



Employee grit and organizational culture on organizational change management: The case of ministry of foos and agriculture

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Abstract

The study examines the impact of employee grit and organizational culture on organizational change management within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana. A positivist approach was employed, utilizing quantitative data collection through questionnaires. The population comprises employees of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Simple random sampling techniques were utilized to select participants. With a sample size of 300, a cross-sectional survey approach was adopted. IBM SPSS version 28 was used for data analysis. The study found that employee grit negatively affects organizational change (-0.251), contradicting research that links grit to adaptability. Organizational culture positively influences change (0.409), but strong cultures can also create resistance. Recommendations of the study and directions for future studies have been discussed.

Keywords: Employee grit, organizational culture, organizational change management, MoF, Ghana

Introduction

In recent times, organizations and researchers have shown interest in employee grit as an integral component needed to be integrated into organizational culture to influence the values and beliefs in the organization which intend impacts employee actions (Kim & Lee, 2022; Choi *et al.*, 2020)^[9, 24, 25]. However, this transformation can bring about significant changes by altering attitudes, systems and approaches which may vary due to factors such as individual differences and the organization's adaptability to change (Fakhar *et al.*, 2021)^[16]. Employee grit is a psychological trait that reflects an individual's perseverance and passion for long-term goals within the work context (Arifin *et al.*, 2019)^[4]. It encompasses the ability to maintain sustained effort and interest over time despite challenges and setbacks. This trait is crucial for understanding the relationship between personal characteristics such as intelligence and personality. Grit is a key psychological concept that explains how individual characteristics, like intelligence and personality, correlate with work performance (Duckworth, 2016). Research indicates that grit is distinct from related psychological constructs like conscientiousness, work ethic, need for achievement, industriousness, hardiness and self-control. Initially, grit was conceptualized with three dimensions which are consistency of interest, perseverance of effort and adaptability (Luthans *et al.*, 2019)^[27]. Consistency of interest refers to the sustained focus and passion for specific interests and goals over long periods. Individuals with high consistency of interest remain committed to their chosen fields for extended durations, although cultural influences can impact this trait. Perseverance of effort denotes maintaining commitment and continuing to strive despite difficulties (Febriawan & Maulina, 2020)^[17]. Persistent individuals exert effort to complete tasks under challenging conditions, displaying resilience and a determination to achieve meaningful goals. Adaptability involves effectively adjusting to changing conditions, expecting challenges and showing flexibility and confidence in overcoming new difficulties (Lee, 2022)^[25]. This trait enables individuals to develop strategies to navigate work challenges and is crucial for achieving long-term goals.

The introduction of adaptability as a dimension of grit stems from cultural variations observed in the two-factor model of grit (Akpa *et al.*, 2021; Lubis & Hanum, 2020)^[2, 26]. Research suggests that adaptability is particularly relevant in collective cultures, where it enhances the ability to overcome challenges in pursuit of long-term objectives. This dimension aligns with the cultural self-construal theory, indicating that individuals adjust their behavior based on social and situational contexts (Assoratgoon & Kantabutra, 2023)^[5]. Organizational culture refers to the shared set of values, beliefs, attitudes and norms that characterize how an organization operates and interacts both internally and externally. It shapes the behaviors and actions of individuals within the organization, influencing decision-making, communication patterns and overall organizational dynamics (Dasanayake & Mahakalanda, 2020)^[12]. The concept of organizational culture has evolved significantly over time, driven by various theoretical perspectives and empirical studies. Originating from the work of Fakhar *et al.* (2021)^[16], organizational culture was initially seen as fundamental to organizational performance, distinct from factors like structure or policy. This perspective shifted focus away from national cultures to emphasize the unique culture within each organization.

Organizational culture gained prominence in human resource management as a tool for understanding and enhancing organizational effectiveness, offering a more flexible and creative approach compared to mechanistic organizational models (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020)^[31]. Various scholars have contributed different typologies and dimensions to define organizational culture. For instance, Bagga *et al.*, (2023)^[7] proposed three levels: artifacts, values and underlying assumptions to explain how culture manifests within organizations. Suprapti *et al.*, (2020)^[34] categorized culture into power, role, task, and person cultures, highlighting different emphases within organizations. Organizational culture serves multiple functions within an organization. It provides a framework for coordinating goals and behaviors, enhancing employee engagement, and facilitating learning from experiences (Khan *et al.*, 2020)^[23]. Additionally, culture reduces

uncertainty by providing a common understanding of organizational goals and acceptable behaviors. It motivates employees by fostering a sense of identity and belonging, thereby increasing commitment and reducing turnover (Dasanayake and Mahakalanda, 2020) ^[12].

Organizational change management refers to the structured approach employed to transition individuals, teams and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It involves the methods and processes used to prepare, equip, and support individuals and teams to successfully adopt change in order to drive organizational success and outcomes (Kamugisha Samwel, 2013) ^[22]. Change management is vital in contemporary organizational contexts due to the ever-evolving external and internal environments. According to Abasilim *et al.* (2019) ^[1], change is essential for organizations to continuously renew their direction, structure, and capabilities to meet the shifting needs of both external customers and internal stakeholders. Change is a constant feature of organizational life, occurring at both operational and strategic levels. Consequently, the ability to effectively manage change is integral to organizational strategy, and the two are intricately linked (Alblooshi *et al.*, 2021) ^[3]. Organizational change manifests in various forms characterized by the rate of occurrence, how it is initiated, and its scale. Employee grit represents a valuable asset in organizational change management, enhancing resilience, commitment, and long-term success (Credé *et al.*, 2017) ^[11]. Emphasizing and cultivating grit within organizational practices can contribute significantly to achieving sustainable change and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation. Grit aligns closely with the concept of perseverance in organizational change. Employees with high levels of grit are more likely to persist in the face of setbacks and challenges encountered during change initiatives (Arifin *et al.*, 2019) ^[4]. They exhibit a "quiet determination" and a tendency not to abandon tasks, characteristics highlighted by Clark and Clark (2020) ^[10] in studies on high achievers. This persistence is crucial when organizations undergo transformative changes that require sustained effort over extended periods.

Grit contributes to employee engagement and retention during organizational change. Employees who are passionate about long-term goals tend to be more committed to their work and the organization's objectives (Duckworth, 2016). They are less likely to be distracted by short-term setbacks or changes, staying focused on achieving the larger organizational goals despite obstacles. This focus is essential in maintaining momentum and morale within teams during times of uncertainty.

Organizational culture serves as a critical foundation for successful organizational change management in public sector organizations (Haist, 2020) ^[18]. A strong organizational culture fosters an environment where employees are more receptive to change. When organizational values align with the proposed changes, employees are likely to embrace new initiatives rather than resist them. This alignment helps in smoother transitions during periods of organizational reform or crisis, such as economic contractions mentioned in the context (Luthans *et al.*, 2019) ^[27]. Culture influences employee engagement levels, which are crucial during organizational change. Engaged employees are more committed to the organization's goals and are willing to contribute proactively

to change efforts. A positive and supportive culture encourages open communication, trust, and collaboration, essential for overcoming challenges posed by economic crises or structural changes (Meriac *et al.*, 2020) ^[28].

Employee grit has garnered attention due to its potential impact on individual and organizational performance (Sentoso & Putra, 2021) ^[34]. Organizations are increasingly interested in how grit contributes to employee engagement, motivation, and ability to navigate and embrace change. Gritty employees are believed to exhibit higher levels of resilience, persistence, and commitment, which are crucial qualities in the face of organizational transformations (Duckworth, 2016). Similarly, organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational behaviors, norms and responses to change. Cultures that are adaptive, open to innovation and supportive of continuous learning tend to facilitate smoother transitions during periods of change (Schein, 2010) ^[33]. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of employee grit and organizational culture in change management, there remains a gap in understanding their combined impact on organizational change outcomes. Existing research often focuses on these factors in isolation, without sufficiently exploring their interactive effects

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining how employee grit and organizational culture jointly influence organizational change management processes.

The study's significance lies in its potential to enhance organizational change capabilities. Identifying factors that contribute to effective change management, such as employee grit and adaptive organizational cultures, organizations can develop strategies to navigate complex environments and achieve sustainable growth

Study Objectives

The study examines the impact of employee grit and organizational culture on organizational change management within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana. Specifically, the research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the effect/impact of employee grit on organizational change management;
2. To investigate the effect of organizational culture on organizational change management within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture;

Literature Review

Employee Grit

Employee grit refers to the combination of passion and perseverance in individuals as they pursue their long-term goals within the workplace (Alblooshi *et al.*, 2021) ^[3]. It is characterized by a deep commitment to their work, driven by a strong sense of purpose and enthusiasm. Gritty employees exhibit resilience in the face of challenges, viewing setbacks as opportunities for growth rather than obstacles (Jordan *et al.*, 2020) ^[21]. They maintain consistent effort over time, demonstrating a steadfast determination to achieve their objectives despite difficulties. Grit also encompasses adaptability, as employees with this trait remain flexible in their approach while staying focused on their goals. Their positive attitude and optimism enable them to inspire and motivate colleagues, contributing to a resilient and productive team dynamic (Hasanati, 2022) ^[20]. Fostering grit in employees nurtures a culture of continuous improvement and enhances organizational success by

harnessing the collective determination and passion of the workforce. Employee grit, a concept popularized

Organizational Change Management

Organizational change management is a critical aspect of modern business strategy, driven by the necessity to adapt to an ever-evolving external environment and meet the dynamic needs of internal stakeholders. As noted by Fries *et al.* (2021), change management involves continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities. This process is essential for organizational survival and success in today's competitive landscape characterized by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting demographics Febriawan & Maulina (2020)^[17]. The concept of change within organizations, as described by Errida & Lotfi, (2021)^[15], is not just an occasional event but a constant feature affecting both operational routines and strategic decisions. This view underscores the interconnectedness of organizational change and strategy, highlighting that effective change management is integral to achieving strategic goals (Elkhwesky *et al.*, 2022)^[14].

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture encompasses the values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that define how people within an organization interact and operate. It is the collective personality of an organization, shaping its identity, influencing its decisions, and determining how it responds to internal and external challenges. At its core, organizational culture is not just about policies or mission statements but rather the deeply ingrained attitudes and practices that guide day-to-day operations and long-term strategies (Sentoso & Putra, 2021)^[34]. A strong organizational culture acts as a cohesive force, aligning employees towards common goals and fostering a sense of belonging and purpose. It provides a framework within which decisions are made, encouraging consistency and predictability in actions.

Employee Grit and Organizational Change Management

Employee grit refers to an individual's perseverance and passion towards long-term goals, especially in the face of challenges or setbacks (Errida & Lotfi, 2021)^[15]. In the context of organizational change management, employees with higher levels of grit are likely to exhibit several behaviors and characteristics that can positively influence the success of change initiatives. Gritty employees are more likely to persist in their efforts to adapt to and implement changes, even when faced with obstacles or resistance (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2023)^[37]. Gritty individuals tend to be more adaptable to new circumstances and more willing to learn and grow from experiences, which is crucial during periods of organizational change. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the organization's goals and vision, which can align well with the objectives of change initiatives. Gritty employees often emerge as informal leaders or champions of change within their teams, rallying others and maintaining motivation (Burke, 2021).

Empirical studies Ongera (2022)^[30] have shown that grit predicts success in various domains, including academic achievement and performance outcomes. Similarly, in organizational settings, higher levels of employee grit can lead to greater success in managing organizational change by fostering resilience, initiative, and perseverance among

employees. While grit has been correlated with success in various domains, including academic and organizational settings, (Peral, 2019)^[32] argue that its predictive power may be overstated or context-dependent. Angela Duckworth's theory of grit explains the relationship between employee grit and organizational change management. Grit, defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, enables employees to navigate and endure the challenges of organizational change. Employees with high levels of grit are more likely to remain committed and resilient, ensuring successful adaptation to new processes and structures within an organization. Duckworth's theory highlights the importance of sustained effort and resilience, suggesting that gritty employees can significantly contribute to the smooth implementation of organizational change by maintaining focus and motivation despite setbacks (Duckworth, 2016). Hence the hypothesis of the study states that:

H1: Higher levels of employee grit are positively associated with successful organizational change management.

Organizational culture and Organizational Change Management

Organizational culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs and behaviors that define how work is done within an organization (Naeem, 2020)^[29]. A strong, positive organizational culture provides several advantages during organizational change: Employees are more likely to align their behaviors with the values and norms of the organizational culture, facilitating smoother adoption of change initiatives. Positive cultures that emphasize trust, collaboration, and innovation can enhance employee commitment to change goals and reduce resistance. Open communication channels fostered by a positive culture enable effective dissemination of information related to change initiatives. Organizations with strong cultures are often more adaptable and resilient in the face of change, making it easier to implement and sustain changes over time (Wahyuni & Triatmanto, 2020)^[36].

Research (Peral, 2019)^[32] indicates that organizations with strong cultures are better able to manage change because they have established norms and values that support flexibility and innovation, essential qualities for successful adaptation to new challenges and opportunities. While strong organizational cultures can indeed provide stability and cohesion, critics argue that overly strong cultures may hinder change rather than facilitate it. Research by Sentoso & Putra, (2021)^[34] for instance, suggests that organizations with highly entrenched cultures may struggle to adapt quickly to external changes or technological advancements. Such cultures may resist new ideas or innovations that challenge established norms, thereby limiting the organization's ability to effectively manage change. Moreover, the emphasis on strong cultures promoting flexibility and innovation may overlook the potential drawbacks of homogeneity in thinking and behavior within the organization. In dynamic and rapidly changing environments, organizations may benefit more from adaptive cultures that prioritize agility and openness to diverse perspectives rather than adherence to established norms and values (Hanelt *et al.*, 2021)^[19]. This perspective encourages a critical examination of how organizational culture interacts with the challenges of change management,

highlighting the need for balance between stability and adaptability in fostering long-term organizational resilience and success.

Edgar Schein's Organizational Culture Model explains the relationship between organizational culture and change management. According to Schein, organizational culture consists of three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. These cultural elements influence how change is perceived and implemented within an organization. A strong, adaptive culture can facilitate change by aligning values and behaviors with new strategic directions. Conversely, a rigid culture may resist change, causing friction and slowing down the change process. Understanding and aligning the organizational culture with change initiatives is crucial for successful change management (Schein, 2010). Hence the hypothesis of the study states that:

H2: A strong, positive organizational culture is positively associated with successful organizational change management.

Methodology

The study adopted quantitative cross-sectional survey approach, specifically descriptive and explanatory research designs to thoroughly investigate the relationships between employee grit, organizational culture, transformational and transactional leadership styles and their combined impact on organizational change management (Babbie, 2010)^[6].

The population of interest for this research comprises individuals employed within MoFA across various organizational levels and functional roles. This includes administrative staff involved in human resources, finance and procurement functions essential to the ministry's operations

The study adopted the random sampling technique to recruit a sample size of 300 respondents from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Ghana due to its effectiveness in ensuring that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. Primary data was collected with the use of questionnaire

The collected data was analyzed with the aid of IBM SPSS version 28. Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize and present the socio-demographic characteristics of study participants.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

From the study dataset, Male respondents made up 78.3 percent of the total, while female respondents made up the remaining 21.7 percent. As the study targets respondents who are working in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, it is safe to suggest that the gender distribution is not balanced in this sector.

30.3% of the respondents were below 25 years, 31.0% of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 35, followed by 22.3% who were between the ages of 36 and 45, 12.3% who were between the age of 46 and 55 and 4.0% were above 55 years. These figures imply a young executive representation.

Again, 56.0 percent of the total was not married, while 44.0% of the respondents were married. This implies that majority of the respondents were not married and single.

In terms of educational background, over two out of every three respondents (72.0%) had undergraduate degrees, 20.7 percent had postgraduate degrees, and the remaining 7.3% had SSCE certificates.

56.0% of respondents were junior staff, followed by 37.7% of the respondents who were senior staff and the remaining (6.3%) were also directors. These figures imply that majority of the respondents were junior staff members.

38.0% of the respondents had held their current job for less than 1 year, 27.0% of the respondents had held their current job between one and five years, 9.7% of the respondents had held their current job between six and ten years, 11.3% of the respondents had held their current job between eleven and fifteen years, 5.7% of the respondents had held their current job between fifteen and twenty years and the remaining 8.3 percent had held their job for more than twenty years. The extent to which the respondents had worked with the ministry was key as it was of essence to find respondents who witnessed the pandemic and post-pandemic periods on which the study is based.

Objective One: To examine the effect/impact of employee grit on organizational change management

The first objective sought to examine the effect/impact of employee grit on organizational change management the study found a significant negative relationship between employee grit and organizational change management, with an estimate of -0.251. This suggests that as organizational change management increases, employee grit tends to decrease. Employee grit, characterized by perseverance and passion for long-term goals, may conflict with the adaptability required in dynamic change environments. Employees with high grit may resist change initiatives, perceiving them as disruptions to their set objectives. The findings imply that while grit is essential for long-term persistence, it may hinder employees' willingness to embrace organizational transformations. Organizations must, therefore, balance grit with flexibility through targeted interventions such as change readiness programs and resilience training. Additionally, leadership must communicate change benefits effectively to align with employees' intrinsic motivation and perseverance, ensuring that their commitment to long-term goals does not hinder the necessary adaptability for change.

The findings suggest that an increase in organizational change management is linked to a decrease in employee grit (-0.251, $p < 0.1$). This challenges Angela Duckworth's Grit Theory, which argues that perseverance and passion for long-term goals enhance adaptability. According to Grit Theory, employees with high grit should embrace challenges rather than withdraw from change. However, the study shows that extensive change management efforts may reduce grit, possibly because frequent changes create uncertainty and stress, discouraging perseverance. This also aligns with Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, which emphasizes the need to generate short-term wins and sustain motivation to prevent employee fatigue. If change initiatives are not well communicated and structured, they may demotivate employees rather than enhance their resilience. Therefore, while grit is essential for overcoming challenges, its effectiveness in a dynamic organizational environment may be contingent on how change is managed and communicated to employees.

The study's finding of a negative relationship (-0.251) between employee grit and organizational change management contradicts existing literature, which generally posits that grit enhances perseverance in the face of challenges (Errida & Lotfi, 2021) ^[15]. Williams and Wade-Golden (2023) argue that gritty employees are more adaptable and resilient, making them valuable assets during organizational transitions. However, the negative correlation suggests that grit may sometimes lead to rigidity, where employees persist in outdated processes rather than embracing change. Burke (2021) highlights that highly gritty employees may resist change due to their commitment to previous goals. Thus, creating resistance rather than facilitating transformation. However, Peral (2019) ^[32] cautions that the benefits of grit may be context-dependent, which means that in environments requiring flexibility, its effects might be counterproductive. This finding challenges the conventional belief that grit universally facilitates organizational change and suggests the need for contextual consideration in its application.

Objective Two: To investigate the effect of organizational culture on organizational change management within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture

The second objective sought to investigate the effect of organizational culture on organizational change management within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The study established a strong positive correlation between organizational culture and organizational change management, with an estimate of 0.409. This indicates that a strong, adaptable organizational culture significantly enhances change management processes. Organizations with a culture that fosters open communication, trust, and shared values experience smoother transitions during change initiatives. A culture that supports innovation and employee involvement encourages proactive engagement with change rather than resistance. The findings suggest that firms with rigid or hierarchical cultures may struggle with change adoption, while those with participatory and learning-oriented cultures thrive. This highlights the need for organizations to cultivate adaptive cultures through leadership development, transparent decision-making, and continuous learning. Leaders should reinforce cultural norms that align with change objectives, ensuring that employees view change as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Organizations that embed change-friendly values into their culture will likely experience more effective and sustainable transformation processes.

The study finds a positive and substantial relationship between organizational culture and change management (0.409, $p < 0.1$), supporting Edgar Schein's Organizational Culture Model. Schein emphasizes that organizational culture, particularly its underlying assumptions and values, plays a crucial role in facilitating or hindering change. A strong culture aligned with change initiatives fosters acceptance, making transitions smoother. This aligns with Kotter's model, which stresses the importance of building a guiding coalition and creating a strategic vision for change. If an organization's culture is resistant to change, efforts to implement new strategies may fail. The findings indicate that organizations with adaptive and flexible cultures manage change more effectively. However, the study also

suggests that rigid cultures may require extensive interventions to shift values and norms, reinforcing Schein's idea that culture operates at deep levels and must be consciously reshaped through leadership and reinforcement mechanisms.

The strong positive correlation (0.409) between organizational culture and organizational change management aligns with research emphasizing culture's role in facilitating change (Naeem, 2020) ^[29]. A positive culture fosters alignment with new organizational goals, reducing resistance and enhancing adaptability (Wahyuni & Triatmanto, 2020) ^[36]. Peral (2019) ^[32] and Robbins & Sanghi (2007) suggest that organizations with well-established cultural values experience smoother transitions because employees are already conditioned to align with evolving organizational objectives. However, research by Sentoso & Putra (2021) ^[34] highlights a potential downside—strong cultures can also create rigid structures that resist change, making adaptation difficult. Hanelt *et al.* (2021) ^[19] argue that highly entrenched cultures may struggle with external disruptions, emphasizing that flexibility within cultural norms is crucial. This study reinforces the positive aspects of organizational culture in managing change but also highlights the need for a balance between cultural stability and adaptability to external shifts.

Conclusion

This study provides critical insights into the complex relationship between employee grit, organizational culture and change management. The negative correlation (-0.251) between grit and organizational change challenges the prevailing notion that grit universally enhances adaptability. Contrary to existing literature (Errida & Lotfi, 2021; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2023) ^[15], the findings suggest that persistence may lead to rigidity, making employees resistant to change rather than facilitating it. This challenges the traditional understanding of grit and highlights the importance of flexibility in change management.

Another significant finding is the strong positive correlation (0.409) between organizational culture and change management, reinforcing prior research (Naeem, 2020; Wahyuni & Triatmanto, 2020) ^[29, 36]. However, this study adds nuance by highlighting the dual nature of strong cultures while they promote alignment with organizational goals, they can also create resistance when changes conflict with deeply embedded norms. This underscores the need for a balance between cultural stability and adaptability.

Recommendation

The key recommendations are;

Organizations should implement resilience-building programs to strengthen employee grit during change. Training on adaptability, problem-solving, and perseverance can help employees cope with transformation. Leaders must communicate clear expectations and provide support systems, such as mentoring and peer coaching. Recognizing employees' efforts in navigating change fosters motivation. Additionally, organizations should encourage goal-setting practices that align personal and organizational objectives. Regular feedback mechanisms will help employees adjust their strategies and maintain grit. Since the findings indicate that higher change management reduces grit, organizations should balance change initiatives with sufficient resources

and support to sustain employee motivation and perseverance.

Also, a strong organizational culture significantly enhances change management. Organizations should embed core values that emphasize adaptability, teamwork, and innovation. Leadership must actively promote a shared vision that aligns with change initiatives. Open communication fosters a sense of belonging and reduces resistance. Employee engagement programs, such as regular town halls and collaborative decision-making, create a culture of inclusivity. Rewarding employees who demonstrate cultural alignment encourages others to follow. Training on organizational values should be on-going, ensuring employees internalize them. Given the 40.9% positive influence of culture on change management, firms must prioritize cultural reinforcement to drive sustainable change.

Suggestions for future studies

The study examines the impact of employee grit and organizational culture on organizational change management within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana. Future studies could focus on other sectors of the economy other than the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Also, a qualitative study could be explored in future

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