificial intelligence could replace the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs in the near future (Briggs, Kodnani, 2023).

Uncertainty is one of the most stressful factors. It arises whenever an individual comes into contact with something new and unknown. Uncertainty breeds tension, often anxiety, fears, although sometimes it is also associated with excitement. One of the classic studies (Holmes, Rahe, 1967) on the importance of life stressors shows that stress does not necessarily result from experiencing only objectively negative situations (divorce, death of a loved one, imprisonment), but also those that are categorized as definitely positive, such as going on vacation, getting married, extraordinary personal achievements, etc. The novelty of the situation is related to its unpredictability, which requires vigilance, caution and being ready to expend energy in the form of physical, cognitive or emotional effort, as well as time and material or financial resources. The problem here is the lack of certainty about the final effect, which may prove to be inconsistent with expectations and thus involve disappointment, regret, and the feeling that the wrong decision was made.

As the study shows, the uncertainty associated with the use of artificial intelligence at work mainly relates to concerns about one's professional position, such as maintaining one's current position or even keeping the job itself. Losing a job is associated with a lack of resources for the individual's life and often that of their family. For this reason, it scored a high eighth place in Holmes and Rahe's ranking of stressors.

2.2. Perceived self-efficacy

The concept of perceived self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura (1977). It refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to cope with a problem and achieve set goals. Research clearly indicates that confidence in one's own abilities is associated, practically, with self-benefits. The greater the sense of self-efficacy, the more ambitious the goals that individuals set for themselves and the more committed they are to achieving them (Locke, Latham, 1990). However, in order for

self-efficacy to have a positive function in an individual's life, it must be based on a reasonably realistic assessment of the situation, based on their experience.

A sense of self-efficacy takes on a new meaning in the context of working with digital technologies, and in particularly artificial intelligence. Lack of or insufficient knowledge of new technologies can trigger a sense of incompetence, which will lead to a lack of self-efficacy being experienced. In addition, the constant changes in the work environment resulting from implementing more and more new tools and their upgrades can compound the decline in self-confidence and professional competences. Additionally, low levels of feeling effective at work will be a risk factor for stress and burnout (Selander, Henfridsson, 2012).

Self-efficacy is also associated with a sense of control over the situation, within which cognitive and behavioural control can be distinguished (McCarthy, Newcomb, 1992). The sense of control takes on a new meaning with regard to working with digital technologies, and in particular with the use of artificial intelligence.

2.3. Aversion toward digital technologies

Aversion is defined as a feeling of dislike for someone or something (SJP, 2025) or as a strong antipathy or deep-rooted dislike (APA, 2025). An attitude of dislike will be associated with negative feelings towards a person or object, while triggering a subjective evaluation based on a negative and usually selective perception of the situation. The literature includes the concept of "algorithmic aversion", which is a "biased evaluation of algorithms, manifested by negative behaviours and attitudes towards the algorithm in comparison with a human" (Jussupow et al., 2020). Studies show that some users of AI-based technologies prefer human judgments, even if the task performance achieved by digital tools is at a higher level (Alvarado-Valencia, Barrero, 2014; Bucher, 2017; Dietvorst et al., 2015).

3. HOW TO BREAK THE RESISTANCE TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Overcoming employee resistance to new technologies, including those based on artificial intelligence, currently appears to be one of the key tasks facing today's managers. The Ernst & Young study (2023) showed that 77% of surveyed employees would feel more comfortable using new technologies if people from all levels of the organization were involved in the process of implementing them, and if senior management promoted their use in a responsible and ethical manner. Resistance to new technologies is to a large extent psychological in nature, thus the steps that should be taken to overcome it should take into account the natural psychological mechanisms that guide human behaviour. Below, ways are discussed that relate to the factors of resistance to new technologies in organizations referred to above.

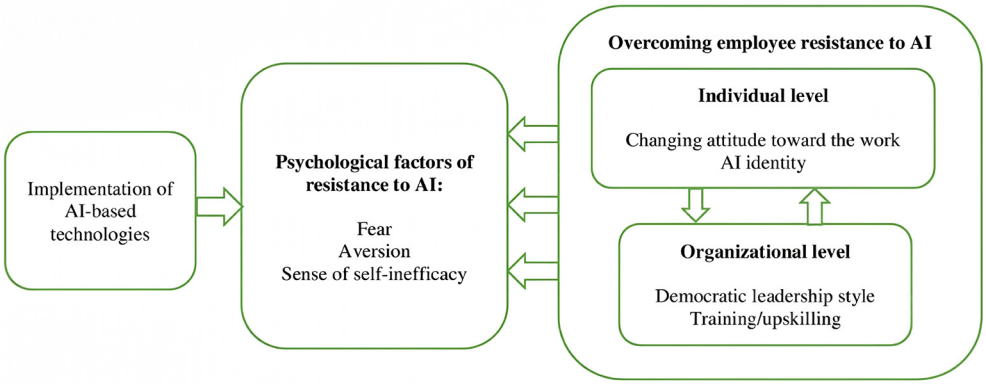

Fig. 1. A model for overcoming resistance to new digital technologies (own elaboration)

3.1. Training and upskilling

The Ernst & Young study (2023) found that 80% of respondents would like to improve their skills in using artificial intelligence in their work. At the same time, according to respondents, implementing the latest technologies will make them more efficient (82%) and more productive (81%).

The above data indicate that employees have mixed feelings about artificial intelligence. On the one hand, they have numerous concerns, because they lack sufficient knowledge of how new technologies will impact their professional future. At the same time, they regard next-generation technologies as tools that would allow them to attain a higher level of functioning at work. This means that despite doubts and a sense of threat from the unknown, they are willing and ready to upgrade their skills in order to employ digital technologies in their work.

Reducing uncertainty and the associated fear in employees seems to be the primary remedy for their resistance to new technologies. This can be achieved by bringing all issues related to the functioning of artificial intelligence closer, both from the legal side, the ethical side, but most importantly by providing workforce training in digital competence. Developing these competences poses a challenge not only for rank-and-file employees, but also for executives, who themselves should develop in this direction and choose training for their subordinates that matches the needs of the organization.

3.2. Changing attitudes toward work

A study commissioned by the American Psychological Association (2023) indicates that employees who fear that some or all of their job duties will be replaced by artificial intelligence in the future simultaneously exhibit more negative attitudes and feelings about their work. Compared to employees for whom artificial intelligence at work is not an issue, they feel more stressed at work (64% vs. 38%)

and emotionally drained (37% vs. 27%), less motivated to do their jobs to the best of their abilities (33% vs. 21%), less productive (25% vs. 16%) and less effective (21% vs. 15%). These employees also say that they mean less to both their co-workers (37% vs. 17%) and their employer (41% vs. 23%). At the same time, more believe that work has a negative impact on their mental health (51% vs. 29%).

Based on the above statistics, it can be concluded that the general change in attitudes toward one's own work from negative to positive may at the same time influence greater favourability on the part of employees toward the use of AI-based technologies. The present relationship will be bidirectional in nature. One of the few studies (Ayyash, 2023) analysing the relationship between technostress (in terms of the above-presented Tarafdar's concept) and artificial intelligence, based on the TAM model (Technology Acceptance Model; Davis, 1989), shows that a positive attitude toward technologies using artificial intelligence is positively associated with the perception of their usefulness and ease of use. At the same time, a positive attitude toward AI-based technology lowers techno-invasion, techno-complexity, and techno-uncertainty.

3.3. Increasing the level of identification with artificial intelligence

Identity in psychological terms is an individual's self-concept, which integrates psycho-physical characteristics, professed norms and values, and a system of views and attitudes towards other people, objects, phenomena and situations. One can distinguish personal identity based on an individual's sense of separateness from their surroundings, and social identity, which is based on identification with a particular group. The term "identification with artificial intelligence" (AI identity) has also emerged in the literature, which builds on the earlier concept of "identification with information technology" (IT identity) (Carter, Grover, 2015, p. 938), describing the degree to which individuals perceive cooperation with artificial intelligence in the workplace as an essential element of themselves (Mirbabaie et al., 2022). Identifying with information technologies means interacting with any technological entity, which allows humans to create, store and transmit information. Technologies are understood here as another type of extensibility (see Hall, 1976), being an extension of the apparatus of speech, hearing and sight.

Artificial intelligence-based technologies are distinguished from "traditional" ones by their greater similarity to the way humans function on a cognitive level, for example. This makes identifying with new digital technologies take on a new meaning. Consequently, research into identifying with artificial intelligence seems even more necessary and desirable than with information technologies. The few studies conducted on this subject so far show that identifying with artificial intelligence can reduce fear of technology, which is rooted in job changes and loss of professional position (Mirbabaie et al., 2022), and also increase work efficiency (Alahmad, Robert, 2020).

3.4. Leadership style

In overcoming employee resistance to any change, proper management of the change implementation process is essential. The management style should always be adapted to the situation (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2002). When introducing modern technologies into the workplace, which can dramatically change the way is effected, it is essential to develop an effective strategy. It takes time to learn the functions and advantages and disadvantages of digital tools and, and above all, to became proficient in using them. In addition, due to mixed feelings about new technologies, with fear and anxiety prevailing, it would be necessary to make such changes taking into account the needs and expectations of those involved.

The above conditions seem to fit best with a democratic style of management, where employees are involved in the decision-making process (Woods, 2020). At the same time, decisions do not have to be made in an abrupt, urgent manner. Involvement in the decision-making process leads participants to take responsibility for the decisions made. In turn, this triggers a number of affective and behavioural reactions in employees that are very beneficial from the point of view of the success of implementing changes in the organization. Research indicates that a leadership style with democratic characteristics is associated with self-confidence, a sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, and a sense of support and being valued (Park et al., 2016; Ngotngamwong, 2012). Experiencing positive attitudes towards one's work automatically reduces the level of fear.

4. SUMMARY

New technologies are increasingly part of the modern organization, and thanks to the possibilities they bring, they can provide excellent support in daily work. Nevertheless, due to their novelty, diversity, complexity and unpredictability, they raise many fears and doubts among employees, above all regarding the uncertainty of their own professional position (Nam, 2019). The ambiguity of the situation and the uncertainty of the future will breed natural resistance among employees. However, with the dissemination of new-generation tools, and the consequent familiarization with them, this resistance will gradually diminish. Conversely, whilever employees continue to show such resistance, the use of new digital technologies in organizations will not be optimal.

The whole process can be accelerated, first of all by conducting appropriate training (Recardo, 1995) tailored to the capabilities of a given employee and the needs of the position. At the same time, it should not be assumed that the competences of young employees in the area of using new technologies is much greater than that of those from older generations. Although the latest digital technologies have entered everyday life, they are practically at the stage of dissemination:

familiarity with them even among younger generations perceived as being familiar with everything new is not at all high. Some surveys indicate that some executives (43% and 39%) regard young college graduates as insufficiently prepared for the workplace, pointing to a lack of technological skills, among other things (Intelligent.com, 2023; ResumeBuilder, 2023). At the same time, the results of Ernst & Young's research (2023) indicate that 74% of Millennials claim to use artificial intelligence at work, along with 70% of representatives of Generation X and 63% of Generation Z. Training in new technologies should therefore be extended to all employees, regardless of age, without assuming that old staff can be replaced by young employees.

Increasing familiarity with new tools, their capabilities and limitations will translate into a change in attitudes toward their use in that part of the workforce not yet convinced by these tools. Developing digital competence will in turn boost employees' sense of effectiveness, which should at the same time mitigate the negative emotions associated with using such tools, with fear at the forefront. Thus, aversion to new tools will decrease, and identification with them will increase, which at the same time will lead to greater commitment and enhanced motivation.

A significant role in overcoming resistance to new technologies will be played by managers (Recardo, 1995). To a great extent, it is up to them to cultivate a friendly atmosphere and organizational climate (Sanchez-Rodriguez et al., 2024; Jerab, Mabrouk, 2023) conducive to improving digital competence among employees. The introduction of new technologies into the organization should be carried out in consultation with employees, taking into account their needs and preferences, which would instil in them a sense of responsibility for the decisions made. In this case, it would be advisable to use a democratic leadership style based on a participatory management approach. Taking responsibility for the decisions made is the basis for developing commitment, which research shows will boost job satisfaction, and in turn translate into decreased negative emotions, including fear, the main factor of resistance to introducing changes (see Moczydłowska, 2023).

Employee resistance to implementing new technologies, especially those based on artificial intelligence, is a natural reaction, albeit one that slows down the potential opportunities offered by the digital revolution. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the sources of this resistance and discover ways to overcome it. This paper, based on a critical analysis of the literature, presents the main factors of resistance to modern technologies: fear of what is new and unknown, lack of a sense of effectiveness, and aversion, with an explanation of the psychological mechanisms behind them. In addition, possible ways of overcoming the resistance of employees convinced to use digital tools in their work are outlined. Finally, a model has been developed which, on the one hand, can serve as conceptualization for future research and, on the other hand, as a basis for outlining strategies for dealing with employee reluctance towards new technologies.

It should be emphasized, however, that this study is not the result of a systematic literature review, which is recommended for future research. Therefore, the factors listed and described, as well as the methods for counteracting them, could be supplemented with additional information not included in this study.

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O CZYNNIKACH OPORU WOBEC SZTUCZNEJ INTELIGENCJI W MIEJSCU PRACY I SPOSOBACH PRZECIWDZIAŁANIA IM

Streszczenie

Wdrażanie nowych technologii w organizacjach jest zmianą, z którą wiążą się zarówno nowe możliwości, jak i zagrożenia wywołujące naturalny opór części pracowników przed ich wprowadzaniem. Celem niniejszej pracy jest przedstawienie modelu przełamywania oporu wśród pracowników wobec nowych technologii cyfrowych opartych na sztucznej inteligencji. Zastosowaną metodą badawczą była krytyczna analiza literatury. Punktem wyjścia opracowanego modelu jest najnowsza praca Golgeciego i zespołu (2025) wskazująca trzy czynniki oporu: o charakterze afektywnym (strach i awersja do nowych technologii) oraz poznawczym (poczucie braku skuteczności). Na podstawie wyników badań oraz psychologicznych mechanizmów stojących za przedstawionymi czynnikami oporu dopasowano możliwe sposoby jego przełamywania na poziomie indywidualnym oraz organizacyjnym. Do pierwszej grupy zaliczono pozytywną zmianę postawy wobec pracy oraz zwiększenie poziomu utożsamiania się z technologiami opartymi na sztucznej inteligencji

wśród ich użytkowników, do drugiej – demokratyczny styl zarządzania oraz podnoszenie kompetencji pracowników pod kątem wykorzystania sztucznej inteligencji w miejscu pracy. Przedstawiony model jest wstępną propozycją i może być uzupełniony o dodatkowe elementy, zarówno po stronie czynników oporu, jak i sposobów przeciwdziałania im; jednocześnie może służyć jako konceptualizacja przyszłych badań.

Słowa kluczowe: model, sztuczna inteligencja, czynniki oporu, poziom indywidualny, poziom organizacyjny