



Synthesis:

The Journal of Integrated Business Studies

eISSN: 3068-6520 (Online)

doi.org/10.70175/synthesisjournal.2025

Volume 1 Issue 1 – February 2026

Beyond Support and Resistance: Rethinking Organizational Change Responses in Practice

Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Received September 30, 2025

Accepted for publication October 12, 2025

Published Early Access October 14, 2025

Abstract: *Organizational change research has evolved substantially over the past two decades, challenging long-held assumptions about how employees respond to transformation initiatives. Drawing on a comprehensive review of 87 empirical studies spanning 2008–2024, this article examines the shift from binary "support versus resistance" frameworks toward multidimensional models that account for cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of change responses. We explore four distinct response types—proactivity, acceptance, resistance, and disengagement—with particular attention to the understudied yet pervasive phenomenon of employee disengagement. The article synthesizes evidence on five categories of predictors (individual differences, change process, change context, change content, and change recipients' relationships), highlights critical gaps in understanding change attributes and cultural contexts, and presents evidence-based organizational interventions ranked by effect size. Practitioners will find actionable strategies for managing change across different stages, contexts, and cultural settings, alongside guidance for evaluating research claims and building sustainable change capabilities. Importantly, longitudinal evidence shows employee responses worsening by an average of 0.25 standard deviations during the first year of implementation, requiring stage-appropriate interventions and realistic timeline expectations.*

Keywords: change management, multidimensional responses, employee disengagement, organizational transformation, proactivity, resistance, change predictors, evidence-based interventions, longitudinal effects, cultural contexts

doi.org/10.70175/synthesisjournal.2025.1.1.3

Suggested Citation:

Westover, Jonathan H. (2025). Beyond Support and Resistance: Rethinking Organizational Change Responses in Practice. *Synthesis: The Journal of Integrated Business Studies*, 1(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.1.1.3

The Anxiety Divide: How Americans Perceive AI's Threat to Work

Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Received September 29, 2025

Accepted for publication October 9, 2025

Published Early Access October 11, 2025

Abstract: *As artificial intelligence capabilities expand rapidly, American workers face unprecedented uncertainty about employment futures. This article synthesizes available survey research, demographic analyses, and organizational case evidence to map how different segments of the US population perceive AI's labor market implications. Recent polling suggests stark divides in concern levels across occupations, with workers in routine cognitive roles expressing higher anxiety than those in manual or interpersonal jobs. Educational attainment, age, and prior technology displacement experiences appear to shape threat perceptions, though systematic research on perception-reality gaps remains limited. While substantial portions of Americans express concern about AI's economic transformation, far fewer report personal job threat, suggesting possible underestimation of disruption scope. Organizations navigating workforce AI integration must address not only technical implementation but also the psychological impacts, skill anxiety, and trust concerns that emerge when workers perceive employment threats. Evidence-based responses span transparent communication, participatory design, capability building, and thoughtful transition support.*

Keywords: artificial intelligence, workforce anxiety, job displacement, organizational change, employee perceptions, procedural justice, skill development, psychological contract, labor market disruption, human-AI complementarity

doi.org/10.70175/synthesisjournal.2025.1.1.2

Suggested Citation:

Westover, Jonathan H. (2025). The Anxiety Divide: How Americans Perceive AI's Threat to Work. *Synthesis: The Journal of Integrated Business Studies*, 1(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.1.1.2

When HR Becomes the Barrier: Rethinking Flexibility Governance in Professional Services

Jonathan H. Westover, Western Governors University

Received September 20, 2025

Accepted for publication October 4, 2025

Published Early Access October 6, 2025

Abstract: *Human resources departments are positioned as strategic partners in workplace transformation, yet emerging evidence suggests they may obstruct rather than enable critical flexibility initiatives. Recent research examining female lawyers in elite international law firms reveals that HR functions frequently impede individualized flexibility arrangements (i-deals), while line managers and partners facilitate them through informal channels. This pattern creates shadow negotiation systems, exacerbates gender inequalities, and drives talent attrition. Organizations lose significant human capital investments when HR risk-aversion conflicts with operational realities. This article examines the organizational consequences of HR inflexibility, presents evidence-based interventions for recalibrating HR's role in flexibility governance, and proposes frameworks for building sustainable, manager-led*

flexibility systems while preserving equity and compliance safeguards. The analysis draws on professional services contexts but offers transferable insights for knowledge-intensive industries confronting similar tensions between standardization and customization in work arrangements.

Keywords: Human resources, workplace flexibility, strategic partnership, i-deals, talent retention, gender inequality, shadow negotiation systems, manager-led flexibility, organizational effectiveness, knowledge-intensive industries

doi.org/10.70175/synthesisjournal.2025.1.1.1

Suggested Citation:

Westover, Jonathan H. (2025). When HR Becomes the Barrier: Rethinking Flexibility Governance in Professional Services. *Synthesis: The Journal of Integrated Business Studies*, 1(1). doi.org/10.70175/socialimpactjournal.2025.1.1.1