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The relationship between readiness for change and job-related attitudes

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READINESS FOR CHANGE
AND JOB-RELATED ATTITUDES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

By

Christine Marie Squillaci

May 2007

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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Megumi Hosoda".

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READINESS FOR CHANGE AND JOB-RELATED ATTITUDES

by Christine Marie Squillaci

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between employees' perceptions of an organization's readiness for change and job-related attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and job-related behaviors such as intention to quit. Employees' perception of the organization's readiness for change was positively related to affective commitment, normative commitment, and job satisfaction. Employees' perception of the organization's readiness for change was negatively related to intention to quit. No relationship was found between employees' perception of the organization's readiness for change and continuance commitment. Implications of the findings are discussed. Suggestions for future research include additional empirical studies and the need for theory building to further the development of the readiness for change construct.

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I am a very lucky person in that I have been blessed with so many wonderful and amazing people in my life who constantly inspire me to do and be more. Without them none of this would be possible. Thank you so much for always believing in me, having faith in me, and knowing that I can achieve my goals. To my family, thank you for being there and supporting me in the many ways you have. To my mom, thank you for all that you did for me and encouraging me to take chances. I love you so very much. To my sisters and brothers, thank you for being you and for being there for me. From you I have learned so much and continue to do so.

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“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity” – Albert Einstein

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INTRODUCTION

Organizations are a place of continual change. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) stated that “more and more managers must deal with new government regulations, new products, growth, increased competition, technological developments, and a changing work force,” (p. 106). Close to thirty years later their statements still hold true. In order for organizations to stay competitive and thrive, they need to be innovative and constantly improve their product line and their personnel. Indeed, “most companies or divisions of major corporations find that they must undertake moderate organizational changes at least once a year and major changes every four or five,” (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979, p. 106). Although changes are designed to make the corporation and products more competitive, employees’ perceptions of these changes can affect the success or failure of the organization’s change initiatives.

Organizational change occurs because of the individuals within the organization (Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996). Members within the organization may decide to initiate a change to further the competitive market position of the organization or they may determine a different internal business model would increase employee performance or morale. Regardless, change in organizations takes place when the organization opts “to get out of pain and move into something better,” (Simon, 1996, p. 86). In the past, much of the literature regarding organizational change has focused on resistance to change or the acceptance of a change initiative (Beer & Walton, 1990; Coch & French, 1948; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Individuals react to change in a myriad of ways, including turnover, absenteeism, commitment, level of support, loyalty, and value they

place in the organization (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Coch & French, 1948; Iacovini, 1993; Schneider, et al., 1996; Stewart, 1994).

Because of a focus on resistance to or the acceptance of change initiatives, little research attention has been paid to examine employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change and the manner in which it relates to their job-related attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intention to quit). Readiness for change, as defined by Armenakis et al. (1993), "is reflected in organizational members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully make those changes" (p. 681). In essence, what the members think about the organization's need for change dictates how they will respond to the change.

With organizational change as a constant phenomenon, measuring organizational members' perceptions of readiness for change and understanding their relationship between readiness for change and job-related attitudes could provide information for successful change implementation as well as sustaining the change. Successful change implementations might potentially lead to increased outcomes for both the organization and the individual employee (e.g., increased productivity, increased job satisfaction). The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change is related to their job-related attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intention to quit).

Following is a review of the past research on organizational readiness for change and job-related attitudes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and

intention to quit. In addition, the hypotheses to be tested in the present study are presented.

Organizational Readiness for Change

As mentioned above, earlier studies of organizational change have sought to understand the reasons why employees are resistant to new ideas or processes in the workplace and have focused on ways to minimize such resistance (e.g., Coch & French, 1948). In their time-motion studies, Coch and French (1948) observed groups undergoing changes in the workplace. Each group was subjected to a different level of participation prior to a change in the way they performed their jobs. Some groups had full representation and participation in the new work design, others had partial representation and participation, and still other groups had no representation or participation. Coch and French (1948) found that employees who were part of the planning process for the change were less resistant to the change and management than those who were not involved with the process. Those employees who were not involved with the planning became more frustrated in their jobs, and as a result, such frustration led to an increase in turnover and absenteeism. Coch and French (1948) concluded that, in part, change efforts which included the affected employees in the design along with a sense of group belonging, produced the least resistance to change. Employees who were included in the plans for the proposed changes had little resistance to the change itself.

In more recent years, organizational change has been examined in terms of what the best strategy is for implementing change while minimizing resistance at the same time (Beer & Walton, 1990; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Kotter and Schlesinger (1979)

have noted that even though managers are aware of resistance to change by employees, “surprisingly few take time before an organizational change to assess systematically who might resist the change initiative and for what reasons” (p. 107). A major reason employees resist change is the sense of loss they might feel as a result of the change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Coch & French, 1948; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). This actual or perceived loss can include feelings of a decrease in job knowledge and the value one adds to the job.

Employees can “resist change when they do not understand its implications and perceive that it might cost them much more than they will gain” (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979, p. 108). Hence resistance to change can develop either when the employee perceives a potential loss or if the gain cannot be readily quantified. Another reason employees may resist change is if they perceive that they need to develop new skills and behaviors (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). If they feel that they cannot develop new skills and behaviors within a required time frame, they may further resist the change and possibly develop feelings of frustration and failure (Coch & French, 1948).

If resistance is at the core of change, then assessing employees’ perceptions of the organization’s readiness for change prior to the implementation may in fact help reduce it. Research has found that gaining employee involvement prior to implementing change can increase the likelihood that the change will be successful (Beer & Walton, 1990; Coch & French, 1948; Coetsee, 1999; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Simon, 1996). Many organizations do not take the time to assess an employee’s resistance to or perceptions of the organization’s readiness for change. One such reason may be the associated cost of

time and money related to administering an organizational survey. However, the time and cost of employees resisting change can exhaust a manager's resources (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). If reducing costs and building credibility in a change program is vital for the proposed change to succeed, measuring the employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change before the actual change takes place may be of value to both the individual employee and the organization.

Perceptions of Readiness for Change

Readiness for change has only recently received research attention in the change literature (Armenakis et al., 1993; Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000; Hanpachern, Morgan, & Griego, 1998; Ingersoll, Kirsch, Merk, & Lightfoot, 2000; Simon, 1996). Although a definitive theory or definition of readiness for change does not exist, it has been studied in many different organizations including healthcare settings (Cunningham, et al., 2002; Ingersoll et al., 2000; West, 1998), manufacturing facilities (Hanpachern et al., 1998), public safety agencies (Cochran, Bromley, & Swando, 2002; Weber & Weber, 2001) and sales organizations (Chonko, Jones, Roberts, & Dubinsky, 2002; Eby et al., 2000).

Armenakis et al. (1993) proposed the idea of creating readiness for change, which is similar to Lewin's (1951) concept of unfreezing. They state that "(c)reating readiness has been most often explained in conjunction with prescriptions for reducing resistance" (p. 682). They propose a model for creating readiness for change beginning with the change message which focuses on the need for change and the perceived ability of the targeted individuals to do so. Various social and individual dynamics are important as a

“distinction between individual and collective readiness” (Armenakis et al., 1993, p. 686) must be determined. Finally, the change agent and the various influence strategies an organization might use further create a sense of readiness for change. In sum, “employee readiness is influenced by the message transmitted via the strategies, the change agent attributes, and the interpersonal and social dynamics of organization members” (p. 691). However, in assessing the readiness for change, Armenakis et al. (1993) believe that “readiness assessments may be for the purpose of discovery as much as for the purpose of confirmation” (p. 691).

Armenakis et al.’s (1993) model of creating readiness for change does have contextual implications in that, while they provide readiness programs based on the urgency of the needed change, the degree or level of change an organization undertakes determines the approach used in increasing readiness. If the change is not needed urgently, a less aggressive approach to creating readiness should be employed. Increasing an employee’s readiness for change not only occurs prior to the change implementation; but also continues afterwards as ongoing maintenance.

Eby et al. (2000) point out that although perceived readiness for change is an intuitively appealing construct, little empirical attention has been given to this construct. This lack of empirical research has also been noted by other researchers as well (e.g., Ingersoll, et al., 2000; Weber & Weber, 2002). Eby et al. (2000) further suggest that “(e)mployees’ perceptions of the organization’s readiness for change has been identified as one important factor in understanding sources of resistance to large-scale change” (p.

420). Building on Armenakis et al.'s (1993) work, Eby et al. (2000) developed and tested a scale to measure employees' perceptions of an organization's readiness for change.

In their study, Eby et al. (2000) measured employees' perceptions of readiness for change in a national sales organization. They investigated three groups of variables, including individual attitudes (e.g., self-efficacy, working in teams, organizational support), job-related attitudes (e.g., trust in co-workers, skill variety, level of participation), and contextual variables (e.g., trust in management, policies and procedures, systems support) with the relation between perceived organizational readiness for change. In examining these attitudes and contextual variables, Eby et al. (2000) found job-related attitudes of individuals who enjoy working in teams, who hold high trust in their peers, and contextual variables such as the organization possessing supportive policies and practices regarding change, were positively related to the employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change. Marginal support was found for those who worked in participative environments as perceiving the organization as ready for change. Eby et al. (2000) further proposed that "readiness for organizational change reflects an individual's unique interpretive reality of the organization" (p. 422). Thus, how an individual perceives the organization's readiness for change can impact how he or she feels about the change. The present study defines readiness for change as set forth by Eby et al. (2000).

Relationship between Perceived Organizational Readiness for Change and Job-Related Attitudes

Building on Eby et al. (2000) research on readiness for change, the relationships between readiness for change and job-related attitudes will be further explored. The relationship between these variables could offer insight into successful change implementation and sustainability. In order to fully understand the relationship between these variables, the constructs of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to quit will be defined.

Organizational Commitment

Although the research regarding perceived readiness for change is more recent, organizational commitment has been studied for many decades. Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) defined organizational commitment as “(a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; (c) a definite desire to maintain organization membership” (p. 604).

Organizational commitment was originally defined as having two dimensions: attitudinal and behavioral (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Mowday et al. (1979) defined the behavioral dimension of organizational commitment as “sunk costs in the organization where individuals forgo alternative courses of action and choose to link themselves to the organization” (p. 225). These individuals are committed to their organization because the cost and risk of leaving would be too high. Attitudinal commitment, on the other hand, “represents a state in

which an individual identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in order to facilitate these goals” (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 225). Individuals high in attitudinal commitment remain at an organization because they identify with it and wish to do so voluntarily.

Most recently, Meyer and Allen (1991) differentiated organizational commitment into three components, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, and believe that an employee experiences each component to different degrees. Employees with affective commitment are very involved and emotionally invested in the organization and stay there because they want to. Employees with continuance commitment are those who stay with an organization because they feel it is too costly to leave or it is a necessity to stay. Employees with normative commitment feel obligated to stay with the organization and thus feel that they ought to. The present study will utilize the definition of organizational commitment set forth by Meyer and Allen (1991).

Researchers investigating readiness for change from an organization’s perspective define organizational readiness “as an organization’s plan for change and its ability to do so” (Ingersoll et al., 2000, p. 11). Ingersoll et al. (2000) examined the relationship between organizational culture, commitment, and readiness. Their findings indicated that “(o)rganizational readiness...was the strongest predictor of employee commitment to the organization” (p. 11). However, in their study they did not differentiate different components of organizational commitment (i.e., affective, continuance, or normative). Researchers who have studied organizational commitment suggest that there are multiple

components and that individuals experience each to varying degrees (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Porter et al., 1974). This is an importance distinction to make as change and organizational commitment can have an effect on one another (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Beer & Walton, 1990; Iacovini, 1993).

Building on this research, it is expected that an individual's perception of organizational readiness for change be differentially related to each component of organizational commitment set forth by Meyer and Allen (1991). The following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1a: Employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change will be positively related to affective commitment.

Hypothesis 1b: Employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change will be negatively related to continuance commitment.

Hypothesis 1c: Employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change will be positively related to normative commitment.

Job Satisfaction

Many researchers have studied the link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Irving, Coleman, & Cooper, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974). Job satisfaction is important to both employees and managers within an organization as employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to stay with the organization and may view change as positive (McNabb & Sepic, 1995). Organizational commitment and job satisfaction are slightly different constructs as

organizational commitment reflects a more global attitude towards the organization as a whole (Mowday et al., 1979). Job satisfaction is an individual attitude and can be defined as how the individual perceives their job and/or dimensions of their job (Mowday et al., 1979).

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have also been studied for their predictive abilities in relation to turnover (Porter et al., 1974) as well as the relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment (Meyer et al., 1989). However, organizational commitment tended to be a better predictor of turnover than job satisfaction (Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974; Steers, 1977). While each construct can offer information about employees' relationships with the organization (Porter et al., 1974), little is known about the relationship between these two constructs and readiness for change.

McNabb and Sepic (1995) proposed that "(e)mployees and managers who are comfortable in their jobs (who have high job satisfaction) and are highly rated in job performance will most likely have positive attitudes toward change" (p. 372). However, it may be possible for an employee to be satisfied with their job but resistant to change if the change may bring either a perceived reduction in workforce or shift in responsibility. Yet if an individual has strong affective commitment and job satisfaction, they may be more open to changes in the workplace. Building on this, the following hypothesis was tested:

Hypothesis 2: Employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change will be positively related to job satisfaction.

Intention to Quit

Intention to quit (or turnover intention) can be defined as an employee's thoughts about leaving an organization voluntarily (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Early research on intention to quit, as with job satisfaction, was explored with its relation to organizational commitment (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Clugston, 2000; Porter, et al., 1974; Russ & McNeilly, 1995; Tett & Meyer, 1993). As previously mentioned, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were often examined as predictors of intention to quit. Organizational commitment has been a fairly consistent predictor of turnover intentions (Mowday et al., 1979; Steers, 1977), especially the affective component of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 1989; Somers, 1995). Porter et al. (1974) noted that attitudes play a role in the decision to leave an organization whereby those who leave tend to have more negative attitudes than those who stay, and that this attitude becomes a more accurate predictor of their behavior closer to their decision of when to leave.

Vandenberg and Nelson (1999) found that turnover intention does not lead directly to turnover behavior and that intentions for leaving vary among individuals. They further asserted that an individual's level of intention to quit may be reduced if the reason for the intent is something that can be addressed by the organization, for example, reassignment to a different supervisor. Thus, Vandenberg and Nelson (1999) concluded that individual differences should be considered when studying intention to quit. Many researchers have also suggested studying individual differences in relation to acceptance or rejection of change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Armenakis et al., 1993; Coch &

French, 1948; Cunningham, et al. 2002; Eby et al., 2000; Ingersoll et al., 2000; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

Much of the research regarding turnover includes the two constructs of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Abelson, 1987; Begley & Czajka, 1993; Russ & McNeilly, 1995), however, other constructs such as receptivity to organizational change may also affect turnover (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). As an extension of Meyer and Allen's (1991), Topolnytsky and Meyer (2002) investigated the relationship between employee commitment and behavior. Commitment was examined in terms of both to the organization and to a change initiative and behavior was examined in terms of intentions to stay and support the change. Of their findings, "employees' commitment does relate to their intention to stay and their level of support for the change initiative" (p. 15).

Other research has looked at whether or not turnover or intention to quit is avoidable or unavoidable. Abelson (1987) found that individuals who chose to leave the organization tended to have less job satisfaction and commitment, and more stress and thoughts about leaving than did individuals who remained in the organization or who left for reasons outside of their control (i.e., stayed at home to care for a family member). Job alternatives can be another predictor of intention to quit (Gerhart, 1990). Individuals who perceive the job market as strong may be more inclined to either look for another opportunity or leave an organization. With a focus on intention to leave and the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, little empirical research has been done on the relationship between intention to quit and readiness for

change. In order to better assess if such a relationship exists, the following hypothesis was tested:

Hypothesis 3: Employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change will be negatively related to intention to leave the organization.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in the present study consisted of all job classifications for employees at a large oil refinery located in Northern California. Although participation was voluntary, employees were highly encouraged to participate in the study. Of the 654 employees at the refinery, a total of 536 completed surveys were returned, providing a response rate of 82%. As can be seen in Table 1, 89% of the respondents were male, which was representative of this particular industry. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they were not a manager/supervisor. When comparing this number to the number of managers/supervisors at the refinery as a whole, the sample was representative in terms of a ratio of non-managers to managers/supervisors. The number of years employees worked at the refinery varied with the largest percentages including employees who have been working there less than three years (22%), those working there between eight to 11 years (16%), and those working there between 20 to 23 years (15%).

Ages for the refinery employees varied widely with the largest percentage of employees between 46 to 55 years of age (45%). Thirty-one percent of employees were between the ages of 36 to 45 years. Education level varied widely amongst employees. Eighteen percent of the employees graduated from high school, 38% of the employees reported that they at least attended college, 18% reported they had attended technical/trade school and another 18% reported they had graduated from college. In sum, the sample consisted mainly of middle-aged, male, non-managers, with some college education.

Table 1 Demographic Information

Variable	Number	Percentage
Gender (<i>n</i> = 513)		
Male	458	89%
Female	55	11%
Managerial Status (<i>n</i> = 504)		
Non-Manager	399	79%
Manager	105	21%
Tenure (<i>n</i> = 514)		
Less than three years	115	22%
4 to 7 years	73	14%
8 to 11 years	82	16%
12 to 15 years	60	12%
16 to 19 years	14	3%
20 to 23 years	76	15%
24 to 27 years	59	11%
28 or more years	35	7%
Age (<i>n</i> = 514)		
25 years or younger	16	3%
26 to 35 years	61	12%
36 to 45 years	158	31%
46 to 55 years	229	45%
56 to 65 years	47	9%
65 years or older	3	< 1%
Education (<i>n</i> = 516)		
Attended High School	3	< 1%
High School graduate	95	18%
Attended college	194	38%
College graduate	95	18%
Tech/Trade School	92	18%
Some graduate school	7	1%
Graduate Degree	30	6%

Procedures

Information regarding the present study was disseminated to all employees from the refinery's Health and Safety Department via a monthly newsletter. In the few months leading up to the survey, brief paragraphs in the newsletter mentioned the survey and that employee's feedback was needed. This was done to gain interest and slowly introduce the survey to the refinery employees. A few days prior to the start of the survey administration, a memo regarding the survey was distributed to all employees to remind them of the survey and to further request their voluntary participation. Surveys were administered during each department's weekly safety meeting. Each participant received internal safety training credit for completing the survey. A sign-in sheet was provided for participants to record his or her participation. The sign-in sheet was collected and retained by a refinery employee who was a member of the data collection team. The sign-in sheet was kept separately from the completed surveys and remained on-site at the refinery.

The data collection team consisted of four people: one Health and Safety employee, two PACE (Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical & Energy Workers) Union Health and Safety Representatives, and the primary researcher. At least two data collection team members were present at the time of survey administration; in most cases one was the primary researcher and the other a PACE representative. Union representation was important to have for the present study as a large majority of refinery employees are union members.

At the beginning of the survey administration, written and verbal instructions about both the study and how to complete the questionnaire were given to each participant, encouraging them to provide honest and accurate answers. Each participant was then asked to read a series of statements in the questionnaire and indicate his or her level of agreement or disagreement by circling a corresponding number on a five-point Likert-type scale. Participants were encouraged to answer each survey item completely, and they had the option of not answering a particular item if desired. Surveys were either completed at time of administration or were distributed and collected at a later time, less than 24 hours after initial administration. All surveys were placed in an envelope and sealed prior to the administrator's departure.

Each survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete, however, participants were given as much time as needed. All participants were provided with an Agreement to Participate in Research signed by the primary researcher, which explained the purpose of the present study and whom to contact should they have any questions. Consent to participate in the present study was implied when a completed survey was returned by the participant. All surveys were removed from the refinery and remained in the possession of the primary researcher.

Confidentiality and anonymity was assured for each participant and the utmost effort was made to achieve this. The only identifying factor on the survey was a number placed there by the primary researcher as a means of tracking distributed surveys in order to know which ones were returned or not. Participants were asked not to put their name on the survey or any other identifying information such as an employee number. The

demographics were also designed as such that no one person could look at the responses and determine what department or area a respondent worked in.

The survey consisted of three separate sections. The first section consisted of a 24-item internally developed employee safety opinion survey. This survey was designed to collect information regarding employees' perceptions of safety feedback and communication to the refinery. Note this survey was not part of the present study.

The second section of the survey consisted of 38 items taken from four different measures which comprise the present study. This section included items that were designed to measure (a) employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change, (b) organizational commitment, (c) job satisfaction, and (d) intention to quit.

The third section consisted of demographic information. Participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, their managerial status, the length of their employment at the refinery, and the highest level of education they had completed. An important thing to note is the refinery has been in operation for many years, however, the ownership had changed three times in a very short period of time. Participants were asked to answer tenure as to how long they had worked at the refinery regardless of ownership to determine if they had gone through the recent changes. The demographic data collected were designed to provide additional insight based on the refinery's history with respect to the changes in ownership.

Measures

Perceived organizational readiness for change. A nine-item scale developed by Eby et al. (2000) was used to measure perceived readiness for change. Examples of

items are “Employers here will not change or alter a process until a problem develops,” and “Employees here act as agents of change” (see Appendix A for the complete list of all items for each scale). Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale items was .77. Items for all scales were measured using a five-point Likert type scale (1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). The scores are summed and averaged with the higher the score, the more one disagrees with the item measured.

Organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was measured using the 24-item organizational commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). The scale is comprised of three components that measure an individual’s affective, continuance and normative commitment. Examples of items measuring affective commitment are “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization,” and “I do not feel ‘emotionally attached’ to this organization” (reverse scored item). Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale items was .82. Examples of items measuring continuance commitment include “It would be very hard for me to leave my company right now, even if I wanted to,” and “Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire”. Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale items was .80. Sample items that measure normative commitment are “I think that people these days move from company to company too often,” and “I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization”. Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale items was .67.

For each commitment component, the scores are summed and averaged with the higher the score, the more committed participants are.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using a three-item scale developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983). Items are “All in all, I am satisfied with my job,” “In general, I don’t like my job,” and “In general, I like working here”. Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale items was .82. The scores are summed and averaged, with the higher the score, the more satisfied participants are with their jobs.

Intention to quit. Intention to quit was measured using a two-item scale adapted from Cammann et al. (1983). The items include “I often think about quitting” and “I will probably look for a new job in the next year”. The reliability for this measure was determined by correlation, which was .51, $p < .01$. The scores were summed and averaged with the higher scores representing less intention to quit.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Measured Variables

The means and standard deviations for all of the variables in the study are presented in Table 2. In general, employees in the present study perceived the organization as somewhat ready for change ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .64$). Most employees are moderately affectively ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .72$) and normatively committed ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .57$) to the organization. However, continuance commitment was not as strongly felt ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .73$). Participants in the present study were not strongly satisfied with their jobs ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .86$) and had a relatively high level of intention to quit ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.02$).

Relationship among the Variables

Readiness for change and organizational commitment. Table 2 summarizes and presents the correlations among the measured variables. Readiness for change correlated significantly with affective commitment ($r = .39$, $p < .01$), indicating the more employees perceived the organization as ready for change, the more they were affectively committed. There was also a significant correlation between readiness for change and normative commitment ($r = .14$, $p < .01$), indicating the more employees perceived the organization as ready for change, the more normatively committed they were. However, there was no significant correlation between readiness for change and continuance commitment.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations (N = 503)

Variable	Mean	S. D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Readiness for Change	2.94	.64						
2 Affective Commitment	2.98	.72	.39**					
3 Continuance Commitment	3.25	.73	-.03	.14**				
4 Normative Commitment	2.97	.57	.14**	.54**	.15**			
5 Job Satisfaction	3.83	.86	.28**	.66**	.074	.41**		
6 Intention to Quit	2.36	1.02	-.35**	-.64**	-.20**	-.42**	-.62**	

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Response options for all measures are 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Readiness for change and job satisfaction. There was a significant positive correlation with readiness for change and job satisfaction ($r = .28, p < .01$), indicating employees with a higher perception of the organization's readiness for change were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs.

Readiness for change and intention to quit. There was a significant negative correlation with readiness for change and intention to quit ($r = -.35, p < .01$), showing employees with a higher perception of the organization's readiness for change were less likely to have intentions to quit.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

A series of hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test each of the hypotheses, controlling for demographic variables (i.e., gender, managerial status, tenure, age, education). Tables 3 through 7 show the results of each hierarchical regression

analysis. The standardized regression coefficient (β) and the amount of variance accounted for (R^2) after each step is shown, as well as the incremental unique variance accounted for (ΔR^2) by perceived readiness for change.

Hypothesis 1a predicted that employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change would be positively related to affective commitment. In the first step the demographic variables were entered. The demographic variables had a significant relationship with affective commitment ($R^2 = .04, p < .05$, see Table 3) with managerial status and tenure being significant predictors ($\beta = .13, p < .01, \beta = -.16, p < .01$, respectively). Readiness for change was entered in the second step and added a significant amount of unique variance ($\Delta R^2 = .13, p < .000$) above and beyond the demographic variables ($\beta = .37, p < .001$). Hypothesis 1a was therefore supported.

Table 3 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Affective Commitment

	Affective Commitment		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1: Demographic variables			
Gender	.07		
Managerial Status	.13**		
Tenure	-.16**		
Age	.06		
Education	.01	.04*	
Step 2: Readiness for Change	.37***	.17***	.13***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 1b predicted that employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change would be negatively related to continuance commitment. In the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis, the demographic variables were entered. The demographic variables had a significant relationship with continuance commitment ($R^2 = .05, p < .001$, see Table 4) with managerial status and education being significant predictors ($\beta = -.11, p < .05, \beta = -.09, p < .05$, respectively). Readiness for change was entered in the second step and it did not add unique variance above and beyond the effects of the demographic variables. Hypothesis 1b was thus not supported.

Table 4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Continuance Commitment

	Continuance Commitment		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1: Demographic variables			
Gender	.01		
Managerial Status	-.11*		
Tenure	.10		
Age	.08		
Education	-.09*	.05***	
Step 2: Readiness for Change	-.02	.05***	.00

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 1c expected that employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change would be positively related to normative commitment. Again, the demographic variables were entered in the first step. The demographic variables had a significant effect on normative commitment ($R^2 = .02, p < .05$, see Table 5) with age and

education being a significant predictors ($\beta = .11, p < .01, \beta = -.12, p < .001$, respectively). Readiness for change was entered in the second step and accounted for a significant amount of unique variance ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p < .01$) above and beyond the variance explained by the demographic variables ($\beta = .12, p < .01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1c was supported.

Table 5 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Normative Commitment

	Normative Commitment		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1: Demographic variables			
Gender	.03		
Managerial Status	.04		
Tenure	-.09		
Age	.11*		
Education	-.12**	.02*	
Step 2: Readiness for Change	.12**	.04**	.01**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 2 stated that employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change would be positively related to job satisfaction. In the first step the demographic variables were entered. The demographic variables had a significant effect on job satisfaction ($R^2 = .03, p < .01$, see Table 6) with tenure being a significant predictor ($\beta = -.18, p < .001$). Readiness for change was entered in the second step and added a significant amount of unique variance ($\Delta R^2 = .07, p < .000$) above and beyond the variance explained by the demographic variables ($\beta = .27, p < .000$). Hypothesis 2 was therefore supported.

Table 6 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Job Satisfaction

	Job Satisfaction		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1: Demographic variables			
Gender	.06		
Managerial Status	.08		
Tenure	-.18***		
Age	.08		
Education	-.05	.03**	
Step 2: Readiness for Change	.27***	.10***	.07***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

A final hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test Hypothesis 3 that stated the employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change would be negatively related with intention to quit the organization. In the first step the demographic variables were entered. The demographic variables had significant relationships on intention to quit ($R^2 = .02$, $p < .01$, see Table 7) with tenure and age being significant predictors ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$, $\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$, respectively). Readiness for change was entered in the second step and added a significant amount of unique variance ($\Delta R^2 = .12$, $p < .000$) above and beyond the variance explained by the demographic variables ($\beta = -.35$, $p < .000$). Hypothesis 3 was thus supported.

Table 7 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Intention to Quit

	Intention to Quit		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1: Demographic variables			
Gender	-.04		
Managerial Status	-.06		
Tenure	.13*		
Age	-.14*		
Education	.09	.02**	
Step 2: Readiness for Change	-.35***	.14***	.12***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The results of the present study demonstrate that when controlling for the demographic variables (i.e., gender, managerial status, tenure, age, education), affective commitment, normative commitment, and job satisfaction were all positively related to readiness for change. The results also showed that intention to quit was negatively related to readiness for change. Finally, the results yielded no significant relationship between continuance commitment and readiness for change.

DISCUSSION

Previous research on organizational change focused on resistance to or acceptance of various change initiatives. The past few years have seen more research assessing readiness for change and the employee's perceptions of it. Building a readiness for change message may ease resistance and facilitate acceptance of the proposed change initiative (Armenakis et al., 1993), however, there are contextual implications based on the organization's needs.

Research on individual attitudes such as self-efficacy or a team-based preference, along with job-related attitudes such as trust in peers has been shown to be positively related to employees' perceptions of readiness for change, as well as organizational variables such as policies and procedures surrounding the change initiative (Eby et al., 2000), yet little research has investigated how employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change is related to the three components of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to leave all of which have been found to affect the organization's bottom line and profitability. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change was related to their job-related attitudes, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to quit.

Results from the present study provide empirical support for the hypotheses that employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change was related to organizational commitment on two of the three components of organizational commitment. That is, individuals who perceive the organization favorably in terms or

readiness for change are more likely to stay with the organization because they want to (affective commitment) and because they feel like they should (normative commitment). The results also provide empirical support for the relationship between readiness for change and job satisfaction in that individuals who perceive the organization as ready for change tend to have high job satisfaction. Additionally, the results provide empirical support for readiness for change and intention to quit with employees who perceive the organization as ready for change are less likely to develop intentions to quit. In other words, those who perceive the organization to be ready for change are more likely to be affectively and normatively committed and satisfied with their jobs, and less likely to have intentions of leaving the organization.

The results of this study showed that perceived readiness for change was related to a variety of job-related attitudes. These results are consistent with past research which found that assessing job-related attitudes was positively related to employees' perceptions of organizational readiness for change (Eby et al., 2000). Organizations change constantly – whether due to increases in technological advances, negotiating a more competitive market strategy or streamlining their human resources – and having employees who support rather than hinder the change efforts may thus add to the success of the organizational change. Based on the findings, when a company launches a change initiative, the initiative might be more successful to the extent that employees' perceptions of readiness for the change are favorable, and might result in higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and lower intention to leave the organization.

When employees in an organization perceive that organization as ready to introduce a change initiative, if the expectation of the change is positive and a positive message regarding the change is delivered by the change agents and other key individuals involved, the perception of the positive change might in turn lead them to feel more affectively committed to the organization, increase their job satisfaction, and decrease any intentions to leave the organization.

The lack of relationship between readiness for change and continuance commitment may be due to the individual being unable to move out of their current situation into a more favorable one, thus perception of the organization's readiness for change may not be of interest to them provided they do not perceive their job to be in jeopardy. These individuals may stay because too much time has been invested in the organization or they have too many outside personal obligations and rely on their position to sustain their lifestyle.

Strengths and Limitations of the Present Study

Although present study contributed to the literature on the perception of an organization's readiness for change and its relationship with job-related attitudes, the present study is not without limitations. First, the present study is correlational and therefore no clear causal statements can be made. That is, one cannot infer that perceived organizational readiness for change leads an individual to be affectively and normatively committed. Rather, it could be that affective and normative commitment might lead an individual to perceive his/her organization to be ready for change.

Perceived organizational readiness for change may not increase one's job satisfaction or intentions to quit; however high job satisfaction or low intention to quit could attribute to an individual's perception of organizational readiness for change. A strong sense of affective commitment or job satisfaction may cause one to feel more favorably about the company and thus hold a positive perception about the future direction of the organization.

Furthermore, unlike many studies, the present study reached nearly every employee in the organization, covering almost all job levels of employees. Thus, the present findings probably are representative of the sample as a whole. However, the strength of the present study could be the weakness of the study. That is, the sample was obtained from a single organization. All respondents were from one company in a particular industry in a particular geographical area. The organization involved in the study does have other facilities in other locations. Obtaining data from these sites and comparing it with the data collected in the present study may offer more insight into how a large scale change could affect an organization.

Another limitation of the present study is the ratio of males to females at the company. The majority of the participants were men. Although the results did not show that gender was related to perceived organizational readiness for change and the other measured variables, there might a possibility that men and women might respond to these variables in different ways. Thus future research should include more female participants and examine gender as a potential moderator. Likewise, the present study did not examine the potential moderating relationships between perceived organizational

readiness and job-related attitudes. Future research might consider the effect of moderators such as gender, age or length of employment.

Self-report was the data collection method used in the present study. This data collection method is very common, however the actual accuracy of the data can be questionable. Participants could be having a less than favorable day and not see the importance of the survey or the research being conducted and purposefully answer in a way to skew the data. Missing data can also affect the integrity of the data if too many respondents skipped the same or multiple questions or return surveys with illegible responses.

The culture of an organization could also affect employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change. If the overall culture of the organization is pessimistic, employees may not have confidence in any change initiatives proposed by the organization. The organization's culture or the union environment could also explain why many employees chose to stay with the company. Many of the employees had been working at the same job site for ten or more years and may be reluctant to leave as they know the culture of the organization and may be comfortable remaining in an environment they are familiar with.

Future Research

In the future, researchers should further explore the perception of readiness for change construct. Like organizational commitment, more construct validity of the measure of readiness for change should also be performed to establish a more dynamic assessment. An agreed upon definition of the readiness for change construct needs to be

determined as it has been defined differently by different researchers. Additional theory building and empirical research regarding readiness for change are also needed to further develop the construct.

It would be interesting to evaluate if perceived readiness for change actually leads to the success of a change initiative during both implementation and the ongoing maintenance. Assessment would need a pre and post phase and it would be of value to an organization to see how this relates to the change initiative. The information gained from a longitudinal study with a pre and post phase could subsequently be applied to future change endeavors.

More empirical studies determining the relationship with job-related attitudes and behaviors not included in the present study should be performed. Other constructs may interact with the readiness for change construct and those interactions may be of value to organizations implementing change. Since organizational change can be costly, the more information provided to the change agents in the beginning, the more communication they can provide to the employees, and the more possibility of the change initiative being successful

Finally, because the present study only focused on the potential consequences of perceived organizational readiness for change, future research should focus on what causes individuals to perceive whether organizations are ready or not ready for change. In other words, future research should focus on the potential antecedents as well as consequences of perceived readiness for change.

In conclusion, the present study provides practical implications for organizations considering implementing a change initiative. Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to quit can all be related to an organization's bottom line. Understanding employees' perceptions of the organization's readiness for change can assist organizations in implementing change initiatives so that they are successful and the desired results achieved.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Items Organized by Scale

Intention to Quit

- 28 I often think about quitting.
- 38 I will probably look for a new job in the next year.

Job Satisfaction

- 7 In general, I don't like my job (reverse scored).
- 15 All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
- 22 In general, I like working here.

Organizational commitment

Affective Commitment

- 2 I really feel as if this company's problems are my own.
- 6 I think I could easily become as attached to another company as I am to this one (reverse scored).
- 12 I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this company (reverse scored).
- 14 This company has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
- 20 I enjoy discussing my company with people outside it.
- 24 I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my company (reverse scored).
- 31 I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career at this company.
- 34 I do not feel like "part of the family" at my company.

Continuance Commitment

- 3 It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my company in the near future (reverse scored).
- 4 One of the major reasons I continue to work for this company is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another company may not match the overall benefits I have here.
- 9 One of the few negative consequences of leaving this company would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
- 16 Right now, staying with my company is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
- 19 It would be very hard for me to leave my company right now, even if I wanted to.
- 26 Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my company right now.
- 30 I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up (reverse scored).

- 33 I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this company.

Normative Commitment

- 8 I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her company (reverse scored).
- 11 I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one company.
- 17 If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my company.
- 21 Things were better in the days when people stayed with one company for most of their careers.
- 25 Jumping from company to company does not seem at all unethical to me (reverse scored).
- 29 I do not think that wanting to be a “company man” or “company woman” is sensible anymore (reverse scored).
- 35 I think that people these days move from company to company too often.
- 37 One of the major reasons I continue to work for this company is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.

Readiness for Change

- 1 When changes are made in my company, employees usually lose out in the end (reverse scored).
- 5 Employees here will not change or alter a process until a problem develops (reverse scored).
- 10 Employees here act as agents of change.
- 13 It is really not possible to change things around here (reverse scored).
- 18 Employees here do not take action until a mistake has occurred (reverse scored).
- 23 Employees here are resistant to change (reverse scored).
- 27 Employees here will only learn new ways if they are forced to (reverse scored).
- 32 Employees here believe that they should do their jobs the same way that they have always done them (reverse scored).
- 36 Employees here believe “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” (reverse scored).

APPENDIX B

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

San José State
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Academic
Vice President
Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies and Research
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To: Christine Squillaci
4147 Stanley Blvd.
Pleasanton, CA 94566

From: Nabil Ibrahim
AVP, Graduate Studies & Research

Date: October 17, 2002

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

**"Organizational Commitment: A predictor of
Readiness for Change and Intention to Stay"**

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to all data that may be collected from the subjects. The approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D. immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma, and release of potentially damaging personal information. This approval for the human subjects portion of your project is in effect for one year, and data collection beyond October 17, 2003 requires an extension request.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services that the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (408) 924-2480.

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