

## Employee Resistance to Change in Sport Organizations: A Conceptual Model Linking Personality and Organizational Culture

Jon Welty Peachey, University of Connecticut  
Jennifer Bruening, University of Connecticut (Advisor)

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Poster**

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Organizations in many industry sectors are recognizing that it is no longer sufficient to conduct business as usual in the 21st century. For businesses and sport organizations in particular to survive and grow, they must be able to adapt quickly and nimbly to changes in strategy, size, environment and technology (Slack & Parent, 2006). However, successful organizational change is extremely difficult to accomplish because employees typically resist change efforts (O'Toole, 1996). Most organizational change efforts fail and end up generating employee recalcitrance, building resentment and fostering dissatisfaction. In fact, it has been suggested that one in three change programs in the sport and recreation industry actually do fail (Welch & McCarville, 2003).

Researchers have posited that organizational change programs fail due to sources of resistance which lie within the individual and also in the environment (Lewin, 1951). Much of the organizational change research has focused on macro/organizational level variables, such as organizational culture and leadership style, rather than on micro/individual level difference factors (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Thus, there is a gap in the organizational change research, particularly in the sport context, examining the micro/individual difference factor perspective of resistance to change. Additionally, there have been few empirical studies investigating the combined role of context/organizational culture with the individual difference personality factor in predicting employee resistance to change (Oreg, 2006).

The purpose of this poster is to explore sources of employee resistance to change in sport organizations, positing a conceptual model linking employee personality dispositions, organizational culture and culture strength with employee resistance to change. It is hoped that this conceptual framework will aid organizational change researchers in sport management with identifying sources and mediating variables of employee resistance to change and stimulate empirical investigation within the sport context.

The under girding supposition of the model is that the type of organizational culture of a sport organization will mediate the relationship between employee personality dispositions and resistance to organizational change. Researchers that have examined personality dispositions have generally concurred that some employees are more likely than others to resist organizational change and experience negative emotions due to their dispositional inclination, independent of all other factors (Oreg, 2003; Gryskiewicz & Tullar, 1995; Cunningham et. al, 2002). As most researchers ultimately agree that employee behavior is determined by both disposition and situation (House et al., 1996), the conceptual model is grounded in this interactionist perspective. The model positions six personality dispositions of employees that will lead to more or less resistance to organizational change; extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism and risk aversion (Oreg, 2003; Judge et. al, 1999). The model suggests that certain personality dispositions allow employees to better accept organizational change, while other dispositions evoke more resistance.

The center of the model visualizes four types of cultures found in sport organizations based on the Competing Values Framework; group, developmental, hierarchal and competitive (Jones et al, 2005; Quinn, 1988; Parker & Bradley, 2000). These organizational culture types serve as mediators between employee personality dispositions and resistance to change. The model predicts that the type of organizational sport culture will serve as a positive or negative filter through which an employee's personality disposition passes in determining degree of resistance to change. The model also diagrams the culture strength of a sport organization, suggesting that weak cultures will allow employee personality dispositions to have a more pronounced effect on resistance to change than type of organizational culture, while strong cultures will permit organizational culture to play the dominant role (Mischel, 1968; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996).

The conceptual model of employee resistance to change in sport organizations contributes to organizational behavior and resistance to change research by advancing the link between personality, organizational culture and resistance to change. Additionally, the model contextualizes factors of employee resistance to organizational change into the sport industry, filling a void in sport management theory and literature. Researchers can utilize the conceptual model as a springboard for exploring myriad facets of employee resistance to change in sport organizations. Researchers can also use the model to investigate the relationship between employee personality dispositions, organizational culture and culture strength at any level of sport, from grassroots to professional, to ascertain if there are differences in the relationships between levels of sport.