Reviewer’s report

Title: Organizational readiness for implementing change: a psychometric assessment of a new measure

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Reviewer: Daniel Holt

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Organizational Readiness for Implementing Change: A psychometric assessment of a new measure

The author(s) should be commended for their efforts and for their conscientiousness through the effort. As someone who is actively involved in the study change readiness, I have felt that we need better developed instruments. Moreover, I have felt that change researchers should apply experimental designs, as the authors have introduced in this manuscript, as hypotheses are tested and more meaningful theories of change and readiness are explored—a great idea!

As I consider measures that are recommended in the literature, I always consider whether I would use the instrument and whether I would recommend this scale to a colleague in its current state. In this case, I would make a positive recommendation.

With that said, I have offered several more specific recommendations—apologies up front, these recommendations and thoughts are not presented in any particular order. Moreover, I sincerely hope they are useful as the authors advance their work and offer the editor some guidance as a publication decision is made.

1. Recommend the authors tighten the conceptual framework that is offered. Several specific suggestions are offered:

   a. There is no explicit, theoretical definition of change commitment or change efficacy. I would encourage the authors to clearly offer a theoretical definition, explaining what these constructs are and what they are not.

   b. The previous comment is particularly important as change commitment is defined. In the organizational sciences (the literature I’m most familiar with), commitment has been defined as “a force [mind set] that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. Human Resource Management Review, 11, 299–326).” Undoubtedly, change can be such a target. The literature has also indicated that it can take different forms, namely, desire (affective commitment), perceived cost (continuance commitment), or obligation (normative commitment). Thus, organizational members can share a sentiment
to support a change because they want to, have to, and/or ought to. With no explicit definition, it isn’t clear is whether the measure of change commitment captures all of these dimensions—adequately tapping the domain of interest.

b. Finally, as I review the conceptual framework, I feel there are several tangents that also “muddy” the discussion. For instance, the authors introduce several additional constructs that serve as antecedents, namely, organizational capacity and change valence. While understand the motivations, the discussion is so brief, I feel they lead to several questions that might be avoided. Consider the discussion of organization capacity, is described as a contextual factor. This implies that capacity would moderate the efficacy—readiness relationship. Although I agree with the thought, it gets away from the purpose of presenting the facets of readiness, how they are defined, and conveying clearly the gap filled with the manuscript.

2. As the authors describe Study 1, I would encourage them to provide the specific definitions that participants used as they went through the process (I’d incorporate those into Table 1 & 2). This is particularly relevant in light of my first comment that suggested the two facets of readiness be adapted.

3. In Study 2 & 3, the idea that an undergraduate, masters, and doctoral student could simply respond to vignettes as hospital a employee is somewhat troubling. In the past, management researchers have asked students to respond to questionnaires as if they consider themselves part of an organization (some research even suggests that undergraduates respond as a CEO would). Over the recent years, this research has not been well received as validity of these types of studies are questioned.

While I’m not entirely sure of the extent to which this is a problem in this particular study (especially when considered in light of Study 4), I would encourage the authors to acknowledge this as a limitation. Moreover, they may go on to explain the experiences of the sample such that readers can more clearly understand the extent to which the participants can understand the vignettes as a hospital employee would.

4. Overall, the authors would be encouraged to better explain the contribution made with Study 3. There is an implicit assumption that the data would be valid and reliable if individual members perceive readiness constructs at organization level in a relatively uniform manner. Why would this be the case?

5. Given Study 3 was done with experimental assignment, the individual responses are independent. In a field setting, however, the responses would not be independent. In essence, responses are not statistically independent. What does this do to the higher level data?

6. One significant issue in the development of the instrument is predictive validity. This would be a significant piece of evidence as the authors open the manuscript arguing that readiness directly influences adoption. While the authors acknowledge this in the discussion, I would suggest the authors develop this line
of research more completely.

Minor Issues

7. I’m not sure I agree with the authors’ decision to retain the commitment item that did not successfully pass the content adequacy screening. While the item indicated that it could be appropriate based on the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, the authors note that there are multiple frames of reference that can be used with the item. This suggests researchers and practitioners may not know the frame that is being used when it is being applied in a field setting.


9. As the authors present items in the narrative of Study 2, these items don’t match the tables (p. 13). For instance, one item, “People here feel confident that they can keep the momentum going in implementing this change.” Yet, Table 3 says the item reads slightly differently, “People who work here feel confident that they can keep the momentum going in implementing this change.”

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

No to all statements above