

Review

# The Role of Managers in Corporate Change Management: A Bibliometric Review

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**Abstract:** In response to a business context characterized by change, a large number of approaches from different areas of knowledge has developed in the literature without an integrative framework. For this reason, the purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive overview of change management literature. Taking as its basis a bibliometric study on change management, this article offers a classification of these approaches that provides an overview of the current state of the research on the role of managers in change management. Four hundred and ninety-three scientific documents (1333 keywords and 883 authors) were retrieved from the Web of Science database from 2013 to 2022. Our results identify three main topics underlying change management literature: organizational change, management and performance. The theoretical and practical implications of each dimension are analyzed and allow us to propose a classification of the literature on corporate change management. Furthermore, the implications of sustainability are also explained.

**Keywords:** change management; resistance to change; organizational transformation; bibliometric analysis



**Citation:** Gutiérrez-Iñíguez, Á.; Collado-Agudo, J.; Rialp-Criado, J. The Role of Managers in Corporate Change Management: A Bibliometric Review. *Sustainability* **2023**, *15*, 10811. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151410811>

Academic Editor: Virginia Bodolica

Received: 25 May 2023

Revised: 6 July 2023

Accepted: 7 July 2023

Published: 10 July 2023



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## 1. Introduction

The history of humanity has always been marked by constant change and evolution. As Arthur Schopenhauer famously stated, “Change is the only immutable thing.” However, the pace of transformation has accelerated significantly, and it has propelled an even more intense wave of change [1]. Just as the steam engine brought about a major shift at the beginning of the 20th century, the technological revolution in progress since the 1990s has propelled an even more intense wave of change. To put this into perspective, if we measure human knowledge by the amount of information generated and stored worldwide, we can observe a staggering increase. By 2007, humanity had generated 295 exabytes of information, and just four years later, by 2011, that number had more than doubled to 600 exabytes.

A significant portion of this generated and stored information pertains to change processes within businesses and companies. Nowadays, many companies find themselves needing to rapidly adapt and change their way of doing things. This is because the world is in a constant state of flux, necessitating continuous adjustments. Organizations must modify various aspects of themselves, such as their organizational structure and management practices [2]. Change is no longer an occasional occurrence; it has become an integral part of conducting business. As stated by [3] (p. 4), “Managers’ expectations have shifted from seeing change as an extraordinary event to seeing it as a permanent condition of business life”. Additionally, the current emphasis on sustainability has acted as a driving force for change within companies. According to [4], sustainability involves the responsible management of resources, promoting social equity, and ensuring ecological integrity. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of environmental, social and economic systems and strives for a sustainable and resilient future.

Considering the significance of change in the business realm, the purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of change management literature with the aim of understanding change management as a systematic framework for facilitating successful organizational change. This involves planning, implementing, and evaluating change initiatives to minimize resistance and maximize adoption. According to [5], change management is a structured process that helps organizations transition from their current state to a desired future state. It includes various elements such as understanding the need for change, engaging stakeholders, providing training and support, and monitoring progress to ensure effective change implementation [6].

Via bibliometric analysis, a quantitative research method was used to evaluate and measure the impact, productivity, and patterns of scientific publications within a specific field analyzing bibliographic data; we aimed to assess previous studies, identify their strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint gaps in the existing literature, and determine the factors that contribute to the success or failure of change management initiatives. According to [7], bibliometric analysis provides a systematic approach to assessing scientific output and collaboration patterns. It helps identify influential authors, top journals, and emerging research areas. This method aids in evaluating research performance and informing strategic decision-making in academia and research institutions. Therefore, by thoroughly reviewing previous literature focused on change management, we can also identify potential barriers, obstacles, and challenges that organizations may encounter during implementation. Furthermore, this analysis will shed light on how various change management practices have evolved, influenced by factors such as technological advancements, globalization, and changing customer demands.

To achieve our goals, this paper is structured as follows: First, we conduct a bibliometric analysis of change management, which enables us to identify the key features underlying the topic, namely organizational change, management, and performance. Subsequently, the following three sections delve into the implications of each key feature within the state of the art. The third section describes the business landscape characterized by change, emphasizing five primary factors: technological development, increased market maturity and competition, concentration and globalization of business activity, customer professionalization, and the growing influence of external agents on business decisions. The fourth section explores the challenges of change management in large companies, while the fifth section highlights the critical role of managers in driving business change. Finally, the sixth section proposes a classification of literature on enterprise change management and discusses the evolution of future research considering the opportunity of meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; in other words, incorporate sustainability into change management.

From our perspective, this research serves two purposes. Firstly, it helps identify research gaps and areas that warrant further investigation in future studies. Secondly, it provides valuable insights for practitioners, enabling them to stay abreast of the latest developments in change management and make informed decisions when implementing change initiatives.

## 2. Bibliometric Analysis of Change Management

To explain in-depth the literature review of change management, we conduct a bibliometric analysis. As [8] (p. 6) points out, “A bibliometric study becomes the scientific area where quantitative analyses of the literature produced on a topic or study area allow us to appreciate what has already been researched and the potential for additional research”. Consequently, we use bibliometric indicators to display the state of the art of change management in a recent period.

This section is organized as follows. First, we explain the methodology applied and the data collection. Second, the main results of the bibliometric analysis conducted are shown. Finally, we highlight the conclusions linked with previous research.

### 2.1. Methodology and Data Collection

The bibliometric analysis is focused on the Web of Science database as a source for our study, and we limited the results to the “Business” and “Management” categories. This period included the last ten years (from 2013 to 2022).

The descriptors entered in WoS database were: “Corporate Change”, “Change Management”, “Resistance to Change”, and “Organizational Change”. We obtained an initial result consisting of 2950 documents. Due to the high amount of information to analyze, we limited the search to documents with 25 citations or more. The final result included 493 documents.

Data processing and representation of the bibliometric study were carried out via the statistical open-source software R, using the Bibliometrix R library and the Biblioshiny version [9].

### 2.2. Results

Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of the bibliometric analysis conducted. We selected the last 10 complete years, but 2022 offers no results due to the limitation applied to the number of citations. A total of 493 documents from 134 different sources are included, with an average citation ratio (ACR) of 45.7 per document. These documents identify a total of 1333 keywords which will be analyzed in the next section. The bibliometric analysis selected 883 different authors, 55 of them in single-authored documents. The average number of authors per document is 2, and the share of international co-authorships is very close to 30%. These results allow us to better understand the interest in change management in previous research.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of change management publications. Source: Compiled by the authors (2023).

Descriptive Statistics	Results
Time span	2013–2022
Documents	493
Sources (journals, books, etc.)	134
Average citation ratio (ACR)	45.7
Keywords	1333
Authors	883
Authors of single-authored docs	55
Co-authors per document	2.17
International co-authorships %	29.01

Figure 1 depicts the most relevant sources of the selected documents. The journals more directly related to the main topic “change management” are identified as the Journal of Organizational Change Management (with 22 documents) and the Journal of Change Management (with 16 documents). Other journals included in the “Business, Management and Accounting” subject area of Web of Science are also relevant: Human Relations, MIS Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, Organization Science, and Strategic Management Journal.

Figures 2 and 3 show the main keywords used in the documents. Organizational change is the most frequently used keyword in the analysis, with 107 appearances, 10% out of the total count. Performance and management appearances are also relevant, over 5% of the total count. The rest of the keywords appear on fewer than 50 occasions, with a total share below 5%.

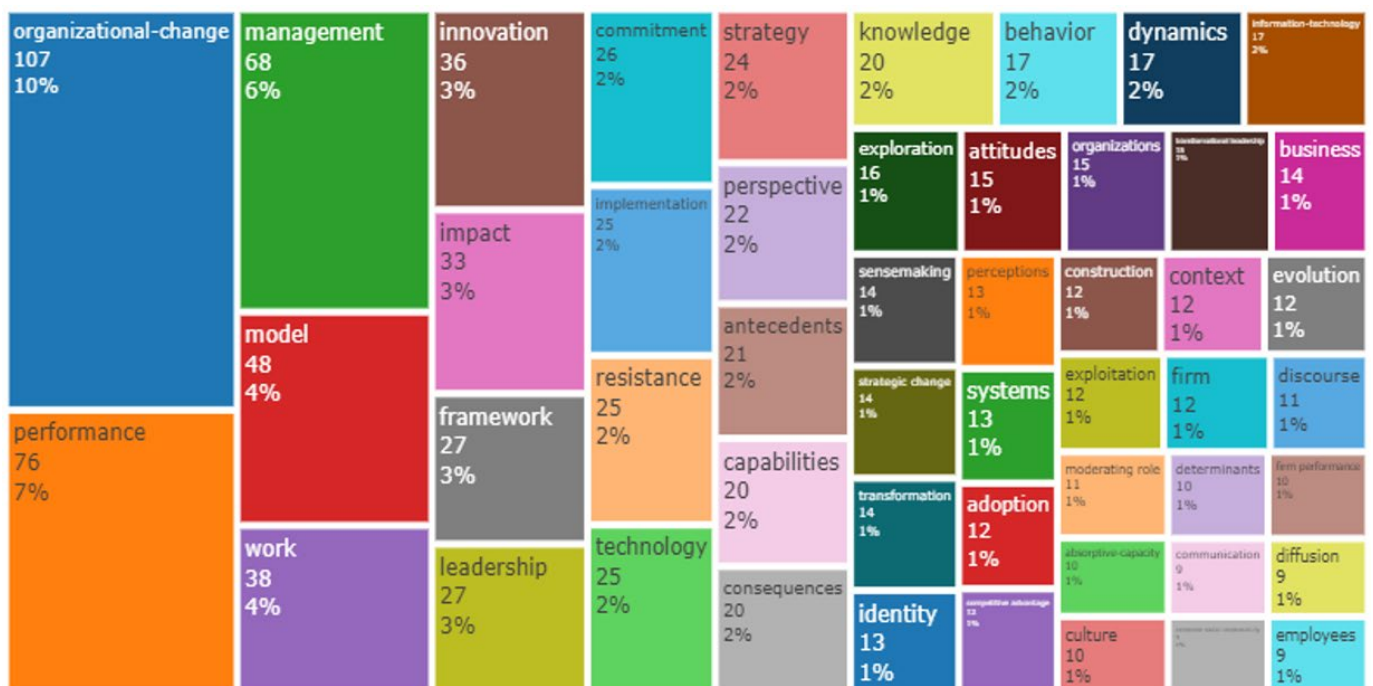
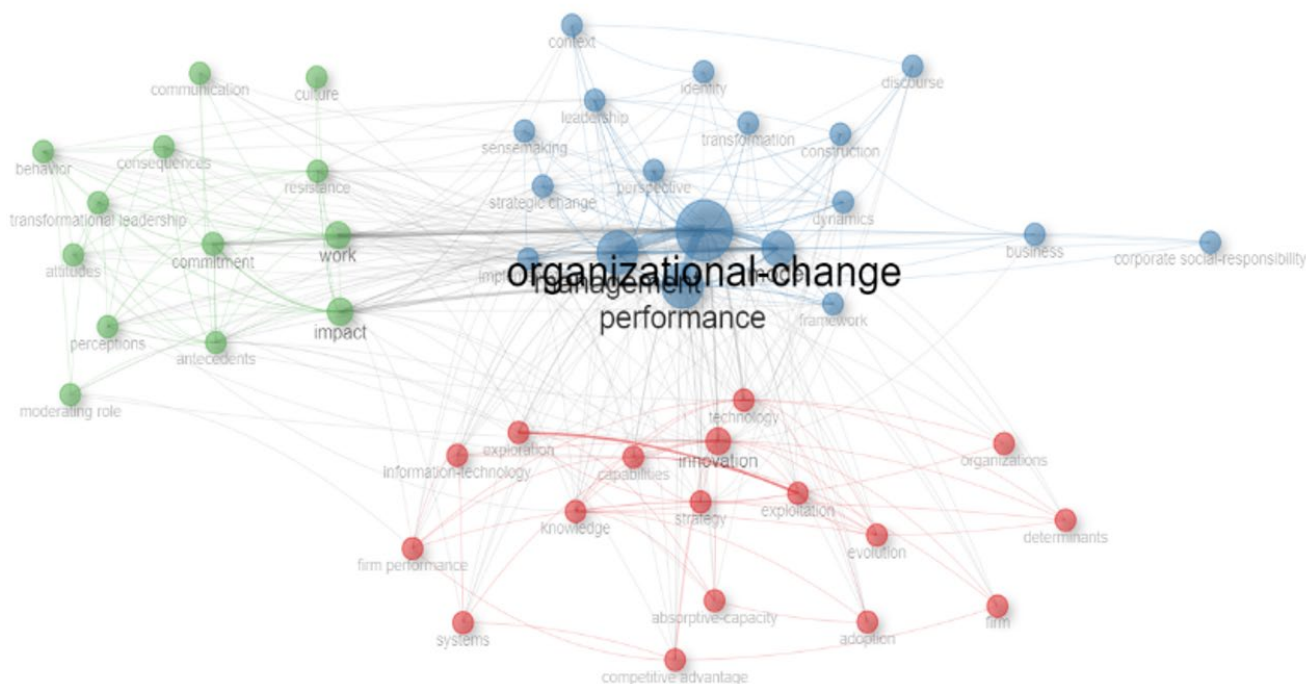




Figure 4 depicts the co-occurrence network to explain the relationships between the most frequently used keywords. The main cluster is associated with the three principal keywords previously identified in the word cloud and the tree map: organizational change, management and performance. The other two clusters represented are associated with less relevant keywords, as shown in Figures 2 and 3.



**Figure 4.** Co-occurrence network. Source: Taken from Bibliometrix output.

### 2.3. Conclusions of the Bibliometric Analysis

The bibliometric analysis allows us to conclude the main topics underlying change management literature are “organizational change”, “management”, and “performance”, as shown in the previous section. Next, we characterize each of them:

- The “organizational change” dimension is influenced by the business context, in terms of uncertainty, globalization, and technology. Ref. [10] (p. 1) defines organizational change as a “process in which an organization alters minor to major structural components to address operational costs, productivity, and/or service quality deficiencies, identify new growth opportunities, or achieve other organizational goals”. Consequently, to define this process properly, it is mandatory to offer a brief explanation of the circumstances that surround it.
- The “management” dimension acquires special importance in a large company’s context, due to their broad scope of competence. In this context, “a change that may seem to be economically favorable right now may not be sustainable over a longer period” [11] (p. 16), thus leading to redefining their long-term strategy.
- The “performance” dimension focuses on the critical role of managers in business change. Ref. [12] (p. 388) points out the importance of the role of change agents in fostering the capabilities of the employees when “the individual learning of organization members led in some instances to organizational learning practices when recruiters collectively renegotiated and reinterpreted the way new recruits are evaluated”. Hence, it is crucial to revise the role of managers in effectively managing change processes.

These findings are consistent with previous research on change management bibliometric analysis. Ref. [13] identifies three main clusters in its research on change management literature from 1995 to 2019: organizational change, management, and humans. The first two clusters fit properly with our findings, i.e., “organizational change” and “manage-

ment”, while the “humans” cluster could be linked with the critical role of the managers in pursuit of company performance, i.e., “performance”. Ref. [14] carries out a bibliometric analysis of attitudes toward organizational change and find a cluster called “Sensemaking of organizational change, dialectical and institutional perspectives”. They define sense-making as “the result of a complex process of emotional responses, ascribed meanings, and perceptions of the change” [14] (p. 141). The meaning of this cluster is very close to our “performance” dimension, which is to emphasize the main role of the manager in the organizational change process.

The following sections explain the theoretical and practical implications of each dimension.

### 3. Focus on Organizational Change: A Business Context Characterized by Change

Behind this unprecedented intensity of change that without exception impacts individuals, organizations, economies, and societies [15] and characterizes business activity, multiple factors act in combination and stimulate each other, among which the experts highlight five.

#### 3.1. Technological Development

Technological innovation is at the heart of the acceleration of change we are experiencing. Another example of the intensity of technological transformation is Moore’s law [16], which predicted that the number of transistors per unit area in integrated circuits would double every year at the same time as their cost would fall, and which has generally been fulfilled over the last few decades.

The impact of technology development on companies is felt at all levels. However, it should be noted that thanks to technology, the factors of distance, time, and cost—historically slowing the pace of business performance—have been significantly reduced, allowing transformation processes to occur increasingly faster. Another significant impact of technological dynamism is the shortening of the product life cycle and the increased pace of the introduction of innovations by competitors [17]. As a result, [18] notes that technology has changed business models, work structures, and working arrangements with employees.

#### 3.2. Market Maturity and Increased Competition

Developed economies have moved from a situation characterized by emerging markets to one in which mature markets predominate, which also intensifies the level of competition and dynamism. In environments characterized by high dynamism, as [19] points out, companies need to introduce more rapid changes in their products or services to remain competitive.

In the past, the growth of companies in many emerging markets was based on two factors:

- Increases in the number of customers—by incorporating new segments or new countries into the market economy.
- Increases in their purchasing power—due to greater levels of consumer income and greater corporate spending/investment in organizational markets.

Although implying the need to assume a certain level of change, this context was dominated by a strong orientation of companies to achieve scale rather than to significantly vary their way of doing things.

Today, we most frequently find that markets are in a phase of maturity in which growth is decreasing because there is no longer such a significant acquisition of new customers, nor is there a significant increase in their purchasing intensity. This creates a new scenario in which companies must seek growth by capturing market share from competitors through greater differentiation of their value proposition. In this context of increased competition, companies must focus on innovating, rather than scaling their business by maintaining the same way of doing things.

### 3.3. Concentration and Globalization of Business Activity

Market maturity and increased competition have in turn sparked two notable consequences:

- Intensified concentration, with the emergence of large players in all sectors, base their efficiency on a greater volume of business.
- The globalization of business activity, in terms of the search for both suppliers and production advantages and for new markets for selling products and services.

Regarding the latter, in just a few decades we have moved to a globalized economy with clear facilitating elements and causes in companies. According to [20], the phenomenon of globalization is related to the increase in the generation, storage, processing, and distribution of customer information through technological tools.

On the other hand, the internationalization of companies' activity adds consequences to transformation processes. Ref. [18] points out that this factor has reshaped organizational culture, its policies, the nature of customers, and the location of work.

Regarding the process of business concentration, it is also evident to what extent in a few years we have gone from markets with atomized competitors to strong dominance by large companies in many sectors. Concentration implies a higher level of change because it increases the company's globalization and investment capacity (in R&D, operational capabilities, mergers and acquisitions, etc.) and because it allows the transfer of business models and best practices between different countries.

Both trends are supported by other factors that in turn act as both cause and effect of the increase in the size and scope of companies' actions. Among them, we must once again highlight technology, which has provided companies with the necessary tools to scale up and internationalize their activity, leading to lower transport costs, more efficient communication, etc.

Globalization and business concentration are also facilitated by the global process of socioeconomic homogenization. Customer needs are becoming more and more similar due to the progressive emergence of a global social and business culture. Supporting this idea, [21] concludes that the convergence of consumer tastes and preferences at the global level favors market concentration processes.

A third factor spurring globalization and concentration is the evolution of policies and legislative frameworks to favor trade. States' quest for growth, wealth, and welfare has gradually led to the development of forums, agreements, and legislative frameworks aimed at market unity within countries, the definition of common economic spaces between states (EU, T-MEC, Mercosur, etc.) and, in short, the gradual reduction of tariff barriers.

### 3.4. Customer Professionalization

Customers, whether in B2B or B2C markets, have not only homogenized their behavior but have also evolved towards a higher level of demand to which companies must respond. In this regard, several studies point out that companies are facing increasingly sophisticated and demanding consumers who have many alternatives from which to select a product or service [22,23].

The development of new distribution channels—particularly in the online sphere—facilitates the comparison of offers, giving customers more and more power and allowing them to make purchasing decisions more professionally. Consequently, [24] propose that a marketing 4.0 environment is appearing, characterized by the coexistence of face-to-face and online channels that increase the possibilities of customer access to company offers.

### 3.5. Growing Influence on Business Decisions by External Agents

Technology is also allowing a greater outward flow of information, which empowers external stakeholders to influence decision-making and the rhythm of change in the company.

Ref. [25] points out that technology has facilitated direct communication between company management and shareholders. Accordingly, shareholders' access to the activity

and results of both large, listed companies and unlisted companies is faster, more precise, and deeper, which allows them to exercise greater control over their decisions.

Likewise, society as a whole—not just consumers—has many sources of information and the media at its disposal to assess companies' reputations, which in turn leads to significant adjustments. The impact of scandals, such as the public revelation of precarious working conditions in producing countries within sectors such as food, textiles, and footwear, or the perception generated by the practices of the financial sector at the beginning of the 21st century, demonstrates how quickly society can demand a change in corporate behavior and explains the strong interest of companies in defining corporate social responsibility and compliance policies.

In addition to the influence of shareholders and society, crises also occupy a prominent place among the external agents that affect companies. In 2009–2012, we experienced an intense financial crisis and, a few years later—beginning in March 2020—a health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Just as the latter was beginning to subside in 2022, the war in Ukraine erupted, posing questions about an uncertain future. In all these cases, companies have had to react by making major transformation efforts to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Finally, there is a consensus among experts and executives who forecast intensification in the coming years with even more accelerated technological development, greater competition, concentration and globalization, increasingly professionalized customers, and greater influence of shareholders and society on business dynamics. If these forecasts come to pass, change will play an even greater role in the life of companies in the future.

As [3] (p. 4) describes in his analysis of the definitions of change management, “Globalization, competition and accelerated technological innovation are creating conditions in which change itself is changing; change is becoming increasingly complex and pervasive, requiring companies to develop specific capabilities to manage it”. Agreeing with this idea, ref. [26] points out that the speed, amplitude, and complexity of the changes and their results make the change itself ambiguous and difficult to define.

In short, for companies, today more than ever, it is critical to optimize the management of change processes. Unfortunately, however, this task is not easy, and according to [27] (p. 98), “Studies show that, in organizations, two out of three transformation initiatives fail”, with numerous authors pointing in the same direction. Ref. [28] (p. 88) reflects on companies' low success rates in change processes such as installing new technology, downsizing, restructuring, or trying to change corporate culture and state that “the brutal fact is that about 70% of all change initiatives fail”. Ref. [29] echoes a study by Ernst and Young that concluded that 75% of transition processes fail. In addition, a Harvard Business School review estimated that the implementation of change cost leading Fortune 100 companies an average of one billion dollars between 1980 and 1995 [30].

#### 4. Focus on Management: The Challenge of Change in Large Companies

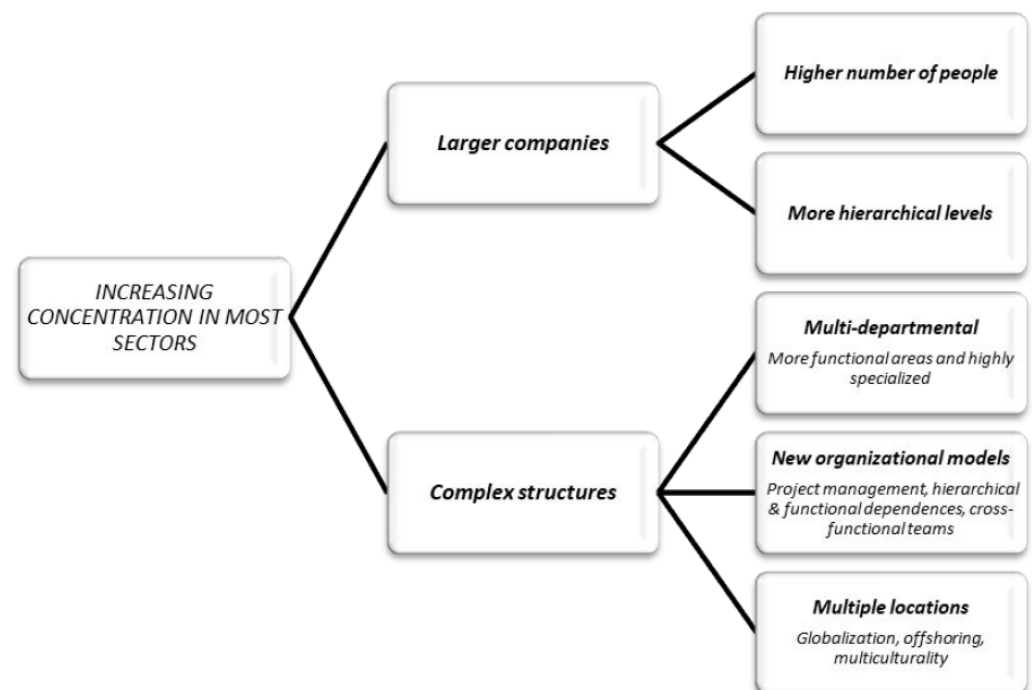
As we have seen, the need to manage this greater intensity of change in companies occurs with increasing concentration in most sectors, leading to the development of increasingly larger companies (in terms of both numbers of people and hierarchical levels) with increasingly complex structures (multiple departments and locations, new organizational models, etc.), as summarized in Figure 5.

Therefore, today's change management processes present difficulties that make them even more challenging to overcome in large companies due to the higher number of people involved, all with different levels of responsibility, situations, and attitudes towards the transformation.

Traditionally, when dealing with change processes, professionals have maintained a strong focus on technical factors—economic resources, operational resources, etc.—because of their tangible nature and, therefore, their greater ease of management. However, [31] warn of the risks of falling into the “fallacy of programmatic change”, according to which



employee behavior changes automatically when the structure and formal systems of a company are altered.



**Figure 5.** Schematic representation of the consequences of increased business concentration. Source: Compiled by the authors (2023).

Accordingly, [32] says that change is scary and hard because it requires the tossing aside of the familiar to jump headlong into the unknown, [33] point out that the greatest challenge in any change process is to change people's behavior, and [34] adds to these ideas by pointing out that the natural human response to change is resistance and that people stick to familiar ways of doing things. Therefore, we must conclude that although technical factors are important, the human factor—despite being intangible—plays a determining role in a company's capacity to optimize change management. And if changing the behavior of one person or a small group can be a challenge, it becomes even more difficult if it involves many people, as is the case of large companies.

Consistent with the above, there is a growing concern among managers and experts about how to leverage the human factor as a key element for the efficient management of change processes.

### 5. Focus on Performance: The Critical Role of Managers in Business Change

With the human factor as a key element in the management of business change, and in a context where companies are becoming increasingly larger, management figures assume a particularly important role. This role is made even more challenging given that they must simultaneously manage the difficulties of the transformation process together with the impact the process might have on their position in the organization. In this sense, [31] (p.64) are illustrative: "It's exciting—even glamorous—to lead others through good times and bad. But leadership also has its dark side: the inevitable attempts to take you out of the game when you're steering your organization through difficult change". Accordingly, the success or failure of an organization correlates with the effectiveness of its leaders and their ability that they show to embrace the need for change [35], because "transformational leaders create a positive vision of change that is worth pursuing and inspire their followers through their charismatic nature" [36] (p. 2).

To summarize what has been said so far: if change management is today a key requirement for business success because it carries with it the risk of failure and the opportunity

to advance [37]—and will foreseeably become more so in the future; if, in addition, people in the organization, in general—and managers, in particular—are a decisive factor in effectively managing change processes; and if, finally, managers face the problem of how to influence the rest of the organization to promote change management, it is appropriate that the academic world should focus on deepening knowledge of the manager’s role in the face of change and on applying models that make change management more efficient. Accordingly, [28] (p. 88) state that “it is imperative that executives understand the nature and process of corporate change much better”.

## 6. A Proposed Classification of the Literature on Corporate Change Management and Future Research: What about Sustainability?

When we turn to the literature for answers to the challenges faced by managers in managing business transformation processes, [3] (p. 4) admits that simply defining what change management is can be problematic, because the possible answers “are as diverse as the challenges that companies face in today’s ever-changing business environment”.

When reviewing the literature on the concept of change management, we find the problem that the limits of the subject are difficult to establish, as there is an enormous amount and diversity of research that can provide a theoretical basis from which to delve into the processes of change in the company and the role of managers in these processes. Moreover, this subject is unique in that it is located on the borderline between various research disciplines, with the fields of business economics, psychology, and technical sciences intersecting. And the few publications that offer a compilation of theories on change do so only from one scientific discipline (e.g., [38] compares six theoretical frameworks on change, but all of them are from the field of psychology). The previous analysis allows us to conclude that explaining how and why companies change has been and continues to be a central point in research on organizations ([39] (p. 10)).

### 6.1. A Proposed Classification of the Literature on Enterprise Change Management

Given the difficulty of developing a broad perspective on the literature on the management of business change, after carrying out an extensive literature review on the subject, we will now present a proposal for classification that we believe may be useful for researchers in this area and which has been drawn up according to two criteria.

The first criterion is the type of research approach. When applied, it is found that the literature responds to four main approaches to change:

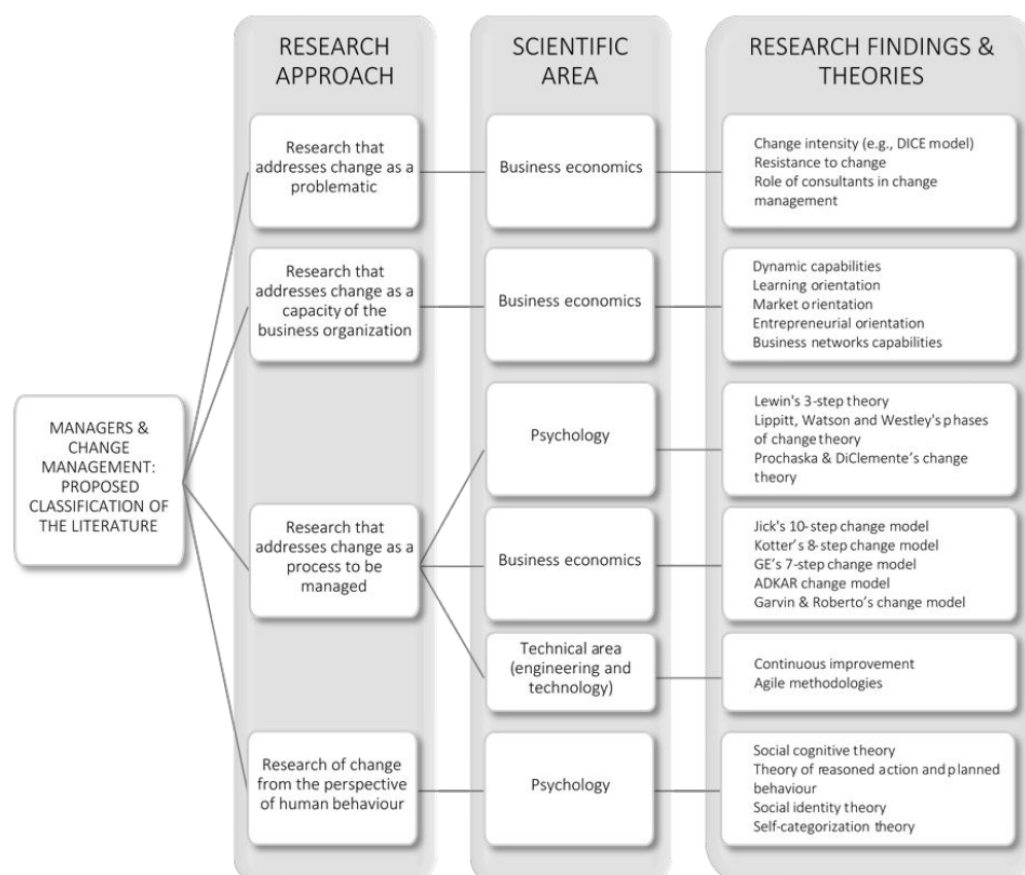
Research that addresses change as a problem. According to [40], change is a problem that is always present in the life of the organization. Following this statement, some studies from the area of business sciences have focused on the analysis of change and its characteristics as an increasingly relevant challenge for organizations. Within this approach, research about change intensity (e.g., the DICE model), resistance to change or the role of consultants in change management can be mentioned.

Research that addresses change as a capacity of the organization. Another research stream within business sciences analyzes changes in the capabilities that an organization must develop to create competitive differentiation through adaptation processes (examples of this line are the theories of dynamic capabilities, learning orientation, market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation or business networks capabilities).

Research that addresses change as a process to be managed. Another approach to the phenomenon of change is the one followed by those who conceive it as a process, the knowledge of which makes it possible to optimize its management. Following this approach, we find models in different disciplines: with a pioneering character in psychology (Lewin’s 3-step theory, Lippitt, Watson and Westley’s phases of change, and Prochaska and DiClemente’s change theory), then in business sciences (Jick’s 10-step model, Kotter’s 8-step model, General Electric’s 7-step change model, the ADKAR change model and Garvin and Roberto’s change model) and also in the technical field (continuous improvement and, recently, agile methodologies).

Research on change from the perspective of human behavior. Finally, change has also been approached from social psychology perspective as part of human behavior (social cognitive theory, theory of reasoned action and planned behavior, social identity and self-categorization, etc.).

Consistent with what has been explained above, the second classification criterion is the scientific area from which the study of change is approached. According to this criterion, we differentiate the studies that have been approached from business economics from those that propose constructs applicable to the business field developed from psychology—focused on an approach to mental processes and people’s behavior, or from the technical perspective—focused on the application to change of solutions from engineering and technology. According to the proposed criteria, the studies that address the subject of change management in companies can be structured as shown in Figure 6:



**Figure 6.** Proposed classification of the literature on enterprise change management. Source: Compiled by the authors (2023).

## 6.2. Predicted Future Developments in Theoretical Frameworks

From the global perspective of the literature on the management of business change provided by the proposed classification, it is striking that the main models for dealing with transformation processes in companies have been developed in recent times (the starting point can be established as the 1940s, with the work of Lewin) so that we have not yet accumulated even a century of scientific knowledge on the subject. Moreover, the number of publications about change management is “on the rise” [13].

The diversity of approaches and the dynamism in the appearance of new publications show that this is a subject that arouses much interest, so that in the coming years we will foreseeably witness the development of theoretical frameworks in two directions:

- Although there are a large number of disciplines and approaches to change management, diversification will continue in the future, driven by emerging fields such as the digital field (applying big data technology) or biology (with the advance of neuroscience). For example, [13] demonstrates the dynamism of research on change management, especially in the ICT industry. Their results conclude this tendency is likely to continue in the next years.
- On the other hand, although the diversity of approaches developed in the literature makes it possible to explain specific aspects of change management, gradual integration of theories is also probable, so that a generally applicable theoretical framework can be configured. Ref. [13] reveals four different approaches that are linked to change management: engineering and the ICT industry, organizational aspects of change, the leadership aspect of change, and the human aspect of change.

Both vectors of research will in any case be necessary because, as [41] states, the context has altered, from change being a non-normal event to being a permanent condition in the life of the companies.

### 6.3. *The Opportunity to Incorporate Sustainability into Change Management*

In recent years, many organizations have realized the importance of merging economic performance with social and environmental performance [42]. In a new context that some authors have defined as the “era of sustainable development” [43], the challenge is to avoid the appearance of imbalances between both dimensions of performance [44].

According to this, sustainability has become an essential element of change management as organizations aim to create long-lasting changes that also have a positive impact on the environment and society. Sustainable development has gained more and more attention from researchers [45]. These investigations try to demonstrate how organizations can maximize their results in a way that is not limited within in the three key dimensions mentioned [43,46]. Economic performance can be evaluated through different indicators, such as assets, liability [47], benefits, income [48], and market share [49]. On the other hand, social performance refers to how an organization manages the well-being of its employees, stakeholders, its community, and the rest of society in general [50]. Finally, the ecological dimension includes the sustainability of its activities, which must always be respectful of the environment, highlighting waste management, reducing carbon footprint, recycling [51], and minimizing the use of energy and resources [52].

The result for organizations that take care of these three dimensions is to achieve a positive corporate reputation that is associated with important benefits: greater employee satisfaction, better relations with shareholders, positive brand equity [53], more motivated workers, more loyal and satisfied customers [54], better ability to attract and retain talent, and more innovation [55].

This context has led to enormous pressure on organizations to improve their sustainable development [45]. As we argued previously, sustainability is acquiring a differentiated weight that must be increasingly considered. Future investigations have the challenge of addressing sustainability from the perspective of change management with a complete and understandable guide to the main approaches analyzed in this research. Consequently, it is necessary to delve into how sustainable change management helps organizations to minimize harmful environmental impacts, reduce waste, and increase efficiency.

## 7. Conclusions and Implications

Reviewing the literature on the role of managers in change management generates value by serving as a guide both for future research studies and for professionals who must deal practically with transformation processes in their companies.

For researchers, the subject is broad and without clearly defined limits, and it may be analyzed via an important diversity of research approaches and scientific disciplines, which makes it necessary to develop a global and integrative perspective. In this sense, the bibliometric analysis of change management literature developed in this research highlights

the key dimensions of organizational change, management, and performance. The findings align with previous research, which identified similar clusters of organizational change and management. The implications of these dimensions are significant for companies operating in a dynamic business environment. Furthermore, given the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of change management, there was a need for a comprehensive review of the literature in this area. This review has considered different research approaches, such as viewing change as a problem, as a capacity of the organization, or as a process to be managed; and potentially incorporating sustainability considerations.

For business professionals, this work is relevant because the analysis emphasizes the critical role of managers in driving and managing business change. Moreover, in large companies, managing change becomes more challenging due to the higher number of people involved and their diverse levels of responsibility, situations, and attitudes toward transformation. While technical factors are important, the human factor and behavioral change are central to successful change management. Managers play a key role in influencing and leading organizational change while navigating the potential impact on their positions within the organization. Enhancing the understanding of the manager's role in change processes and applying efficient change management models are essential for achieving successful outcomes.

Finally, the analysis underscores the five key factors affecting organizational change, including technological development, market maturity, concentration and globalization of business activity, customer professionalization, and the growing influence of external agents. These factors contribute to the complexity and pervasiveness of change, demanding specific capabilities for effective change management. Looking at its possible future evolution, expert forecasts point to an intensification of its impact. If this happens, companies will need to adapt even faster amidst technological advancements, increased competition, and changing customer demands, while considering the globalized nature of business and the impact of external actors on the decision-making process.

Therefore, future research in the field of change management should aim to deepen knowledge of the manager's role in the face of change and explore models that enhance change management efficiency. In this sense, the ultimate goal, which if achieved can create more opportunities to optimize transformation processes and to which this paper aims to contribute, is to approach change management from an interdisciplinary and integrative perspective on its technical and human dimensions. By advancing research in this area, organizations can better face the challenges of change and develop strategies for sustainable success.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, Á.G.-I.; writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, Á.G.-I., J.C.-A. and J.R.-C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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