



Assessment of employees attitudes toward ongoing organizational transformations

Journal:	<i>Journal of Organizational Change Management</i>
Manuscript ID	JOCM-04-2019-0119.R3
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Organizational change, Individual willingness and ability to change, Change management, Digital service industry

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYEES ATTITUDES TOWARD ONGOING ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Digital service companies are currently facing several challenges. These challenges are diverse, ranging from the strategic and operational levels to issues of people management. The operational challenges include the need for ongoing organizational transformations as a result of technological acquisitions, and the adoption of new technologies and business models (Berman, 2012). Christensen (1997; 2013) suggested that a change in technology can give new entrants a significant advantage, therefore existing companies need to constantly update. Consequently, low levels of satisfaction are often reported amongst the employees (Bersin *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, the digital service industry is racing towards automation and digitalization – focusing on the delivery of big data and security services – and employees do not possess the right skills to support the changing business portfolio. When such global organizations are diversified and include different businesses through acquisitions, there are coordination problems (Goold & Campbell, 2002). In these settings, change management is a critical organizational skill set, dealing with the entrenched inability of organizations to adopt behaviors that would allow them to embrace new technologies (Flanding *et al.*, 2018). Lack of knowledge leads to high costs, lower profit margins, and slow proliferation of automation and industrialization. Transition and transformation projects are challenged financially; the processes are complex. These factors result in dissatisfaction amongst the employees and lead to many employees *sitting through the change*. However, an attempt to change can have a positive or negative impact on attitude and productivity (Weber & Weber, 2001; Piderit, 2000). In the such a complex settings, most change efforts fail (Rafferty *et al.*, 2013) and this alone is the main reason for taking a new and careful theoretical approach to those transformations to

1
2
3 which extant theories are not easily applied (Robinson, 2019). In this study we consider a top-
4
5 down approach to change management, since this change dynamic is the most typical for
6
7 digitalization-induced organizational transformations, which are often are results of the new
8
9 strategy implementation at the organizational level. However, the change supportive behavior
10
11 is important for successful implementation of planned change (Miller *et al.*, 1994; Rafferty *et*
12
13 *al.*, 2013), and therefore we study the internal enablers affecting employees' attitudes toward
14
15 change, i.e. what enables employees to facilitate organizational change.
16
17
18
19

20 While the failure to successfully implement planned change may be attributed to many
21
22 factors, few issues are so critical as employee's attitude to change (Miller *et al.*, 1994). Kotter
23
24 (1995; 2012) suggested that most transformation efforts fail because people do not understand
25
26 the need for change: employees' responses may be positive and supportive, or they may be
27
28 negative – or even directly oppositional (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Change-supportive
29
30 behaviors can be defined as “actions employees engage in to actively participate in, facilitate,
31
32 and contribute to a planned change initiated by the organization” (Kim *et al.*, 2011). The
33
34 purpose of this study was to find the predictors of employee's attitudes towards change
35
36 measured by a willingness and ability to change and specify what the key underlying factors
37
38 impacting employees' change-supportive behavior are, in order to plan an ongoing change.
39
40
41
42

43 Although many organizations are currently faced with the challenge of adapting to a
44
45 rapidly changing and often unpredictable environment, the underlying concepts of the change
46
47 process remain relatively simplistic (Buono & Kerber, 2010). Therefore, organizations would
48
49 like to understand what the role of employees' willingness and ability to adapt strategically
50
51 when a strategy has been successfully implemented. Since the strategic change is often in the
52
53 “non-disclosure”¹ phase, it is nearly impossible to measure the readiness of the employees to
54
55
56

57
58 ¹i.e. the context of the upcoming change was not known to the employees since it either cannot be
59
60 announced before the Works Council approve it (see the Research Design section below), or is in the
preliminary stage when discussed at the top-management level etc.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

successfully adopt the change using one of the existing frameworks (Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Bouckennooghe, Devos & Van Den Broeck, 2008; Rafferty *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the only way to measure the general willingness and ability to change as employee attitude indicators is by using a simplified approach adapted from existing frameworks of readiness.

This research addresses the need for a more employee-oriented approach in the study of change (Vakola, 2014) with a focus on internal enablers of change readiness. It uses an abductive approach and seeks to refine existing theories, rather than invent new ones (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). It includes the process of reasoning from data collection to understanding of observed patterns (Robinson, 2019).

LITERATURE: THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUAL CHANGE READINESS

Literature on the topic of change defines it as the deliberate introduction of novel ways of thinking, acting, and operating within an organization as a way of surviving or accomplishing certain organizational goals (Schalk *et al.*, 1998). In these terms, it is very similar to innovation, in which effectiveness is found to be a function of (a) the strength of an organization's climate for the implementation of that innovation and (b) the fit of that innovation to targeted users' values (Klein & Sorra, 1996). Change can be also viewed as a process of altering the present shape/estate to become a better one (Bäesu & Bejinaru, 2014). Change can be analyzed from different perspectives and can therefore include individual or organizational foci. Cameron & Green (2004) place individual change at the heart of everything that is achieved in organizations. An increasing number of researchers believe that many change efforts fail because change leaders often underestimate the role individuals play in the change process (Choi, 2011).

Previous studies examining the conditions in which employees support organizational change have focused on various concepts explaining employees' responses towards

1
2
3 organizational change, defined as certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts, and
4
5 predispositions to act toward some aspect of the environment (Secord & Beckman, 1969;
6
7 Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). This includes resistance (Oreg, 2006), readiness for change
8
9 (Armenakis *et al.*, 2007), openness to change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), commitment to
10
11 change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002), and cynicism (Wanous *et al.*, 2004). These constructs
12
13 have been defined in Table 1.
14
15

16
17 -----
18 **Insert Table 1 about here**
19
20 -----
21
22

23
24
25 The success – or even survival – of a company strongly depends on whether their
26
27 employees embrace readiness to change and adaptive abilities to achieve a sustainable
28
29 competitive advantage (Pan & Sun, 2018). Research has recently begun to suggest insights
30
31 about organizational change from individuals' perspectives (e.g., Bartunek *et al.*, 2006; Oreg
32
33 *et al.*, 2011; Oreg *et al.*, 2016). Weiner (2009) argues that in ordinary language the term
34
35 “readiness” connotes a state of being both psychologically and behaviorally prepared to take
36
37 action (i.e. willing and able) which strongly supports the selection of the attitudinal construct
38
39 (i.e. attitudes to change). Change readiness is, therefore, one of the most often used attitudes
40
41 toward change (Bouckennooghe, 2010), and, therefore, will be addressed in this research.
42
43
44

45
46 Like change itself, readiness for change is a multi-level construct and can be present and
47
48 studied at the individual, group (unit, department), and organizational levels (Weiner, 2009).
49
50 Despite the importance of the change readiness concept for successful implementation of the
51
52 change in organizations, *individual readiness* as a stand-alone concept in an organizational
53
54 context does not appear in the literature (Vakola, 2013), thus creating interest for further
55
56 research and theorization. Recent studies suggested several models of individual readiness for
57
58 change, e.g. with a focus on job satisfaction (Shah *et al.*, 2017). However, this research uses a
59
60

1
2
3 survey of the academic staff of public sector higher educational institutions in Pakistan, and
4 therefore, cannot always be directly applied to the private sector where performance is profit
5 related. Additionally, as Nink and Welte (2011) stressed, to make employees feel completely
6 involved in the organizational change, satisfaction with the workplace alone is not enough. The
7 first steps considering the central, active roles change recipients play in organizational change
8 events were recently conducted by Oreg *et al.* (2016).
9

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17 Although employee attitudes toward change are a key factor that determines the success
18 of an organization's change efforts, much of the research focusing on issues relevant to
19 organizational change has focused on organizational-level concerns rather than individual-
20 level concerns (Elias, 2009). Two main concepts have been used to explain employee attitudes
21 toward change: the concept of resistance for change and the concept of change readiness
22 (Bouckenooghe, 2010). Other concepts that emerged are: openness to change, change
23 cynicism, and others (see Table 1). Employee responses toward change can be classified into
24 four groups: cognitive, affective, intentional, and behavioral (Repovš, Drnovšek & Kaše,
25 2019). In the first instance, research defined resistance to change as behavior intended to avoid
26 change (e.g., Herscovitch, 2003). Later, other dimensions such as intentional, cognitive, and
27 affective dimensions were included (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). The contemporary view is that
28 resistance to change is a multidimensional attitude (Oreg, 2006). Readiness for change is a
29 more recently developed concept, defined as the cognitive precursor to the behaviors of either
30 resistance to, or support for, a change effort (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993).
31 Researchers agree that readiness for change has similar dimensions as resistance to change, but
32 the former concept entails not the behavioral dimension, but the cognitive, affective, and less
33 intentional ones (Armenakis Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Cunningham et al., 2002; Holt et al.,
34 2007; Weiner, 2009; Holt & Vardaman, 2013). Although change resistance may exist alongside
35 change readiness, the later concept provides us with the foundation for sound theorizing, and
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 for managing challenges related to individual readiness for change in organizations, and
4
5 therefore will be used as the theoretical basis in this research.
6
7

8 Individual readiness for change can be influenced by broader factors (Cunningham *et al.*,
9
10 2002). The literature distinguishes between three categories of antecedents for individual
11
12 readiness: external organizational pressures, internal context enablers, and individual
13
14 characteristics (Rafferty *et al.*, 2013; Schein, 2010). This study is focused both on internal
15
16 context enablers and some individual characteristics of employees, and on change management
17
18 issues related to these factors (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). Weiner (2009) noted that change
19
20 readiness means being willing and able to change. The construct of *willingness to change* is
21
22 adapted from the constructs of emotional readiness to change. As proposed by Bouckenooghe
23
24 *et al.* (2008), individuals believe that they are ready for change and perceive change as a
25
26 positive challenge. The construct of *ability to change* is borrowed from the *efficacy* component
27
28 of change readiness as proposed by Armenakis and Harris (2002). This component is related
29
30 to the questions “can I/we successfully implement the change?” If employees do not have the
31
32 confidence or emotional intelligence to adopt new ways of operating, and if emotional
33
34 capability at the organizational level is missing, the change outcome can be adversely affected
35
36 (Huy, 1999). A similar construct - “change related self-efficacy” - was proposed by Wanberg
37
38 and Banas (2000) as a predictor for openness to change. They argued that individuals will not
39
40 perform well in a changing context when they are not aware of their abilities. There are several
41
42 models of change, readiness, and openness, however, no models were found which analyzed
43
44 the willingness and ability to change together as the employees’ attitudes towards change.
45
46
47
48
49

50
51
52 Individuals, teams, and organizations all play a part in the process of change, and leaders
53
54 have a particularly onerous responsibility: that is, making “all this” happen (Cameron & Green,
55
56 2009). Bäesu and Bejinaru (2014) suggested that it is a leader’s job to create change readiness,
57
58 and that an employee’s readiness to accept change is critical for the process of success. Higgs
59
60

1
2
3 and Rowland (2000, 2005) linked leadership behaviors to activities involved in implementing
4 change. This includes shaping behavior (actions related directly to the change), framing
5 (establishing starting points for a change), and creating (connections between individual and
6 organizational capabilities, and communication and marketing of the change). For example,
7 Berneth (2004) suggested that communication of the change is the primary mechanism for
8 creating readiness for change among organizational members. Additionally, leaders can adopt
9 an “energizing” leadership strategy (Bruch & Vogel, 2011) to transform the spirit in the
10 organization from toxic to winning.
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 A review of the literature reveals a small number of publications on topic dealing with
23 resistance to change and change readiness (Repovš, Drnovšek & Kaše, 2019). This paper aims
24 to contribute to the research and practice on individual change readiness, building on the
25 concept of change readiness and its relationship with employees’ willingness and ability to
26 change, as well as internal context factors that can be affected by leadership strategies. We
27 explore internal context change readiness enablers, as well as leadership change strategies in
28 the business context of the global digital service company. Figure 1 below summarizes the
29 concepts that constitute and affect employees’ readiness and willingness to change.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 -----
42 **Insert Figure 1 about here**
43 -----
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

53 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

54
55 Since few researchers have attempted to develop the models of organizational change
56 (Decker *et al.*, 2012), and with the willingness and ability to change at an individual level
57 remaining under-researched, the selected strategies of this study were abductive, i.e. they
58
59
60

1
2
3 applied a process of reasoning to data in order to understand it, and observed patterns in order
4
5 to offer the framework of underlying variables. One of the main reasons of why organizational
6
7 initiatives fail is the lack of a thorough diagnostic investigation in an organization's readiness
8
9 and risk for a planned change (Pelletiere, 2006). In this sense our research complements
10
11 practice literature, including the Q12 survey conducted by Gallup Corporation (Hoogerhuis &
12
13 Anderson, 2019), which suggests that through qualitative and quantitative data on people's
14
15 change readiness, leaders can discover ways to unify employees behind a change initiative. We
16
17 begin with simple logic to guide the exploration of the data and go on to develop plausible
18
19 explanations for the results. In doing so, we aim to extend and enrich the theory. We used the
20
21 abductive approach as the extant theories were fragmented and not easily applied, given the
22
23 complexity of the phenomenon, or the context and goals of this research (Robinson, 2019). The
24
25 aim of abductive research is to combine data-gathering with analysis in incomplete
26
27 observations, comparing the evolving framework with existing literature-based theory and
28
29 including both inductive and deductive elements (Frow *et al.*, 2015). An abductive inquiry is
30
31 particularly appropriate when pursuing theory development, i.e. refining existing theories
32
33 rather than inventing entirely new ones (van Echtel *et al.*, 2008). From the theoretical
34
35 perspective, we used a concept of change readiness as an attitude comprised of cognition and
36
37 affect (Holt *et al.*, 2007a). We constructed the predictors of a change readiness based on the
38
39 review of prior literature (see Appendix for the list of predictors and relevant questions).
40
41
42
43
44
45

46
47 We collected data to study the determinants of the willingness and ability to change using
48
49 a mixed-methods approach, with exploratory interviews followed by a web-based survey with
50
51 both closed and open (qualitative/inductive component) questions (the quantitative/deductive
52
53 and qualitative/inductive components, respectively) (Hanson *et al.*, 2005; Jansen, 2010). This
54
55 approach is particularly important because it allows us to understand the internal enablers
56
57 which are most typical for the selected sample (the questionnaires offer breadth of research),
58
59
60

1
2
3 and at the same time to understand why (interviews and open-ended questions offer depths of
4 understanding). The research design of the questionnaire is based on the main measures of
5 willingness and ability to change collected from the academic literature. This allows us to apply
6 deductive reasoning. The formulation of questions was guided by the mixture of theoretical
7 approaches proposed by Wanberg and Banas (2000), Bouckenooghe *et al.* (2008), and Rafferty
8 *et al.* (2013). The variables in this study compiled from academic sources are summarized in
9 Table 2.

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Insert Table 2 about here

The research was conducted in a German subsidiary of a global digital service company (*the Organization*) with more than one hundred thousand employees and a revenue of more than €10 billion annually. According to Forbes (2018), the organization is on the list of 100 top digital companies in the world. From July to August 2018, all employees from offices located in 4 cities (2310 people in total) were invited to participate in the survey. 549 were on holiday and 306 employees replied to the online survey, which came to a total response rate of 17.39%. The respondents included both employees and managers; however, we do not know the distribution of the answers between these two groups, since it was not approved by the Works Council². Focusing on one country allowed exclusion of the influence of different laws and national culture effects on the behavior of respondents. In total, 249 male and 47 female participants responded, including 3.92% aged 30 or younger, 42.48% between 31 and 50 years old, and 53.6% aged 50 years or older. The distribution of age and gender of the respondents is normal as it reflects the demographic distribution in the company. Most of the participants

²In German companies, the Works Councils (WCs) play an extremely crucial role to ensure the welfare of the employees. WCs at regional levels and different legal entities represent employees in the management of the organization.

1
2
3 had more than 20 years of work experience in the company (50.98%), more than a third of the
4
5 employees had 11-20 years of experience (31.05%), and the rest had less than 10 years of
6
7 experience (17.97%).
8
9

10 11 12 **Quantitative component: surveys**

13
14 The survey comprised 52 multiple-choice questions and free-text comments. Multiple choice
15
16 answers and a scale of 1-4 were used where: 1 – strongly disagree; 2 – slightly disagree; 3 –
17
18 slightly agree and 4 – strongly agree. The SPSS statistical tool was used to analyze the primary
19
20 data. To find an association between variables, Spearman's rank correlations were used. Values
21
22 of from 0.3 to 0.7 were considered valid moderate correlation scores, and values above 0.7 as
23
24 strong correlation scores. Analysis of variance techniques includes the Mann-Whitney test for
25
26 two independent samples, such as gender, and the Kruskal-Wallis test for more than two
27
28 independent samples, such as age, level of job seniority, the company background, and job
29
30 function. The free-text comments from the respondents are coded into themes and represented
31
32 in percentage to the total (See Table 3 below).
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 **Qualitative component: interviews**

41
42 For the interviews, fifteen employees who were aware of an upcoming change were
43
44 selected and invited, of which nine participated in the interviews. The interviews were based
45
46 on 17 questions covering aspects of cognitive and emotional readiness. All questions were
47
48 open-ended, and participants' answers were coded into themes. After the interview, the answers
49
50 were summarized and sent to the interviews for approval.
51
52

53
54 The interviews and the open questions in the survey were coded in Excel and the output
55
56 is shown as a percentage of the total. The responses to the interviews were integrated into
57
58 analysis wherever it is appropriate.
59
60

THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall *willingness to change* was measured based on the answers to the question: “*I feel I am ready for another organizational change*” (emotional readiness). The open-ended questions revealed that employees were ready for an internal job change only when it was meaningful (see Table 3 below). Overall, it can be concluded that employees are willing to change only if the upcoming change makes sense to them (Lawrence, 1969). This confirms the importance of the *valence* component of cognitive change readiness proposed by Armenakis *et al.* (1993).

Insert Table 3 about here

To plan the best possible change intervention, it is important to examine whether there are differences in the degree of willingness to change amongst groups of employees. There were several categories of employees identified for this investigation such as age, gender, job function, company background, and years of experience (job seniority). It was found that age and level of seniority in the company had an impact on willingness to change, as older and more experienced people were more pessimistic towards change. However, no evidence was found that gender, company backgrounds or job function determine willingness to change.

We found three potential reasons behind this impact. Firstly, people who have been working in the company for longer have lived through several organizational changes and have criticized the change management capabilities in the Organization. Secondly, the desire for job comfort and job stability is greater in senior employees. Thirdly, the fear of being unemployed is also greater in senior employees above the age of 55 and older. Therefore, agreeing to change jobs without knowing the impact of this change (personally) is an unlikely behavior in this age

1
2
3 category. While previous research has demonstrated that age alone accounts for little variance
4
5 in work performance in relatively stable work contexts, it is plausible that adaption to changes
6
7 in work settings might become more difficult with age (Niessen *et al.*, 2010). Contrary to this
8
9 common stereotype, Kunze *et al.* (2011), has found that the age of employees correlates
10
11 negatively with resistance to change. Our findings suggest that age can have mixed non-linear
12
13 effects on the individual's attitudes to change.
14
15

16
17 The overall *ability to change* was measured based on the answers to the question: "*My*
18
19 *prior experiences make me confident, that I will be able to perform successfully after an*
20
21 *organizational change is made*". It can be assumed that an employee's belief in his or her
22
23 capabilities to support a change is the best measure to assess the general ability to change in
24
25 the Organization. The open-ended questions discovered that employees wish processes and
26
27 pools to be a part of restructuring and change as well.
28
29

30
31 Similar to the willingness to change questions, we surveyed several groups of employees
32
33 for their ability to change. Evidence has been found that only the company background has an
34
35 impact on the responding tendencies for the ability to change in the Organization. The impact
36
37 of company background can be explained by the effect of previous changes. Employees with
38
39 different company backgrounds can have different attitudes to change. This finding is
40
41 consistent with what is already known, i.e. that organizational culture (or the background
42
43 organization in our study) plays an important role in the change process (Schneider & Brief,
44
45 1996; Silvester & Anderson, 1999; Rashid *et al.*, 2004; Jones *et al.*, 2005).
46
47
48
49
50

51 **Impact of internal enablers**

52
53 To better understand the individual conditions for change-supportive behavior, it is
54
55 important to analyze the impact of internal context enablers on the willingness and ability to
56
57 change.
58
59
60

1
2
3 **Job satisfaction.** The satisfaction of the employees in their job was measured by the
4 question: “*Are you satisfied in your current job?*”. No significant association between job
5 satisfaction and willingness and ability to change was found. Therefore, it can be concluded
6 that despite the average scores for job satisfaction (58.46% of the respondents chose options
7 for slightly satisfied and strongly satisfied), it does not seem to impact the willingness and
8 ability to change in the Organization. Although previous research suggested that satisfaction
9 with communication has significant positive effects on workers' perception of readiness for
10 change in some organizations (Claiborne *et al.*, 2013), our research found that overall job
11 satisfaction is not a predictor of the readiness to change. This is in line with Nink and Welte
12 (2011), who suggested that satisfaction with the workplace alone is not enough for greater
13 readiness to change.
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

28 **Individual perception of organizational culture.** The individual perception of
29 organizational culture is measured in this research by three questions. The first question was
30 “*I am aware of the values of the organization and can identify myself with them*”. It aims to
31 measure the awareness and identification of employees to the values of the Organization. The
32 values are set company-wide and are listed on the website.
33
34
35
36
37
38
39

40 A moderate positive correlation was found between the question “*I am aware of the*
41 *values of the organization and can identify myself with them*” and the ability to change. As a
42 result of this, it can be concluded that employees who are aware of the values and vision of the
43 organization have a greater belief in their capabilities to cope with change. A test of variance
44 has been conducted for all the identified groups of employees for the question “*I am aware of*
45 *the values of the organization and can identify myself with them*”, as this question shows a
46 moderate positive correlation with the ability to change. It was found that only company
47 background has an impact on the scoring tendency for values of the Organization and
48 identification with them. The organizational culture is understood in this research as a set of
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 shared meanings that make it possible for members of a group to interpret and act upon their
4
5 environment (Schein, 1984). Based on secondary sources of information, it can be concluded
6
7 that as a result of the previous change (M&A of two European companies) and of rapid
8
9 acquisition-based growth in recent years, the Organization has two distinct groups of
10
11 employees. It can be concluded that past culture (different in these two companies) may affect
12
13 the perception of organizational values and may therefore affect the ability and willingness to
14
15 change if employees do not identify themselves with the “new values”. This is consistent with
16
17 findings related to the company background (see discussion above).
18
19
20

21
22 **Understanding the need and urgency for change.** The need and the urgency for change
23
24 are measured in this research by three statements: *“I understand the current organizational*
25
26 *challenge in the organization”*, *“My direct and executive management communicates regularly*
27
28 *on the current challenges in the organization”*, and *“I understand that there is a need for*
29
30 *change in the organization as soon as possible”*.
31
32

33
34 The statement *“I understand the current organizational challenge”* also has a moderate
35
36 positive association with willingness to change measured by the response to *“I am ready for*
37
38 *another organizational change”* and ability to change measured by the response on *“My prior*
39
40 *experiences make me confident, that I will be able to perform successfully after an*
41
42 *organizational change is made”* which means employees who understand the current
43
44 organizational challenges in the Organization are also more willing and able to change.
45
46

47
48 A moderate positive association found between *“I understand that there is a need for*
49
50 *change in the organization as soon as possible”* and *“I am ready for another organizational*
51
52 *change”* shows that an employee who understands there is an immediate requirement of
53
54 change also feels ready for an organizational change. Therefore, a test of variance for all
55
56 groups of employees for *“I understand the current organizational challenges in the*
57
58 *organization”* and *“I understand that there is a need for change in the organization as soon*
59
60

1
2
3 *as possible*” was conducted. It was found that job function has an impact on understanding
4 the challenges in the organization (“*I understand the current organizational challenges in the*
5 *organization*”). It was also found that gender has an impact on employees’ reactions to “*I*
6 *understand that there is a need for change in the organization as soon as possible*”. The
7 responses to “*I understand the current organizational challenges in the organization*” differ
8 among different departments. This can be explained by considering that some groups of
9 employees have a better overview of processes and finances, and therefore a greater
10 understanding of the need for change. This factor was proposed by Armemakis *et al.* (2007)
11 as a component of change readiness which reflects a belief that change is needed. In this
12 research we extended this factor adding the urgency for change as a measure of awareness of
13 the challenge.

14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Individual perception of organizational capabilities to change. This factor is measured in this research by four responses “*I believe that the organization has been able to cope effectively with new situations*” (61.1% of respondents disagreed with the statement), “*I believe that past changes in the organization resulted in improvements*” (72.55% of respondents disagreed with this statement), “*I believe that the organization has proven itself capable of implementing organizational changes*” (62.09% of respondents disagreed with this statement), “*The organization generally provides appropriate support when needed to cope with organizational changes*” (67.32% of respondents disagreed with the statement). Table 4 (below) shows that 10.46% of respondents chose to add free-text comments on this section. The main themes addressed in these comments were dissatisfaction about working in the Organization, which included processes, tools, management and near and offshoring strategies, dissatisfaction about past change, and lack of trust in change implementation capabilities in the Organization. The participants highlighted the requirement of including processes and tools in restructuring measures.

Insert Table 4 about here

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

A moderate positive correlation was found between the two questions “*I believe that past changes in the organization resulted in improvements*” and “*My prior experiences make me confident, that I will be able to perform successfully after an organizational change is made*”, and the ability to change (see Table 5 below). This means the Organization’s capability to change has an impact on the ability to change of an individual in the Organization: in other words, when employees believe that past change has brought improvements, they tend to believe that they can cope with a future change and perform successfully. The responses on the question “*I believe that past changes in the organization resulted in improvements*” indicated that all groups of employees have the same tendency to respond to these questions. This corresponds with Choi (2011) who suggested that an organization’s ability to accommodate changing situations has a great impact on individual change readiness.

Insert Table 5 about here

Communication in the organization. The quality of communication in the Organization was measured with three questions. The first question was “*The communication I receive from the organization centrally is timely and useful*”, which 53.26% of the respondents agreed with. The second question was “*Information on upcoming changes first come to us mostly as rumors*”, which 83.07% of the respondents disagreed with, and the third question was “*My line manager and executive management communicate on a regular basis on upcoming changes*”, which 60.68% of the respondents agreed with. The topmost categories of comments suggested that the timing and content on change communication do not meet

1
2
3 expectations, followed by allegations that news on upcoming change mostly comes as rumors.
4
5 For all the questions in communication in the Organization, the correlation is weakly positive
6
7 and so no significant relationship has been found with willingness and ability to change. This
8
9 is different from what was suggested in previous research, i.e. that the failure to provide
10
11 sufficient information or providing poor-quality information can result in several problems,
12
13 including cynicism about change (Choi, 2011). Providing information about the change is
14
15 probably not enough for complex transformations and more complex interventions are
16
17 necessary. This can be explained by considering that in this study employees did not know
18
19 about the planned change, and therefore nothing had been communicated.
20
21
22
23

24 **Trust in leadership.** The questions aimed at testing trust in leadership could not be
25
26 added to the survey due to the recommendation from the management team. Therefore, this
27
28 factor was explored in personal interviews only. Two questions were asked to assess the role
29
30 of trust in leadership. For the first question *“In the organization, do you think there is a*
31
32 *discrepancy in trust in direct management and trust in executive management?”* the answer
33
34 was positive for all participants. Several reasons were highlighted for this lack of trust. For
35
36 the second question, *“Do you think trust in management plays a crucial role in the success or*
37
38 *failure of change efforts?”* the answer again was also positive for all the participants.
39
40 Therefore, this study is compelled to consider this factor as positively influencing willingness
41
42 and ability to change. This supports the findings of Bouckenoghe et al. (2008), who found
43
44 trust in top management plays a crucial role in change readiness.
45
46
47
48

49 **Prior experience with change.** Most of the respondents (69.97%) referred to the last
50
51 organizational change they participated in as an acquisition. Upon asking the question if the
52
53 goal of the organizational change was clear, 43.7 % answered yes, 28% no and 25% maybe.
54
55 For the question *“Was the change successful in your opinion?”*, only 14% responded “yes”,
56
57 38.56% responded “no”, and 45% responded partially “yes” or “no”.
58
59
60

1
2
3 The interviewees were asked to name the most important change management issues.

4
5 For example, Interviewee 4 said the following in response to the question “*what are the main*
6
7
8 *challenges and what can be done better*”:

9
10 “*...Set the strategy, involving the employees, lead them to the new organization, focus*
11
12 *on the customer, and solve the issues*”.

13
14 Interviewer 5 suggested, “*to involve the people in the planning, and in the beginning*”.

15
16 To summarize, no relationship was found between prior experience with change and
17
18 ability and willingness to change. Based on their prior experience employees would like to be
19
20 involved and have control over the upcoming change events at the earliest stages.
21
22 Recommendations provided by the interviewees on the question are summarized in Table 6
23
24 below. The most common responses included: increasing transparency, people involvement,
25
26 and training; demonstrating people’s perspective; collecting feedback; and effective
27
28 communication. However, our finding is different from what is known from prior literature.
29
30 For example, Rafferty *et al.* (2013) identified an employee’s change history in an organization
31
32 as a key antecedent of their opinion on organizational change. This difference suggests that
33
34 although employees recognize the failure of the previous change, they also understand the need
35
36 and urgency of the new transformation.
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 -----
44 **Insert Table 6 about here**
45 -----

46
47
48
49 **Leadership change strategies.** The employees were asked what kind of leadership
50
51 behaviors they wished their leaders to possess during change (according to the leadership
52
53 change strategies suggested in 2001 by Higgs and Rowland). In the answers to the questions
54
55 about leadership strategies in the organization, we found that the most typical leadership
56
57 behavior in settings of organizational change was framing, with shaping and creating less
58
59
60

1
2
3 typical, suggesting that employees want their leaders to tell the truth about the upcoming
4
5 change. That is an interesting finding because as per Higgs and Rowland (2011), a leader's
6
7 shaping behaviors or centric behaviors lead to unsuccessful change (see Table 6 below). Upon
8
9 asking the question "What type of the motivational strategy do you currently observe in the
10
11 leadership of your organization?", the employees pointed out that caustic and resigned attitudes
12
13 are the most predominant symptoms of adverse emotions during the change in the
14
15 Organization. This finding is consistent with Bruch and Vogel (2011), who suggested both
16
17 these forms of *organizational energy* are negative for a healthy business environment.
18
19

20
21 Figure 2 below summarizes the relationships amongst variables and willingness and ability to
22
23 change. This Figure demonstrates the relationships between predictors of ability and willingness to
24
25 changes in their predictors and, therefore, provides insights into the conceptual framework in Figure 1.
26
27

28
29 -----
30 **Insert Figure 2 about here**
31
32 -----
33
34
35
36
37

38 **CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

39
40
41 This research has explored the predictors of individual change readiness as a precursor
42
43 to organizational change and examined leadership strategies available to help generate
44
45 readiness. This research discovered that employees are willing to change when the proposed
46
47 change makes sense to them. Evidence has been found that the following factors have an impact
48
49 on the willingness and ability to change include: job function (indirectly), age, job seniority,
50
51 knowledge of values (individual perception of organizational culture), company background,
52
53 understanding the current challenges and understating the need and urgency for change. Trust
54
55 in leadership at different levels plays a crucial role in shaping change readiness.
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Our study contributes to the prior research, including the theoretical and practical
4 literature on the effects of work attitudes, emotions, and behaviors on performance. This
5 research also contributes to the practical literature on the conduct of employee interviews on
6 change, including Gallup's Q12 employee engagement framework (Gallup, n/d). We add to the
7 existing literature new dimensions related to prior experience with change and understanding
8 the need and urgency for change – specific factors that are relevant to an individual's ability to
9 change.
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 Managers can use the findings of this study to learn how to plan and manage
21 organizational change in the fast-paced business environment of digital service industries,
22 which often requires a longer time with a need to extend the organizational restructuring to
23 behavioral and mindset change. This research suggests a practical approach to the assessment
24 of change readiness in the industry where employees represent the main assets of the
25 organization and take an active part in the co-creation of the value propositions with customers
26 (Heim *et al.*, 2018). When planning change, managers should take into consideration that even
27 well-planned change events may not produce the desired outcomes if members are not ready
28 (Armenakis *et al.*, 1993). Some age groups and more experienced employees can demonstrate
29 low levels of change readiness. Change agents in organizations need to pay more attention to
30 vulnerable groups (older and more experienced staff) when planning organizational change.
31 Managers can improve change readiness among these groups through organization events
32 aiming at communication the purpose of a transformation, for example, involving these people
33 in the planning. Knowledge of values, understanding the current challenges, and understating
34 the urgency for change, as well as the development of positive attitudes toward past changes
35 through discussion, can improve the overall readiness for change among personnel.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56

57 Change initiatives based on so-called digital transformations – opportunities to create
58 new business models for global digital companies – become more complex and strategic and
59
60

1
2
3 therefore, as recently suggested, there is a need to manage the transition and emotions of
4 employees (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2018). We propose that the focus should have a long-term
5 perspective, i.e. prior experience with change in the organization and the future change. We
6
7 also found that people expect more diverse leadership behaviors, including framing, shaping,
8 and creating (Higgs & Rowland, 2011). Our research highlights interrelations between
9
10 demographic and internal context variables, which influence willingness and ability to change
11
12 at the level of the individual in the organization. This study contributes to organizational change
13
14 literature, suggesting a simple model explaining factors affecting employees' willingness and
15
16 ability to change.
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

24 This research does have its limitations, however: firstly, the context of the upcoming
25 change was not known to the employees. These scores could have been more accurate if the
26 employees had known this. Secondly, since the questions aimed at testing the trust in leadership
27 could not be added to the survey (due to the recommendation from the management team), this
28 research could not explore the reasons behind participants' answers. Such reasons could include
29 the management team not trusting the responses of its employees, refusing to judge itself by its
30 employees, or not confident enough. We also do not know the distribution of the answers
31 between these two groups, since this question was not approved by the Work Council. Also,
32 this research is focused on one organization, and research in other industries and firms in the
33 digital service industry would be beneficial. The effects of ageing on the individual readiness
34 for change would be an interesting avenue for future research. Future research could also
35 explore the individual readiness for change between other categories of employees, including
36 those with and without migration background or experience. Overall, further research needs to
37 explore more about the perception of change strategies in a fast-paced business environment
38 and suggest new theoretical approaches explaining change dynamics.
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 **Acknowledgments** Authors would like to thank the Editorial Team of the JOCM and two
4
5 anonymous reviewers for their constructive and friendly review and cooperation that allowed
6
7 us to improve this paper. This paper also benefited from the feedback received from four
8
9 anonymous reviewers at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting 2020. The authors
10
11 would like to thank Associate Professor Jane McCormack and Mr. Jack Masters for editing and
12
13 proof-reading this work. No external research funding received to finance this study.
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 REFERENCES

- 21
22
23 Alas, R. (2008), “Employees willingness to participate in implementation of organizational
24
25 change”, *Management of Organizations: Systematic Research*, Vol. 46, pp. 7–15.
26
27
28 Armenakis, A. A. and Bedeian, A. G. (1999). “Organizational change: A review of theory and
29
30 research in the 1990s”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 293–315.
31
32
33 Armenakis, A. A., Bernerth, J. B., Pitts, J. P., and Walker, H. J. (2007). “Organizational change
34
35 recipients' beliefs scale: Development of an assessment instrument”, *The Journal of*
36
37 *Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol.43 No. 4, pp. 481-505.
38
39
40 Armenakis, A. A. and Harris, S. G. (2002), “Crafting a change message to create
41
42 transformational readiness”, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 15
43
44 No. 2, pp. 169-183.
45
46
47
48 Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G. and Mossholder, K.W. (1993), “Creating readiness for
49
50 organizational change”, *Human Relations*, Vol. 46 No. 6, pp. 681–704.
51
52
53 Axtell, C., Wall, T., Stride, C., Pepper, K., Clegg, C., Gardner, P. and Bolden, R. (2002),
54
55
56 “Familiarity breeds content: The impact of exposure to change on employee openness
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 and well-being”, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol.75
4
5 No. 2, pp. 217–231.
6
7
8 Băesu, C. and Bejinaru, R. (2014), “Leadership approaches regarding the organizational
9
10 change”, *The USV annals of economics and public administration*, Vol. 13 No. 22 (18),
11
12 pp.146-152.
13
14
15 Bartunek, J. M., Rousseau, D. M., Rudolph, J. W. and DePalma, J. A. (2006), “On the receiving
16
17 end: Sensemaking, emotion, and assessments of an organizational change initiated by
18
19 others”, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 182-206.
20
21
22 Berman, S. (2012), “Digital transformation: opportunities to create new business models”,
23
24 *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 16-24.
25
26
27 Bernerth, J., (2004). “Expanding our understanding of the change message”, *Human Resource*
28
29 *Development Review*, Vol. 3 No.1, pp. 36-52.
30
31
32 Bersin, J., Flynn, J., Mazor, A., and Melian, V. (2017), “The employee experience: Culture,
33
34 engagement, and beyond. 2017 Global Human Capital Trends. Deloitte Insights”,
35
36 available at: [https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/human-capital-](https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/human-capital-trends/2017/improving-the-employee-experience-culture-engagement.html)
37
38 [trends/2017/improving-the-employee-experience-culture-engagement.html](https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/human-capital-trends/2017/improving-the-employee-experience-culture-engagement.html).
39
40
41 Bouckenoghe, D. (2010), “Positioning change recipients’ attitudes toward change in the
42
43 organizational change literature”. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 46 No.
44
45 4, pp. 500–531.
46
47
48 Bouckenoghe, D., Devos, G. and Van Den Broeck, H. (2008), “The change climate
49
50 questionnaire: Scale development”, working paper [2008/511], Vlerick Leuven Ghent
51
52 Management School, University of Gent, Gent. April 2008.
53
54
55 Bruch, H., & Vogel, B. (2011). *Fully charged: How great leaders boost their organization's*
56
57 *energy and ignite high performance*, Harvard Business Press, Boston.
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Buono, A.F. and Kerber, K.W. (2010), “Intervention and organizational change: Building
4
5 organizational change capacity”, *EBS Review*, Vol. 27, pp. 9-21.
6
7
8 Cameron, E. and Green, M. (2004), “*Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide*
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Buono, A.F. and Kerber, K.W. (2010), “Intervention and organizational change: Building organizational change capacity”, *EBS Review*, Vol. 27, pp. 9-21.
- Cameron, E. and Green, M. (2004), “*Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools and Techniques of Organizational Change*”, Kogan Page Limited, London.
- Christensen, C.M. (1997, 2013). *The innovator's dilemma: when new technologies cause great firms to fail*, Harvard Business Review Press, Cambridge.
- Claiborne, N., Auerbach, C., Lawrence, C. and Schudrich, W. Z. (2013), “Organizational change: The role of climate and job satisfaction in child welfare workers' perception of readiness for change”, *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol. 35 No 12, pp. 2013-2019.
- Choi, M. (2011), Employees’ attitudes toward organizational change: A literature review. *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 479–500.
- Cunningham, C.E., Woodward, C.A., Shannon, H.S., MacIntosh, J., Lendrum, B., Rosenbloom, D., and Brown, J., (2002), “Readiness for organizational change: a longitudinal study of workplace: psychological and behavioral correlates”, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 75, pp. 377-392.
- Decker, P., Durand, R., Mayfield, C.O., McCormack, C., Skinner, D., and Perdue, G. (2012), “Predicting implementation failure in organization change” *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 29-50.
- Del Val, M. P., and Fuentes, C. M (2003), “Resistance to change: A literature review and empirical study”, *Management Decision*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 148-155.

- 1
2
3 Devos, G., Buelens, M. and Bouckennooghe, D. (2007), "Contribution of content, context, and
4
5 process to understanding openness to organizational change: Two experimental
6
7 simulation studies", *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 147 No. 6, pp. 607–630.
8
9
10
11 Dubois, A. and Gadde, L. E. (2002), "Systematic combining: An abductive approach to case
12
13 research", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 55 No. 7, pp. 553-560.
14
15
16 Elias, S. M. (2009), "Employee commitment in times of change: Assessing the importance of
17
18 Attitudes toward organizational change", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 37-
19
20 55.
21
22
23
24 Fedor, D. B., Caldwell, S. and Herold, D. M. (2006), "The effects of organizational changes
25
26 on employee commitment: A multilevel investigation", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol.
27
28 59 No. 1, pp. 1–29.
29
30
31
32 Flanding, J.P., Grabman, G.M., and Cox, S.Q. (2018). *The technology takers: leading change*
33
34 *in the digital era*, Emerald Group Publishing, Bingley.
35
36
37 Forbes (2018), Top 100 digital companies, available at:
38
39
40 <https://www.forbes.com/top-digital-companies/list/2/#tab:rank>.
41
42
43 Fox, D. G., Ellison, R. L. and Keith, K. L. (1988), "Human resource index management: An
44
45 and its relation- ship to readiness for change", *Public Personnel Management*, Vol. 17
46
47 No. 3, pp. 297–302.
48
49
50 Frow, P., Nenonen, S., Payne, A., and Storbacka, K. (2015). "Managing co-creation design:
51
52 A strategic approach to innovation", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp.
53
54 463-483.
55
56
57
58 Gallup (n/d). Employee engagement survey questions. Available from:
59
60

1
2
3 <https://q12.gallup.com/public/en-us/Features>.

4
5
6 Goold, M., and Campbell, A. (2002). *Designing effective organizations: How to create*
7
8 *structured networks*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

9
10
11 Groves, K.S. (2005), "Linking leader skills, follower attitudes, and contextual variables
12
13 via an integrated model of charismatic leadership", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 31
14
15 No. 2, pp. 255–277.

16
17
18 Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Clark, V. L. P., Petska, K. S., and Creswell, J. D. (2005),
19
20 "Mixed
21
22 methods research designs in counseling psychology", *Journal of Counseling*
23
24 *Psychology*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 224-235.

25
26
27 Heim, I., Han, T., and Ghobadian, A. (2018), "Value co-creation in ICT services company: A
28
29 case study of a cross-border acquisition", *Journal of East-West Business*, Vol. 24 No. 4,
30
31 pp. 319-338.

32
33
34 Herold, D.M., Caldwell, S. and Liu, Y. (2008), "The effects of transformational and change
35
36 leadership on employees' commitment to a change: A multilevel study. *Journal of*
37
38 *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 2, pp. 346–357.

39
40
41 Herscovitch, L. (2003), "Resistance to organizational change: Toward a multidimension
42
43 conceptualization" (unpublished doctoral dissertations). University of Western Ontario,
44
45 Ontario, Canada.

46
47
48 Herscovitch, L., and Meyer, J. P. (2002), "Commitment to organizational change: Extension
49
50 of
51
52 of a three-component model", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No.3, pp. 474–
53
54
55
56
57
58
59 487.
60

- Hertel, B., van der Heijden, I.J.M., de Lange, A.H., Guido, J.D., and Kunze F. (2013),
“Age, resistance to change, and job performance”, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*,
Vol. 28 No. 7/8, pp. 741 -760.
- Higgs, M. and Rowland, D. (2000). “Building change leadership capability: The quest for
change competence”, *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 1 No.2, pp. 116-130.
- Higgs, M.J., and Rowland, D. (2001), “Developing change leaders: Assessing the impact of a
development programme”, *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 2 No.1, pp. 47-64.
- Higgs, M. and Rowland, D. (2005), “All changes great and small: Exploring approaches to
change and its leadership”, *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 121–
151.
- Higgs, M. and Rowland, D. (2011), “What does it take to implement change successfully?
A study of the behaviors of successful change leaders”, *Journal of Applied Behavioural
Science*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 309–335.
- Hoogerhuis, M and Anderson, J. (2019). “How to adapt to constant change: create it”,
available at: https://www.gallup.com/topic/change_management.aspx.
- Holt, D.T. and Vardaman, J.M. (2013), “Toward a comprehensive understanding of readiness
for change: The case for an expanded conceptualization”, *Journal of Change
Management*, Vol. 13 No.1, pp. 9–18.
- Holt, D.T., Armenakis, A.A., Feild, H.S. and Harris, S.G. (2007a), “Readiness for
Organizational Change. The systematic development of a Scale”, *The Journal of
Applied Behavioural Science*, Vol. 43 No.2, pp. 232–255.
- Holt, D.T., Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G. and Feild, H.S. (2007b), “Toward a

- 1
2
3 comprehensive definition of readiness for change: A review of research and
4 instrumentation”, In: Pasmore, W.A. and Woodman, R.W.(Eds.), *Research in*
5
6 *Organizational Change and Development*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited,
7
8 Bingley, pp. 289–336.
9
10
11
12 Huy, Q.N. (1999), “Emotional capability, emotional intelligence, and radical change”,
13
14 *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 325-345.
15
16
17
18 Jansen, H. (2010), “The logic of qualitative survey research and its position in the field of social
19
20 research methods”, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social*
21
22 *Research*, Vol. 11 No. 2, Art. 11, pp. 1-21.
23
24
25
26 Jones, R.A., Jimmieson, N.L., and Griffiths, A. (2005). “The impact of organizational culture
27
28 and reshaping capabilities on change implementation success: The mediating role of
29
30 readiness for change”, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 361-386.
31
32
33
34 Kim, T.G., Hornung, S. and Rousseau, D.M. (2011). “Change-supportive employee behavior:
35
36 Antecedents and the moderating role of time”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 37 No. 6,
37
38 pp. 1664–1693.
39
40
41
42 Klein, K.J., and Sorra, J.S. (1996), “The challenge of innovation implementation”, *Academy*
43
44 *of Management Review*, Vol. 21 No.4, pp. 1055–1080.
45
46
47
48 Kotter, J.P. (1995). “Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail”, *Harvard Business*
49
50 *Review*, March-April: 59-67.
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60 Kotter, J.P. (2012). *Leading change*, Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge.
Kunze, F., Boehm, S. and Bruch, H. (2011), “Age diversity, age discrimination climate and
performance consequences - a cross organizational study”, *Journal of Organizational*
Behavior, Vol. 32 No.2, pp. 264-290.

- 1
2
3 Kwahk, K.-Y., and Kim, H.-W. (2008), “Managing readiness in enterprise systems-driven
4
5 organizational change”, *Behaviour & Information Technology*, Vol. 27 No.1, pp. 79–
6
7 87.
8
9
- 10 Lawrence, P.R. (1969). “How to deal with resistance to change”, *Harvard Business Review*,
11
12 Vol. 47 January No. 1, pp. 4–6.
13
14
- 15 Madsen, S.R., Miller, D. and John, C.R. (2005), “Readiness for organizational change: Do
16
17 organizational commitment and social relationships in the workplace make a
18
19 difference?” *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, Vol. 16 No.2, pp. 213–233.
20
21
22
- 23 Miller, V.D., Johnson, J.R., and Grau, J. (1994), “Antecedents to willingness to participate
24
25 in a planned organizational change”, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, Vol.
26
27 22 No.1, pp. 59–80.
28
29
30
- 31 Niessen, C., Swarowsky, C. and Leiz, M. (2010), “Age and adaptation to changes in the
32
33 workplace”, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 25 No.4, pp. 356-383.
34
35
36
- 37 Nink, M. and Welte, K. (2011). “Involving employees in change”, Available from:
38
39 <https://news.gallup.com/businessjournal/150932/involving-employees-change.aspx>
40
41
- 42 Oreg, S. (2006). “Personality, context, and resistance to organizational change”, *European*
43
44 *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 15 No.1, pp. 73-101.
45
46
- 47 Oreg, S., Bartunek, J.M., Lee, G., and Do, B. (2016). “An affect-based model of recipients’
48
49 responses to organizational change events”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 43
50
51 No. 1, pp. 65-86.
52
53
- 54 Oreg, S., Vakola, M., and Armenakis, A. (2011). “Change recipients’ reactions to
55
56 organizational change: A 60-year review of quantitative studies”, *The Journal of*
57
58 *Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 47 No. 4, pp. 461-524.
59
60

- 1
2
3 Ostroff, C. and Clark, M.A. (2001), "Maintaining an internal market: Antecedents of
4
5 willingness to change jobs", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 59 No. 3, pp. 425-
6
7 453.
8
9
- 10
11 Pan, W. and Sun, L. (2018), "A self-regulation model of Zhong Yong thinking and employee
12
13 adaptive performance", *Management and Organization Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 135-
14
15 159.
16
17
- 18
19 Pelletiere, V. (2006), "Organization self-assessment to determine the readiness and risk for a
20
21 planned change", *Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp.38-43.
22
23
- 24
25 Piderit, S.K. (2000), "Rethinking resistance and recognizing ambivalence: A multidimensional
26
27 view of attitudes toward an organizational change", *Academy of Management Review*,
28
29 Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 783-794.
30
31
- 32
33 Rafferty, A.E., Jimmieson, N.L. and Armenakis, A.A. (2013), "Change readiness: A
34
35 multilevel review", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 110–135.
36
37
- 38
39 Rafferty, A.E., and Minbashian, A. (2018), "Cognitive beliefs and positive emotions about
40
41 change: Relationships with employee change readiness and change-supportive
42
43 behaviors.", *Human Relations*, Vol. 72 No. 10, pp. 1623 –1650.
44
45
- 46
47 Rafferty, A.E., and Simons, R. (2006), "An examination of the antecedents of readiness for
48
49 fine-tuning and corporate transformation changes", *Journal of Business & Psychology*,
50
51 Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 325– 350.
52
53
- 54
55 Rafferty, A.E., and Restubog, S. (2017), "Why do employees' perceptions of their
56
57 organization's change history matter? The role of change appraisals", *Human Resource
58
59 Management*, Vol.56 No.3, pp. 533-550.
60
- 60
61 Rashid, Z.A., Sambasivan, M., and Rahman, A.A. (2004), "The influence of

- 1
2
3 organizational culture on attitudes toward organizational change”, *Leadership &*
4
5 *organization development Journal*. Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 161-179.
6
7
- 8 Repovš, E., Drnovšek, M., and Kaše, R. (2019), “Change ready, resistant, or both? Exploring
9
10 the concept of individual change readiness and resistance to organizational change”,
11
12 *Economic and Business Review for Central and South-Eastern Europe*, Vol. 21 No.2,
13
14 pp. 309-343.
15
16
- 17
18 Robinson, S.L. (2019), “What is a pre-theory paper? Some insights to help you recognize
19
20 or create a pre-theory paper for AMD”, *Academy of Management Discoveries*, Vol. 5
21
22 No.1, pp. 1-7.
23
24
- 25
26 Shah, N., Irani, Z., and Sharif, A.M. (2017), “Big data in an HR context: Exploring
27
28 organizational change readiness, employee attitudes and behaviors”, *Journal of*
29
30 *Business Research*, Vol. 70, pp. 366-378.
31
32
- 33
34 Schalk, R., Campbell, W.J. and Freese, C. (1998), “Change and employee behavior”,
35
36 *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 19 No.3, pp. 157-163.
37
38
- 39
40 Schein, E.H. (1984), “Coming to a new awareness of organizational culture”, *Sloan*
41
42 *Management Review*, Vol. 25 No. 2, pp. 3-16.
43
- 44
45 Schein, E.H. (2010), *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
46
- 47
48 Schneider, B. and Brief, A. (1996), “Creating a climate and culture for sustainable
49
50 organizational change”, *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 24 No. 7, pp. 7-19.
51
- 52
53 Secord, P.F., and Backman. C.W. (1969), *Social Psychology*, McGraw Hill, New York.
54
- 55
56 Self, D.R., and Schröder, M. (2009), “Enhancing the success of organizational change:
57
58 Matching readiness strategies with sources of resistance”, *Leadership & Organization*
59
60 *Development Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 167-182.

- 1
2
3 Silvester, J., and Anderson, N.R. (1999), “Organizational culture change”, *Journal of*
4
5
6 *Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 72 No. 1, pp. 1-24.
7
8
9 Vakola, M. (2013), “Multilevel readiness to organizational change: A conceptual approach”,
10
11 *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 13 No.1, pp. 96–109.
12
13
14 Vakola, M. (2014), “What’s in there for me? Individual readiness to change and the perceived
15
16 impact of organizational change”, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*,
17
18
19 Vol. 35 No .3, pp. 195-209.
20
21
22 Vakola, M. and Nikolaou, I. (2005), “Attitudes towards organizational change: What is the role
23
24 of employees’ stress and commitment?”, *Employee Relations*, Vol. 27 No.2, pp. 160-
25
26 174.
27
28
29 Van der Smissen, S., Schalk, R. and Freese, C. (2013), “Organizational change and the
30
31 psychological contract: How change influences the perceived fulfillment of obligations”,
32
33
34 *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 26 No.6, pp. 1071-1090.
35
36
37 Van Echtelt, F., Wynstra, F., van Weele, A. and Duysters, G. (2008). “Managing supplier
38
39 involvement in new product development: a multiple-case study”, *Journal of Product*
40
41 *Innovation Management*, Vol. 25, pp. 180–201.
42
43
44 Walker, H.J., Armenakis, A.A., and Bernerth, J.B. (2007), “Factors influencing organizational
45
46 change efforts: An integrative investigation of change content, context, process and
47
48 individual differences”, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 20 No. 6,
49
50 pp. 761-773.
51
52
53
54
55 Wanberg, C.R. and Banas, J.T. (2000), “Predictors and outcomes of openness to changes in a
56
57 reorganizing workplace”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 85 No.1, pp. 132–142.
58
59
60

Wanous, J.P., Reichers, A.E., and Austin, J.T. (2004), "Cynicism about organizational change: An attribution process perspective", *Psychological Reports*, Vol. 94 No.3, pp. 1421–1434.

Weber, P.S. and Weber, J.E. (2001), "Changes in employee perceptions during organizational change", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 22 No.6, pp. 291-300.

Weiner, B.J. (2009), "A theory of organizational readiness for change", *Implementation Science*, Vol. 67, No.4, pp. 67-75.

Appendix. Survey questions.

N	Predictor	Questions/Statements
		How far do you agree with the following statements?
1	Age	What is your age?
2	Gender	What is your gender?
3	Company background	What is the name of your previous company?
4	Job seniority	How long have you been with / working for the Organization including the predecessor company?
5	Job function	What is your job function?
6	Job satisfaction	Are you satisfied in your current job?
7	Individual perception of organizational culture	I am aware of the values of the Organization and can identify with them.
8		I am aware and support the vision of the Organization.
9		I feel that the culture in the Organization is open and receptive to new ideas, innovation, and change.
10	Understanding the need & urgency for change	I understand the current organizational challenges in the Organization.
11		My executive management communicates regularly on the current challenges of the Organization.
12		I understand that there is a need for a change in the Organization as soon as possible.
13	General attitude at workplace-willingness to change	I feel I am ready for another organizational change.
14		I welcome organizational change as a positive challenge.
15		I am open to switching jobs in 6-12 months if required by organizational change.
16	Trust in oneself-self efficacy-ability to change	My past experiences make me confident that I will be able to perform successfully after an organizational change is made.
17		Though I may need some support, I have little doubt I can perform well, following any restructuring.

1	18		I do not anticipate any problems adjusting to the work I will have when organizational change is adopted.
2	19	Individual perception of organizational capabilities to change	I believe that the Organization has been able to cope effectively with new situations.
3	20		I believe that past changes in the Organization resulted in improvements.
4	21		I believe that the Organization has proven itself capable of implementing organizational changes.
5	22		The Organization generally provides appropriate support when I need them to cope with organizational changes.
6	23	Quality of communication	The communication I receive from the Organization centrally is timely and useful.
7	24		Information on upcoming changes does not first come to us as rumours.
8	25		My line manager and the Organization management communicate on a regular basis on upcoming changes.
9	26	Past experience with change	What was the name of the last reorganization change you were involved in?
10	27		Was the goal of this organization change you experienced clear to you?
11	28		Was the change successful in your opinion?
12	29		What did you like the most in the change?
13	30		What can be improved for changes in the future?
14	Answer the following questions keeping the recent organizational change in mind		
15	31	Past experience with change/ change communication	The information I received about that change was timely and useful
16	32	Past experience with change/change support	I was able to express the support I needed to my manager and was given the necessary support.
17	33		I was able to ask questions about the changes that had been proposed and voice my opinion about the change
18	34	Past experience with change participation	I was able to participate in the planning and implementation of the change
19	35	Past experience with change leadership behaviour	My manager was able to emotionally connect me to the change by inspiring and challenging me to deliver the change through motivation
20	36		My manager provided the emotional, temporal, and physical space to enable me to think and act differently.
21	37		My manager was controlling what needed to be done, allocating tasks, expressing his/her view of the change.
22	38	Reasons for change in the future	What in your opinion needs to change to tackle the current challenges in the Organization?
23	39	Requirements for future organizational changes: change communication	How frequently do you want to hear about the change?

1		
2		
3		
4	40	Requirements for future organizational changes: change communication
5		What is the most effective channel of communication about the change?
6		
7		
8	41	Most valued change leadership behaviour during an
9		I want my leader to establish an emotional connection to the change and to create a compelling story for the organization about the change.
10		
11	42	organizational change/change leadership behaviour
12		I want my leader to tell the whole truth about the change and motivate everyone to deliver the change.
13		
14	43	leadership behaviour
15		I want my leader to set boundaries and expectations for the change.
16		
17	44	
18		I want my leader to create ownership, trust and confidence.
19	45	
20		I want my leader to encourage others to voice their opinions through empathy and high-quality dialogue skills.
21	46	
22		I want my leader to provide the emotional, temporal, and physical space for me to think and act differently during the change.
23		
24	47	
25		I want my leader to closely manage relevant tasks and hold others responsible for delivering task for the change.
26	48	
27		I want my leader to express his own views and use his experience to shape the implementation of the change.
28	49	
29		I want my leader to be persuasive and expressive.
30	50	Phase of energy in the organization
31		Which phase of energy do you see your colleagues currently have in the Organization? Corrosive energy, productive energy, comfortable, resigned energy?
32		
33	51	Key success factors for making organizational change successful
34		What, in your opinion, are the key success factors for making organizational change successful in the Organization?
35		
36	52	Ways to bring a mindset change
37		What, in your opinion, are the three top ways to bring a mindset change in the organization?
38		
39		
40		
41		
42		
43		
44		
45		
46		
47		
48		
49		
50		
51		
52		
53		
54		
55		
56		
57		
58		
59		
60		

Table 1.
Definition and explanation of constructs of employee attitudes.

Construct	Definition	Indicative literature
Readiness for change	Extent to which an individual believes that a change at the individual level is needed and whether he or she has the capacity for it	Armenakis <i>et al.</i> , 1993 Holt <i>et al.</i> , 2007a Holt <i>et al.</i> , 2007b Holt & Vardaman 2013
Commitment to change	A mindset that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative	Herscovitch & Meyer 2002 Fedor <i>et al.</i> , 2006 Herold <i>et al.</i> , 2008 Choi, 2011
Openness to change	An underlying trait of flexibility and assumes creativity, curiosity, and artistically sensitivity, i.e. "willingness to accommodate and accept change"	Fox <i>et al.</i> , 1988 Miller <i>et al.</i> , 1994 Wanberg & Banas, 2000 Axtell <i>et al.</i> , 2002 Groves, 2005 Madsen <i>et al.</i> , 2005 Devos <i>et al.</i> , 2007 Kwahk & Kim, 2008 Choi, 2011
Cynicism about organizational change	Pessimism about future organizational change being successful, a dispositional attribution of the failure (the motivation and competence of organizational leaders) and/or a situational attribution of the failure	Choi, 2011 Wanous <i>et al.</i> , 2004

Table 2.

Independent variables.

Variable	Type	Indicative literature
Age	Demographic	Niessen <i>et al.</i> (2010) Kunze <i>et al.</i> (2011) Hertel <i>et al.</i> (2013)
Gender	Demographic	Alas (2008) Ostroff & Clark 2001
Job level and function	Demographic	Alas (2008)
Tenure in the company	Demographic	Alas (2008)
Company background of the employee	Demographic	Van der Smissen <i>et al.</i> (2013)
Individual perception of organizational culture	Internal context enabler	Choi (2011)
Understanding the need and urgency for change	Internal context enabler	Armenakis <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Individual perception of organizational capabilities	Internal context enabler	Choi (2011)
Quality of communication	Internal context enabler	Choi (2011)
Trust in leadership	Internal context enabler	Rafferty & Simons (2006) Bouckenooghe <i>et al.</i> (2008) Higgs & Rowland (2000, 2001, 2005) Higgs & Rowland (2011)
Past experience with change	Internal context enabler	Rafferty <i>et al.</i> (2012) Raffery & Restuborg (2016)
Change participation as a part of past experience with change	Internal context enabler	Bouckenooghe <i>et al.</i> (2008)

Table 3.
Open comments on “*I feel I am ready for another organizational change*”.

Free text comments on willingness to change	N of responses	% of total
No comments	263	85.95
Open to internal job change only when it is meaningful	21	6.86
Dissatisfaction due to past change	9	2.94
Question on change itself	7	2.29
Dissatisfaction due to constant state of change	5	1.63
Not open to job change	2	0.65
Grand Total	306	100.00

Source: primary data collected through online survey.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Table 4.
Open comments on the question
“I believe that the organization has been able to cope effectively with new situation”.

Free text comments on willingness to change	N of responses	% of total
No comments	274	89.54
Dissatisfaction about working in the organization (processes, tools, management, near & offshoring)	9	2.94
Answer not related to the question	6	1.96
Dissatisfaction about past change	5	1.63
Processes and tools must be a part of the org change	4	1.31
Lack of trust on change implementation management capabilities in the organization	3	0.98
Lack of support from the organization to cope with org change	2	0.65
Positive comment on organizational capabilities	2	0.65
Question about the upcoming change	1	0.33
Grand Total	306	100.00

Source: primary data collected through the online survey.

Table 5.
Individual perception of organizational capabilities to change and willingness and ability to change questions.

Question	I believe that the organization has been able to cope effectively with new situations	I believe that past changes in the organization resulted in improvements	I believe that the organization has proven itself capable to implementing organizational changes	I feel I am ready for another organizational change
I feel I am ready for another organizational change	0.089	0.153**	0.126*	1.000
My prior experiences make me confident, that I will be able to perform successfully after an organizational change is made	0.253**	0.307**	0.273**	0.423**

** Significant at 0.01 level (two tailed). * Significant at 0.05 level (two tailed).

Source: primary data collected through online survey.

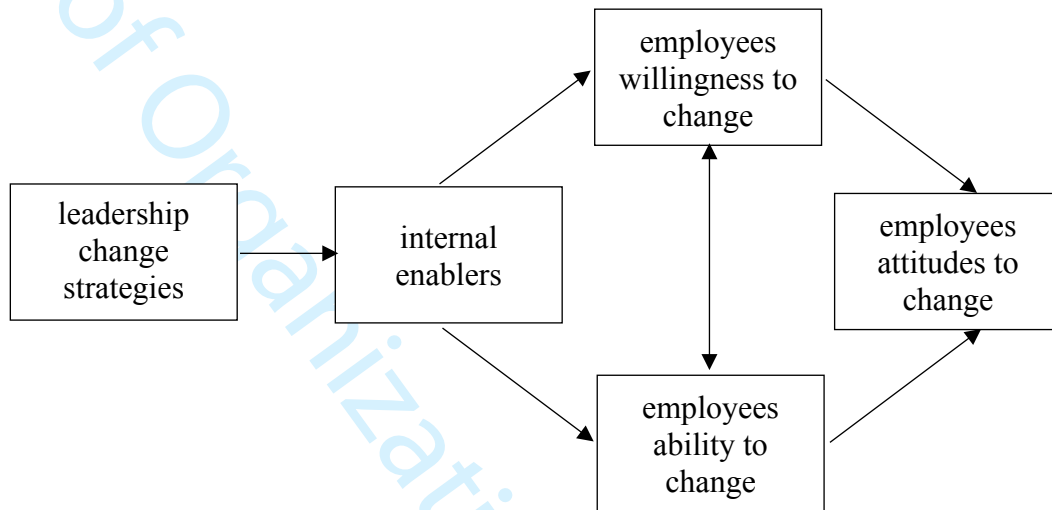
Table 6.
Results of change behavioral requirements from the online survey.

Questions	N of responses	% of total	Change strategy
I want my leader to tell the reality as it is and motivate everyone to deliver the change.	251	82.03%	Framing
I want my leader to express his own views and use his experience to shape the implementation of the change.	133	43.46%	Shaping
I want my leader to be persuasive and expressive.	133	43.46%	Shaping
I want my leader to set boundaries and expectation for the change for others to operate in.	127	41.50%	Framing & creating
I want my leader to provide a positive mood as well as the temporal and physical space for me to think and act differently during the change.	116	37.91%	Creating
I want my leader to establish an emotional connection to the change and create a compelling story for the organization about the change.	99	32.35%	Framing
I want my leader to control what gets done and hold others responsible for delivering task for the change.	98	32.03%	Shaping
I want my leader to create ownership, trust and confidence.	87	28.43%	Framing & creating
I want my leader to encourage others to voice their opinions through empathy and high quality dialog skills.	78	25.49%	Creating

Source: primary data collected through online survey.

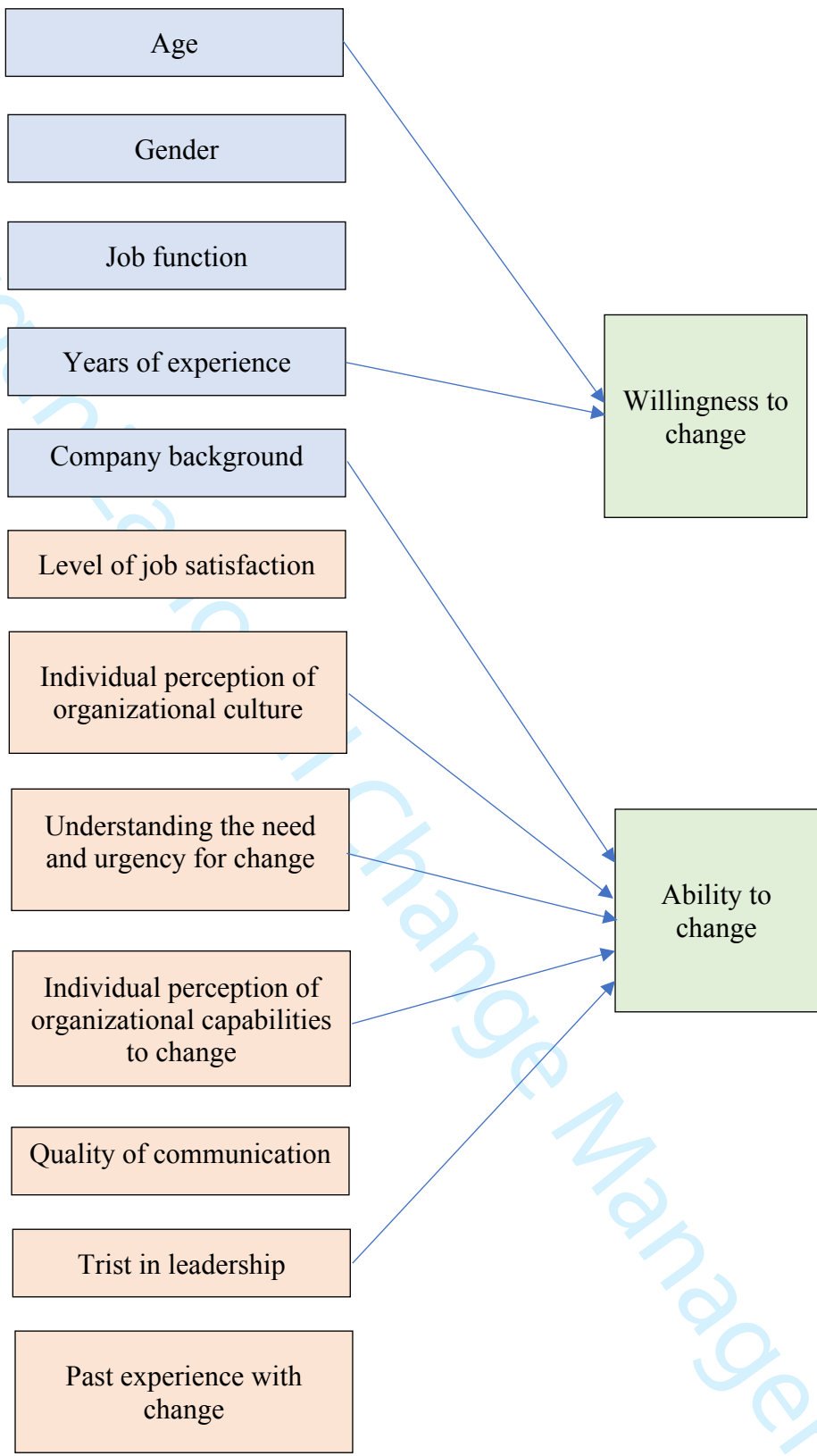
Figure 1. The relations amongst variables and willingness and ability to change.

Source: Authors based on literature sources.



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 2. The relationships amongst variables and willingness and ability to change.



Source: Authors.