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# Trust in Management, Communication and Organisational Commitment: Factors Influencing Readiness for Change Management in Organisation

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**Abstract.** Organisational change occurs when an organisation makes a transition from its current state to some desired future state in minimising employee resistance and cost to the organisation while simultaneously maximising the effectiveness of the change effort. This paper, aims at appraising the change management of organisation in Malaysia since limited research has been done to examine readiness for change by the employees in the organisation. This paper is materialising its objectives of (1) investigating the current practice of organisation and employees in the organisation towards change management and (2) assessing the factors influencing readiness of organisation and employees in the organisation towards change management. It is found via literature review that change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented to transitioning individuals, teams, and organisations to a desired future state by focusing on the wider impacts of change, particularly on people, where change does not happen in isolation and it impacts the whole organisation. Furthermore, it is found that current practice of organisation and employees in the organisation towards change management involved in three main factors, namely trust in management, communication and organisational commitment; with the factor for trust in management is the positive vision for the future by management team, meanwhile for communication, it is found that there is good communication between supervisors and employees about the organisation's policy toward the changes. The factor found in organisational commitment is employees enjoying discussing about their organisation with outsiders. The findings of this paper provide a positive impact on change management planning, which ultimately help in ensuring more effective change programme implementation in the organisation in Malaysia.

## INTRODUCTION

Change is common in life, which is something that presses a person out of the comfort zone. It is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. In the organisation context, organisation capability to change will lead to a more promising future. In the past few decades, the organisational changing rates had grown tremendously in line with the incremental of several factors, such as customers' demand, globalisation, cost and technology advancement [1]. Hence, according to [2], due to the challenges caused by these rapid changes, people have to be ready for the change and adapt to the challenges of the environment.

It is therefore common to see that the organisation's efforts in enhancing business processes, which usually involve costly systems, are seen as a waste of money by the society since they do not experience any improvements. This occurrence is mainly due to low quality and responsiveness by the organisation. According to the Malaysian Public Complaints Bureau (2016), the complaints received from January until September 2016 are about failure to adhere to set procedures and unsatisfactory quality of service with 15.9 percent and 13.0 percent, respectively, by the public organisation. These percentages are considered high, where trends have shown a decrease pattern in last five years. This figure reflects that the organisation in Malaysia, particularly the public, is still lacking in adapting to the change and transformation environment. This is further supported by [3] who claim that if only the role has been carried out well, the organisation will be very much appreciated and trusted by the people given that organisation's success depends on competent and accountable workforce. Hence, this paper aims at appraising the change management of the organisation with the main objectives of investigating the current practice of organisation and employees in the organisation towards change management and assessing the factors influencing readiness of organisation and employees in the organisation towards change management. It is hoped that the current organisation practices could be improved for the betterment of nation development as a whole.

### **Current Organisation Practices**

The rapid increase in knowledge, social status, as well as enhanced technology, has resulted in a dynamic and challenging organisation environment. Nevertheless, organisations that have thrived in the 21st century are only those whose employees remain ready and supportive to organisational changes. Hence, according to [4], in facing these upcoming non-stop challenges, the organisation yearns for employees' readiness to face changes. However, the main challenge lies in implementing the change strategies effectively mainly because organisational changes often face intense resistance due to lack of organisation members' readiness for change [5]. Therefore, due to the increased lack of employees' readiness for change, the organisation's strategic change implementation usually goes awry [6].

Some evidences suggest that organisation members are increasingly inclined to embrace and support organisational changes when their interest and belief are significantly aligned with the goals and mission of the organisation. Various research studies have established that for employees to support and appreciate organisational changes, where such changes must be significantly aligned with the values of the organisation's members [7].

Based on previous studies, there are numbers of factors that influence employees' readiness for change, which are individual and workplace factors ([8]; [9]; [10]; [11]; [7]; [12]; [13]). However, there have been very few integrated studies, which take a holistic perspective by looking into both workplace and individual factors [14]. Yet, [15] have identified four elements that influence readiness for change, which are change content, process, internal context and the individuals involved. The literature has also found that most previous studies in employees' readiness for change have not agreed with integrated model or elements by [15] as the studies only measured singular elements of employees' readiness for change, such as for change content ([16]; [17]), change process [18], internal context ([19]; [20]) and individual attributes ([21]; [22]).

Therefore it is important to probe into the matter further and investigate the employees' readiness for change from a holistic perspective by considering the internal context, process and individual attributes. Realistically, there is a vital need for organisations to understand employees' readiness for change towards actualisation of organisational changes. It is also important to identify the factors or forces that will affect employee's readiness towards change in an organisation. These factors can allow the leaders or top management of the organisation to improve the employees' readiness to change by taking appropriate steps, which can lead to decrease of resistance among employees in the organisation.

### **Factors Influencing Readiness for Change Management**

Various factors have been determined via literature review on the factors influencing the readiness for change management. It is divided into organisational factor and organisational commitment factor where organisational

factor is further divided into trust in management and communication, whilst the latter is divided into affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment.

In terms of organisational factor, according to [23], trust in management is the employee's inclination to follow and support the leader. Trust in management is an internal context factor and component of an organisational climate [24]. Trust in management provides direction in the relationship between employee and management especially when involved with openness and spontaneity [25]. In an organisation, it is recommended by this paper that trust in management is important to ensure employees' cooperation. Organisational change that may lead to crisis and risk for the employees requires the management to place importance on building a trust.

With trust in management, employees may recognise the management's good intentions [26] and believe that they can enjoy the benefits gained from the organisation. This is supported by [27] who stated that employees believe that they may not be manipulated by the management since the management is trustworthy. Besides that, [28] explained that employees who trust their management would give a positive reaction towards organisational change. [29] further proved that trust in management is a strong factor for employees to accept any change or new system.

In addition to trust in management under organisational factor that influences readiness for change management, communication is also vital in determining the success of any change initiative [30]. According to [31], communication is information exchange and happens in three dimensions, which are upwards, downwards and horizontally. It is important for an organisation to communicate on organisational change since weak or low level of communication leads to the feeling of resentment towards the change [32]. Therefore, open and honest communication is essential for change actualisation [33]. It is therefore observed by this paper that an interrupted communication together with misunderstanding during change will create a severe impact on strategy implementation as well as action. This is further supported by [5] who identified misunderstanding due to communication problems or insufficient information as one of the main reasons for resistance to change.

As for the second factor that influences readiness for change management i.e organisational commitment, it is the nature of the relationship between the individual and organisation, where the individual has confidence towards organisation's values and mission, and is willing to work vigorously for the best interest of the organisation. It is therefore suggested by this paper that employees who are committed to the organisation have a strong feeling to be part of the organisation. Commitment reflects the nature and relationship between employees and organisation [34].

Organisational commitment may be influenced by many factors such as individual characteristics, namely gender, age and years of experience, together with organisational factors, like leadership style. Organisational commitment is related to individual identification and involvement in the organisation, and the level of loyalty to the organisation [35]. By having organisational commitment, one will feel strongly attached with the organisation and voluntarily adapt with the organisation's values and always be ready for any changes made by the organisation.

As the organisational commitment is divided to three components of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, the first component of affective commitment is related to an employee's emotional attachment and involves an individual feeling towards the organisation. Employees who hold strong affective commitment will stay in the organisation because they want to. On the other hand, the second component of continuance commitment refers to the individual awareness on the cost implication if one leaves the organisation. Employees who hold this commitment will stay in the organisation because they have to. In addition, the third component of organisational commitment, normative commitment deals with individual values pertaining the needs of obligations to the organisation. Employees who fall in this category stay in the organisation because they believe that it is the right thing to do.

[36] stated that organisational commitment was higher among employees who underwent good experience in work, such as the feeling satisfied that the organisation had fulfilled employees' needs. Establishment of positive behaviour and satisfactory relationship at work will encourage the employees to be committed towards the works assigned. To conclude based on previous studies, it is found that organisational commitment is one of the determinants that has an effect on the organisation.

## Defining Readiness for Change Management

Change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented [37], and that the lasting benefits of change are achieved. According to [38], change management is an approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organisations to a desired future state. The focus is on the wider impacts of change, particularly on people and how they, as individuals and teams, move from the current situation to the new one. The change in question could range from a simple process change, to major changes in policy or strategy needed if the organisation is to achieve its potential. Furthermore, theories about how organisations change draw on many disciplines, from psychology and behavioral science, to engineering and systems thinking [39]. The underlying principle is that change does not happen in isolation and it impacts the whole organisation (system) around it, and all the people touched by it.

Various terms have been used to describe readiness for change, as without it, passive compliance and resistance for change will happen. Readiness was first introduced by [40] as getting the organisation's member to let organisational change happens physically and psychologically. The management has to prove that existing process or practice is no longer acceptable and relevant with business environment in order to sustain or gaining back success. One earlier approach in creating readiness as suggested by [5] are through education, communication, participation, facilitation, support and explicit as well as implicit coercion.

However, definition of readiness for change by [4] is one of the most cited in the change management literature. [4] defines readiness as organisational members' belief, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organisations' capacity to successfully make those changes. The concepts of discrepancy, appropriateness, principal support, efficacy and valence are then identified as dimension of individual readiness for change [4].

Similarly, [41] expand on [4] definition by including employees' belief in the benefits gained from the changes. [42] refer readiness for change as a unique interpretive and perception of an individual as it is influenced by organisation's readiness to take on change. [15] reviewed readiness for change literature and developed a new definition that incorporate factors influencing readiness for change which is readiness for change is a comprehensive attitude that is influenced by the content (what is being changed), the process (how the change is being implemented), the context (circumstances under which the change is occurring) and the individuals (characteristic of those being asked to change) involved; and collectively reflects the extent to which an individual are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo.

The review of literature found that it is agreed by above researchers that readiness for change in organisational context involve individual perception about the extent to which change is needed, the organisation's capacity to make change successful and the benefits gained from the change. Other key elements of readiness for change include the appropriateness and organisational support for the change. This consistent definition of readiness for change may have resulted due to expansion of definition from one main source as unavailability, limited and lack of knowledge in this field of study.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has identified various antecedents and issues for better understanding as well as improving knowledge in readiness for change management. This paper also provides an understanding to the management on the factors that help employees to be ready for organisational change. By considering the role of management and employee characteristics, it is possible that the success of organisational change is higher since it is impossible to implement the change programme without the involvement from both parties. As a result, the management can plan and manage the change programme more effectively since it is important for the organisation to perform well and be prepared in the business reengineering and transformation process in order to provide better outcomes to the customers and stakeholders. This requires the employees to always ready for enhancement and not be complacent. Hence, through this paper, better strategies can be taken up to ensure that employees are in the high readiness in order to achieve the vision and mission established by the organisation.

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