

RESISTANCE OF EMPLOYEES AGAINST CHANGES AS A DETERMINANT OF CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN ECONOMY, ILLUSTRATED WITH EXAMPLE OF TOURISM ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

The complexity of phenomena and processes that constitute the economic system, established by means of i.e. branch differentiation, structural differentiation and subjective differentiation, determines narrowing the field of study down to a specific branch of national economy. In view of the dynamic nature of economic processes and phenomena taking place in the tourism industry, its systematic development and increase in its socio-economic significance, tourism enterprises or, more precisely, selected aspects of their innovative activity have become an object of scientific interest. Resistance against changes is a significant factor of psychosocial, cultural and organizational nature when it comes to developing changes within the scope of innovative activity in tourism enterprises. This factor can be considered in the context of both external circumstances (resistance of tourists against innovations implemented by tourism service providers) and internal circumstances (specifically, employee resistance against changes initiated and introduced within the tourism enterprises). In the article there have been presented results of empirical studies on psychological determinants of implementing innovative changes in tourism industry and recommendations for eliminating psychological and intellectual barriers for introduction of such changes (e.g. resistance against changes) in the business entities studied. In this paper there have been employed the procedures of the two fundamental research methods, that is, analysis and synthesis. The topic of study undertaken has grounds in both theory and economic practice.

Key words: innovations, human resources, employee, tourism, tourism enterprises, resistance against changes.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management.

1. Introduction

Nowadays it has become an almost universal attitude to recognize innovations (including creative behaviour being an immanent component of innovativeness) as the prime mover of socio-economic development. Moreover, they are considered as such in relation to various sections and levels of management, that is, at the level of industry branches, at the local, regional and nationwide level and at the international level (e.g. at the level of the EU). It has to be underlined that from the point view of the issues studied a particularly important role within that scope is to be played by stimulation of innovative activity in enterprises, which are the pillar of every single economy. In this paper there have been adopted the following assumptions:

- 1) The complexity of phenomena and processes that constitute the economic system, established by means of i.e. branch differentiation, structural differentiation and subjective differentiation, determines narrowing the field of study down to a specific branch of national economy. The phenomenon of heterogeneity of the economy results at the same time, for example, from differentiation within the scope of:
 - Type of business activity conducted;
 - Organizational and legal frame;
 - Sector and type of ownership;
 - Scale of operation (territorial range, target markets and potential markets) of individual business entities;

- Relations with other branches of economy (other types of business activity), including in reference to innovative cooperation, formal (contractual or non-contractual) collaboration with suppliers and also consolidation processes;
 - Size of enterprises, e.g. when taking into account the employment level, revenues from sales, annual turnover or total balance in a financial year;
 - Location, e.g. taking into account the administrative division of the country (for example division into voivodeships) and also other criteria of classification and typology and, thus, *de facto* points of reference that systematize enterprises.
- 2) In view of the dynamic nature of economic processes and phenomena taking place in the tourism industry, its systematic development and increase in its socio-economic significance (e.g. measured on the basis of number of tourist traffic participants, including foreign tourists, number of overnight accommodations provided and revenues from sale of tourism services and complementary services), tourism enterprises or, more precisely, selected aspects of their innovative activity have become an object of scientific interest. It is the dynamic innovativeness of enterprises (the level and structure of investment expenditures dedicated to innovative operations) that constitutes the contemporary measure of competitiveness and modernity of the economy.
 - 3) The changes taking place in the environment of the organizations force them to increase their operating flexibility, which is expressed mainly by increase in efficiency and rate of implementing changes, particularly innovative ones, in various areas, starting from the sphere of marketing, organization and management, through the technical-technological plane and ending with protection of the natural environment and even the issues of corporate social responsibility (CSR) or, in a wider sense, the whole of relations with the environment.
 - 4) The intensification of innovativeness in tourism requires a strictly practical approach (introduction of specific pro-innovative actions) and not only a postulative one. Additionally, such approach needs to be present at various levels, namely at the levels of:
 - Administrative entities at the national and local government level, which are the main creators and executors of innovative policy in tourism (and in economy as a whole);
 - Non-governmental organizations and institutions operating in aid of tourism development;
 - Business environment institutions,
 - Tourism enterprises;
 - Enterprises operating in complementary industries (e.g. transport, commerce, telecommunications), that is, those that provide “accompanying” services to the tourism participants;
 - Customers in tourism.
 - 5) Resistance against changes is a significant factor (of psychosocial, cultural and organizational nature) when it comes to developing innovative activity in tourism enterprises. This factor can be considered in the context of both external circumstances (resistance of tourists against innovations implemented by tourism service providers) and internal circumstances (specifically, employee resistance against changes initiated and introduced within the tourism enterprises). The main object of scientific interest of this elaboration is the resistance against changes in the aspect of endogenous factors.
 - 6) In this paper there have been employed the procedures of the two fundamental research methods, that is, analysis and synthesis.
 - 7) The topic of study undertaken has grounds in both theory and economic practice.
 - 8) In the article there have been presented results of empirical studies on psychological, intellectual, culture and sociological determinants of implementing innovative changes in

tourism industry and recommendations for eliminating barriers for introduction of such changes in the business entities studied. The essential survey was carried out in the year 2016. For comparative purposes was presented the results of another study that was carried out by the author in 2010 – Determinants of companies' innovative development as illustrated by selected types of services (*Brojak-Trzaskowska, 2012*).

2. Resistance of employees against innovative changes on the basis of theoretical deliberations

When considering the issue of resistance of employees against introduction of organizational changes, M. Czerska points to the following groups of sources of such opposition (*Czerska, 2002: 521–524*, as well: *Ściborek, 2005; Zajac, 2006; Penc, 2007; Sobka, 2014; Kosieradzka, 2015*):

- 1) The sources lying in the personality of a given person, e.g. lack of faith in being able to cope with a new situation, the necessity to change one's own employee profile mainly within the scope of knowledge, skills and attitudes, being forced to make effort in order to handle new tasks and executive procedures and also to abandon old habits and hitherto fixed patterns of procedure, low level of tolerance towards changes and being afraid of losing face.
- 2) The sources generated by social groups, which may be related to the pressure of a formal or non-formal employee group, presumptive conflict between the change and the valid cultural values and standards of procedure and to the lack of trust towards the management.
- 3) The sources related to the change itself, that is, employees' fear of losing employment, reduction of income, loss of other benefits, replacement of hitherto superior and/or co-workers, reduction in prestige and hitherto authorizations and power gained, extension of the scope of tasks, obligations and responsibilities and changing the job for a more difficult, less important and/or less interesting one.
- 4) Sources lying the organization of the change process, including:
 - Discrepancy in assessment of situation and the lack of awareness of the necessity of change related thereto;
 - Lack of preparation of employees to the process of initiating and introducing organizational changes;
 - Employee's negative opinion on the solution adopted and the implementation process itself;
 - Lack of sufficient participation of employees in the process of change and integration with the organization and the changes introduced;
 - Lack of translation of change effects to the motivational mechanisms for change executors;
 - Errors in information on change.

To compare, J. Majchrzak, when analysing the issues of resistance against changes, underlines the significance of actions aiming at maintaining the status quo. The actions of this type can originate from specific people, groups and – finally – from the whole organization, and as a result of that there can be differentiated individual resistance, group resistance and organizational resistance. The last of those is also called inertia, the level of which increases together with the size, age and complexity of a given organization. Additionally, in each of these cases the resistance can be either overt or hidden. The author quoted highlights also the necessity for the management to adhere to the following rules that determine the efficiency of implementation of organizational changes (*Majchrzak, 2002*; and others: *O'Connor, McDermott, 1997; Heller & Hindle, 1999; Zarębska, 2002; Senge, 2006; Czerska & Szpitter,*

2010; Penc, 2011; Gros, 2012; Griffin, 2013; Cannon & McGee, 2015; Dorst, 2015; Roth & Kurtyka, 2015):

1. Building the atmosphere of trust.
2. Presenting the grounds (purpose) for the changes and what they are supposed to lead to.
3. Caring for frequent and open communication with employees.
4. Ensuring participation of employees in the whole change process, particularly if the changes are planned.
5. Creating conditions for absorbing and accumulating knowledge as a condition for development of the whole organization.
6. Eliminating conflicts in the organization.

When carrying out further theoretical deliberation on the nature of the employees' resistance to changes, including those related to introduction of innovations (organizational and/or marketing-related, process-related, product-related and technology-related), there should be paid attention to the following aspects, including possible human attitudes and behaviour:

- Employees' fear of something that is unknown or to them or difficult for them to understand, or even pointless from their point of view;
- Fear of failure;
- The feeling of being threatened, or even fear of being dismissed, degradation, loss of hitherto power, loss of position in the organizational hierarchy, loss of benefits related thereto, etc.;
- Fear of consequences of organizational changes introduced in the enterprise;
- The degree to which the employees are made aware of the essence of the changes introduced, particularly of the advantages resulting therefrom;
- The scope and adequacy of the employee training and development system with regard to the needs, that is, the degree to which the employees are prepared to the change implementation process, particularly within the substantive and psychological (behavioural) scope;
- Participation of employees – to the extent possible, their active engagement in the initiated transformation or, in a wider sense, employee participation in general management;
- Importance of an efficiently working, generally available and comprehensive information system in a given enterprise;
- 'Bottlenecks' identified in functioning of the communication system in a given enterprise;
- Problem solving techniques, particularly those that were efficient in the past;
- dysfunctions in interpersonal relations;
- Insufficient – according to the employees – technical, procedural and financial preparation of the organization to implementation of the changed designed, particularly the innovative ones.

3. General characteristics of the studies carried out

The total population of the group studies consisted of 1,508 business entities. Therefore relevance was at the level of 2% and statistical error at the level of 3%. The survey was carried out in stages at the turn of February and March of the year 2016. At the stage constituting the object of scientific interest of this elaboration there had been returned 118 correctly filled questionnaires. The survey employing a questionnaire encompassed tourism enterprises operating in Poland (domestic, foreign and mixed), representing various classification sections.

The results thus obtained indicate clearly that within the structure of respondents the dominant group is constituted accordingly by following subgroups of tourism enterprises (Figure 1):

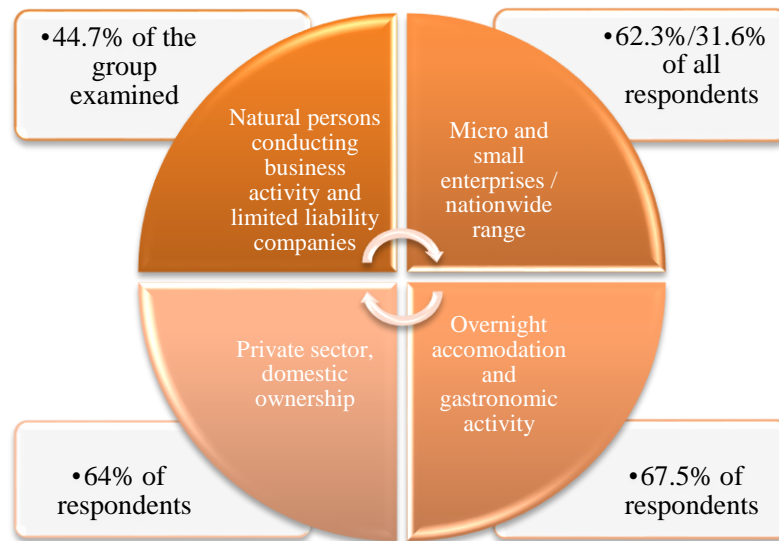


Figure 1. Structure of the examined group according to selected criteria of enterprise classification (own study)

- Natural persons conducting business activity and limited liability companies. The group of other organizational and legal forms of business included, among others, joint stock companies, private partnerships, limited partnerships, professional partnerships, cooperatives and even a single state-owned enterprise;
- Micro and small enterprises operating nationwide. Here it has to be added that the share of enterprises operating on the international market is at a similarly high level – it amounts to 29% of all the business entities encompassed by the survey. The leading role of entities operating nationwide and internationally results from the specificity of tourism business (including the characteristics of services and the tourism itself) and particularly from providing services to both domestic and foreign tourists;
- Business entities representing the private sector and, additionally, domestic-ownership, which is generally a tendency characteristic of market economy (and specifically of the ownership structure occurring in the whole Polish economic system);
- Enterprises providing overnight accommodation and gastronomic services and also conducting sports and recreation activity in aid of tourist traffic participants. The subgroup studies constitutes 64% of the whole of the entities surveyed, where the Figure provided does not make a demarcation between purely accommodation activity or strictly gastronomic activity since in the group studies there are included entities providing comprehensive handling of the needs of tourists (overnight accommodation + board + accompanying services, that is, particularly those that satisfy the recreational, cultural, sports-related, entertainment, SPA-related and similar individual needs) or providing overnight accommodation services together with gastronomic services.

Next to the values selected, presented on Figure 1, that characterize the studied group of tourism enterprises there should be taken into account their location in the administrative division of the country.

According to the criterion analysed it was found that the business entities of dominating significance are those located in the following Voivodeships: Pomorskie (Pomeranian), Podkarpackie (Subcarpathian), Mazowieckie (Masovian). It has to be added that the entities conducting tourism activity that are located in Pomerania, Subcarpathia and Masovia constitute 30% of all the tourism industry entities encompassed by the study. On Figure 1 there has been presented the structure of the studied group of tourism enterprises with taking into account selected general criteria of division of business entities.

The criteria presented on Figure 1 constitute basic criteria of division of enterprises, but they do not constitute a closed list.

4. Contesting attitudes of employees towards implementation of innovations in tourism enterprises in light of empirical research

Table 1 presents the results of studies on endogenous factors with a psychological and intellectual basis, including cognitive basis, determining initiation and introduction of innovative changes in tourism enterprises in 2016.

The studies conducted were focused around the issue of limited knowledge level in the business entities studied, aversion, particularly among employees and towards acquiring new knowledge (a feedback relationship exists between these two factors), insufficient use of knowledge in business practices, resistance towards changes as an immanent factor in the deliberations conducted, limited tendency to risky behaviour and insufficient cognitive motivation.

Table 1. Indications of respondents within the scope constituting the main object of scientific interest (own study)

Psychological and intellectual barriers for implementation of innovative changes in tourism enterprises	Number of indications	Structure [in %]
Insufficient knowledge level in the organization	24	10.6
Aversion towards learning	40	17.6
Lack of or insufficient use of knowledge in practical activities	27	11.9
Resistance towards changes	57	25.1
Lack of tendency to risky behaviour	32	14.1
Insufficient cognitive motivation	29	12.8
Other	12	5.3
None of the above	6	2.6
Total	227	100.0

When analysing the data included in Table 1 it has to be added that the people surveyed could indicate more than one answer. Additionally it has to be explained that in the category of other barriers of psychological and intellectual nature for introducing innovations the respondents indicated, among others:

- Difficulties in the process of learning (acquisition and accumulation of new knowledge by employees);
- Lack of engagement of employees in the process of designing and introducing changes in the enterprise;
- Thinking and acting according to usual patterns and schemes of activity, and even traditionalism;

- Lack of openness in employee attitudes, insufficient flexibility with regard to behaviour and specific actions;
- Lack of the feeling of responsibility for the decision made and actions executed, particularly for their consequences for the organization and also its employees and their superiors;
- Repeating errors (e.g. organizational errors) from the past within the scope constituting the object of the study;
- Mental barriers.

What is important from the point of view of this paper's subject and the studies related thereto, in the structure of internal factors of psychological and intellectual nature that limit the introduction of innovative changes in tourism enterprises, a significant role is played by the resistance of employees against changes. It is a *de facto* barrier that is significant in case of every fourth business entity studied.

Next to general aversion of employees (i.e. the above mentioned resistance as a natural feature of human attitudes and behaviour) towards introduction of any changes to the status quo, new solutions and new ideas, what is of great importance, considering that it matters in total to 40% of respondents, are the barriers for acquiring, capitalizing and disseminating knowledge, which regard in this case certain specific situations, namely:

- Inadequate level of knowledge in organizations in relation to the needs resulting from implementation of changes;
- Aversion towards learning;
- Lack of or insufficient use of knowledge in business practice, which is generally contrary to the assumptions of the concept of a learning organization combined with attributes of an intelligent organization.

In relation to that there should be paid attention to creating a learning organization on one hand and knowledge workers on the other, who at the same time should be distinguished by certain attributes (*Antczak, 2014; Fazlagić, 2006; Kowalczyk & Nogalski, 2007; Staniewski & Szczepankowski, 2009; Urbanek, 2011; Leśniewski & Morawska, 2012; Wszendybył-Skulska, 2012; Jashapara, 2013; ; Rundo, 2013; Karaś & Piasecka-Głuszak, 2013; Kampioni-Zawadka, 2014; Kisielnicki, 2014*):

- High productivity, assuming, however, favourable (optimal) conditions of operation and readiness for systematic learning (*Allen, 1999; Brdulak, 2005; Kegan, Laskow & Lahey, 2009; Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz & Laur, 2010; Bombala, 2010; Gharajedaghi, 2011; Atkinson, 2014; Stroh, 2015; Dereń & Skonieczny, 2016*);
- Ability to work in parallel on multiple varied projects – tasks;
- Independent organization of work and rational management of own time and of the resources of the enterprise as well;
- Identity of the organization (*Leinwand & Mainardi, 2016; Heskett, Sasser Jr. & Schlesinger, 2015*);
- Ability to handle ambiguities and situations that create uncertainty;
- Identification with the profession and the functions and tasks executed rather than with the physical workplace;
- Motivation based to a large extent on extraeconomic stimuli (prestige and self-realization) and not necessarily on stimuli based on purely material interests;
- High mobility and readiness to change the workplace.

For comparative purposes (Figure 2) there can be presented the results of another study that was carried out by the author in 2010, that is, five years earlier, according to which in case of enterprises operating in the tourism industry we were dealing with the following

psychological barriers for introduction of innovative changes (Brojak-Trzaskowska, 2012: 228):

- Low (insufficient) level of knowledge, which was indicated by 21.4% of entities of the group studied;
- Lack of tendency to take risky actions – this factor was significant for 17.7% of enterprises;
- Employees' resistance against introduction of changes, indicated by 17.6% of total respondents;
- Low level of cognitive motivation in case of 16.8% of respondents;
- Unsatisfactory level of use of knowledge in business practice – which was the answer indicated by 14.3% of the entities surveyed.

Additionally, what played a significant role in the business entities studies was the lack of imagination and intuition among employees and lack of employees' ability to search for new solutions. The aversion of employees towards acquiring new knowledge (learning) was of relatively lower significance.

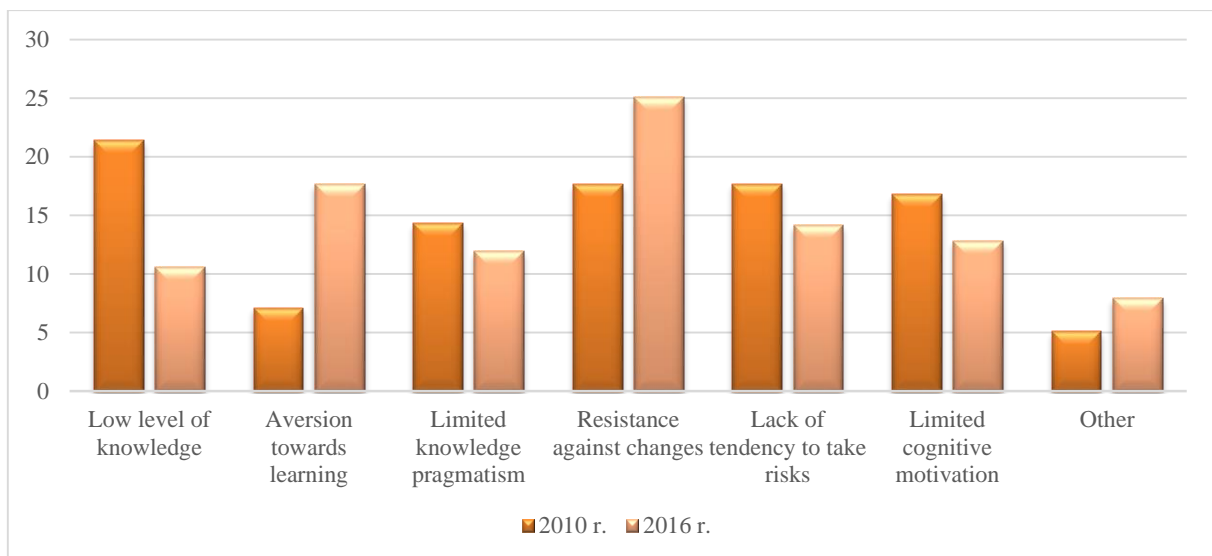


Figure 2. Comparative analysis of psychological factors of implementation of innovative changes in tourism enterprises in years 2010 and 2016 (own study)

The individual factors specified on Figure 2 have been expressed in %. The sum of all factors, for years 2010 and 2016, accordingly, is 100%. The comparative analysis of the two studies carried out indicates additionally on a clear increase (by 7.5% in 2016 compared to 2010) in resistance of employees against implementation of innovative changes in tourism enterprises.

The dynamic of changes in other internal factors of psychosocial and intellectual nature determining innovative changes in the business entities examined in the analogous period was at the following level (The structure of psychological factors of formation of the process of innovative changes in tourism enterprises in years 2010 and 2016, accordingly, is presented on Figures 3 and 4):

- Low level of knowledge in the enterprise – loss in significance, that is, in 2016, compared to 2010, the number of respondents indicating this specific factor decreased by 50.5%;
- Aversion towards learning – increase by ca. 148%;

- Limited extent of use of knowledge in business practice – loss in significance of the factor analysed by 17%;
- Lack of tendency to take risks in activities executed – decrease in significance of the factor studied by 20%;
- Limited level of explorative motivation among employees – decrease by ca. 24%.

To summarize, the results of the survey studies conducted indicate clearly that the studied group of determinants for implementation of innovative changes plays a significant role in the group of tourism enterprises. This is also confirmed by the fact that in 2016 only six of the business entities studied did not indicate any of the answers. On the other hand, this allows stating that in these particular organization the psychological factors do not constitute barriers for introduction of changes.

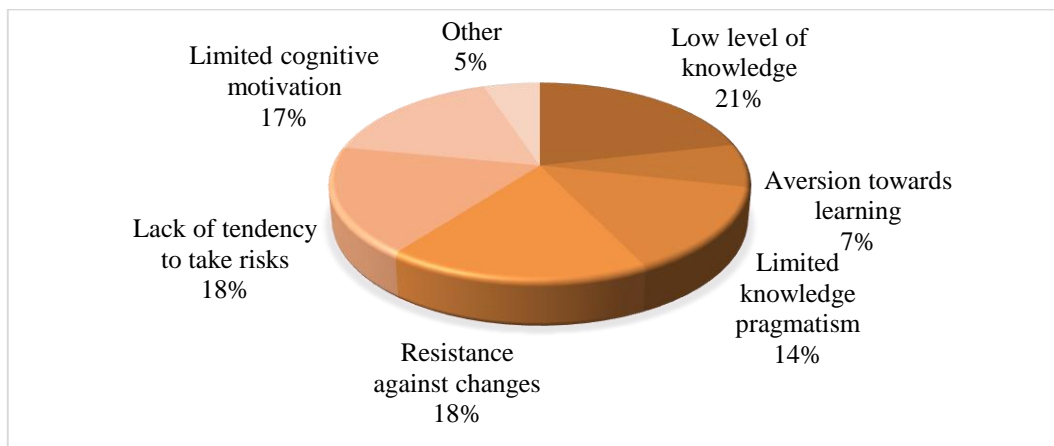


Figure 3. Structure of psychological and intellectual barriers for implementation of innovative changes in tourism enterprises in 2010 (own elaboration on the basis of study results)

In view of the above, what should play a particularly important role among the management of tourism enterprises is using the recommendations indicated further in this paper.

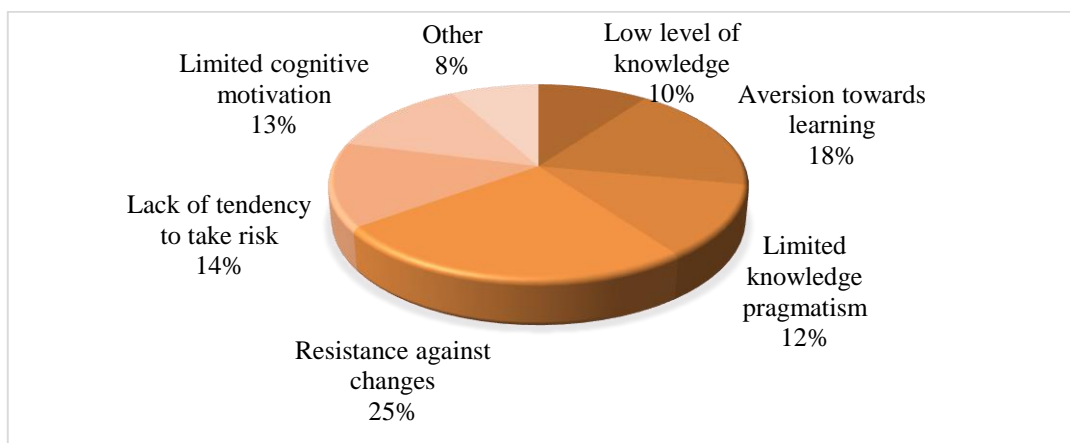


Figure 4. Structure of psychological and intellectual barriers for implementation of innovative changes in tourism enterprises in 2016 (own study)

5. Conclusions and recommendations

When summarizing the hitherto deliberations there should be particularly underlined the significance of the following activities carried out in order to eliminate or at least limit the psychological barriers for introduction of innovative changes in the business entities studied (The guidelines present can generally be applied almost universally, in any organization, irrespective of the type of activity that it carries out, the size of the organization, its organization and legal frame, its sector, its form of ownership and its scale of operation):

- Creating an appropriate (meaning: efficient, comprehensive and just) motivation system, including rewarding creative and innovative behaviour among employees, and creating a system of human resources development that would ensure in particular that the employees participate in trainings or other forms of competence and qualification transfiguration, adequately to the staff requirements within that scope;
- Building an efficiently working information system and communication system;
- Ensuring that the employees participate in the process of introduction of organizational changes;
- Forming appropriate interpersonal relations in a specific enterprise, that is, counteracting tensions, situations with potential for conflict and disputes between employees;
- Applying the technique of limiting the employees' resistance against changes that is optimal in a given situation – in one situation the best solution might be negotiations, while in another – coercion, and in yet another – participation of employees and engaging them in the change execution process and even in the change design process within the framework of working groups;
- Exchange of knowledge and experience between employees, which constitutes one of the prerequisites for formation of a learning organization (knowledge organization) and, consequently, intelligent organization (one that popularizes new knowledge in business practice).

The above list of recommendations for increasing the efficiency of innovation implementation in tourism enterprises through the prism of internal psychological, cultural and organizational-management factors can be supplemented with (*Brojak-Trzaskowska, 2012: 335*):

- Building an innovation strategy constituting an integral component of the general strategy of the enterprise;
- Forming a creative style of leadership, triggering initiative among employees, that is, boldness in action, engagement, creativity and, as a result of it, innovativeness;
- Expanding the hitherto scope of independence and responsibility of employees;
- Building an organizational atmosphere and culture focused on ingenuity and innovativeness of employees, high level of activity, boldness in action and taking risks;
- Application of modern techniques and tools, as well as information and communication technologies;
- Treating every undertaking as an opportunity for systematic learning and simultaneous implementation of new knowledge in business practice;
- Popularization of new attitudes and patterns of behaviour oriented on creativity and innovativeness of employees, their resourcefulness and accumulation of knowledge.

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