



# Antecedents to Change Readiness

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# Abstract

The increasingly competitive global environment organisations operate in today necessitates organisations are adept at successfully undergoing change. Research highlights the readiness for change is a critical precursor to successful change efforts, it is difficult to determine whether an organisation is ready for change, and the majority of organisational change efforts fail to achieve their intended results. This quantitative study provides insight into readiness for change from the perspective of three independent variables, namely change management, change communication, and resistance to change; determines associations between these independent variables, and with readiness for change; and establishes a prediction model that suggests these independent variables are antecedents that add statistically significantly to the prediction of the dependent variable readiness for change.

# Introduction

- Daily businesses/we are confronted with a volatile local, regional and global environment
- Drive changes in our businesses, lives & future
- Organisations must be able to adapt to change
- Talent management challenges into the future
- Introducing change is complex & challenging
- 70% of change efforts fail – inadequate change management, communication, resistance to change and change readiness; and other factors

# Introduction

- Impetus for this research:
  - Enormous investment, high change effort failure rate
  - Lack of reliable instruments to measure change readiness
  - Since 1998 change efforts of predecessors to and of Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) have been unsuccessful
  - Provide insight into whether change management, change communication and change resistance are antecedents to change readiness and to determine their impact

# Literature Review

- Change management:
  - “A set of structured processes and actions, tools and techniques, for managing the human side of business changes in order to align organization’s goals with changed demands of the environment” [1].
  - In this continuously changing, highly unstable global business environment we operate in [2], effective change management is critical to mitigating the risk of failure during the change effort [3].

# Literature Review

- Change communication:
  - “The process by which information is exchanged and understood, with the objective of motivating or influencing behaviour” [4] in support of the change effort.
  - Researchers [5][6] suggest that change communication is a principle means for developing change readiness among organisational members.
  - Limited importance placed on change communication in literature; and limited research into the efficacy of communication strategies.

# Literature Review

- Change resistance:
  - “Any behaviour that retains the status quo in spite of applied forces to change the status quo” [7]; and “an adherence to any attitudes or behaviours that frustrate organisational change goals” [8].
  - Change resistance is considered the “enemy of change” [9]; hence, it defies belief as it is frequently disregarded in organisations and in research [10][11].

# Literature Review

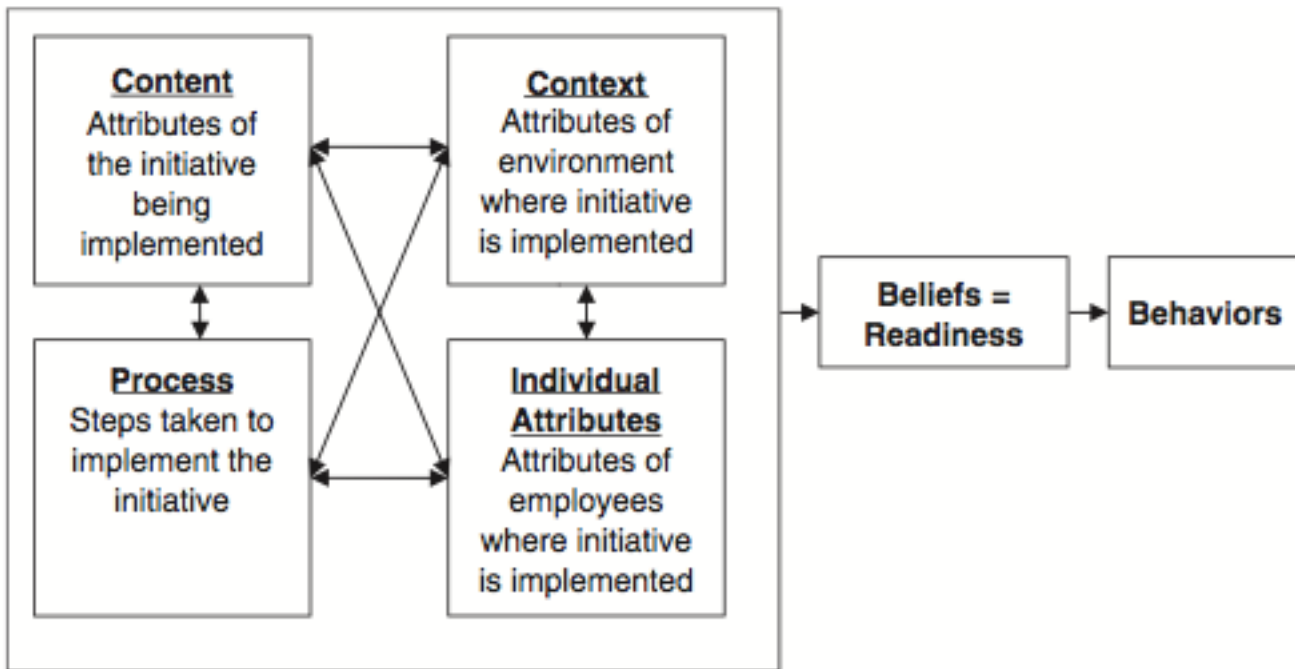
- Change Readiness:
  - Cognitive (process of acquiring knowledge and understanding) state containing beliefs, attitudes and intentions toward a change effort [12].
  - Experts [13][5][14] argue when employees are highly committed to the change effort, high organisational readiness for change is present.
  - Also, a researcher [5] suggests when employees are ready to accept change, low levels of resistance to change and high levels of change readiness denote conditions for effective organisational change.



# Theoretical framework

- This study is based on the theoretical framework developed by Holt et al. (2007) [15] who classified four categories of antecedents of readiness for change; namely, individuals (some employees support change while others do not), process (steps followed during change implementation), context (conditions employees operate in) and content (initiative being introduced and its characteristics) factors.

# Theoretical framework

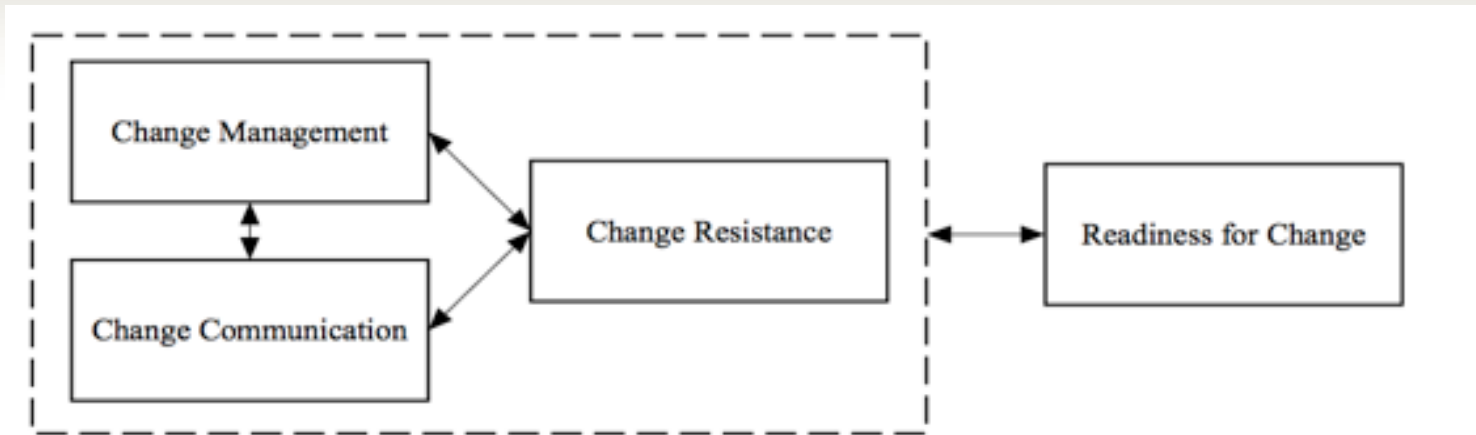


Source: Holt et al. (2007)

# Conceptual framework

- Considering 70% of change efforts fail due to factors including lack of change management, communication, resistance to change and change readiness; and researchers highlight impact of these factors on change readiness; the conceptual model for this research is based on the relationship between change communication, change management and change resistance as antecedents to change readiness.

# Conceptual framework



Source: Slack and Singh, 2016.

# Background

- In 2011, Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji ('MSAF') established as a Commercial Statutory Authority.
- Mandated “to depart from traditional bureaucratic values and to adopt a greater emphasis on change, flexibility...efficiency and productivity” [17].
- Reform Outcomes - Service delivery misaligned and below customer's expectations; employees' dissatisfaction with reform process - degradation of job satisfaction, and bureaucratic culture [16].

# Problem & Justification

- Change readiness is a critical precursor to change efforts [12], difficult to determine, and limited 'immature' assessment instruments exist [18][19].
- Minimal research from the employees' perspective [20][21].
- 70 percent of change efforts fail because of factors such as change communication, change management, resistance to change and change readiness [22].

# Research Aim

Provide insight into readiness for change from the perspective of 3 perceived antecedents to readiness for change: change management, change communication, and change resistance; determine associations; and establish a prediction model for readiness for change.

# Research Hypothesis

$H_0$ : There is no statistically significant correlation at all; i.e. none of the variables (Change Management, Change Communication, and Change Resistance) belongs in the prediction model for Readiness for Change.

$H_1$ : There is a statistically significant correlation; and at least one of the variables (Change Management, Change Communication, and Change Resistance) belongs in the prediction model for Readiness for Change (Slack and Singh, 2016).



# Research Methodology

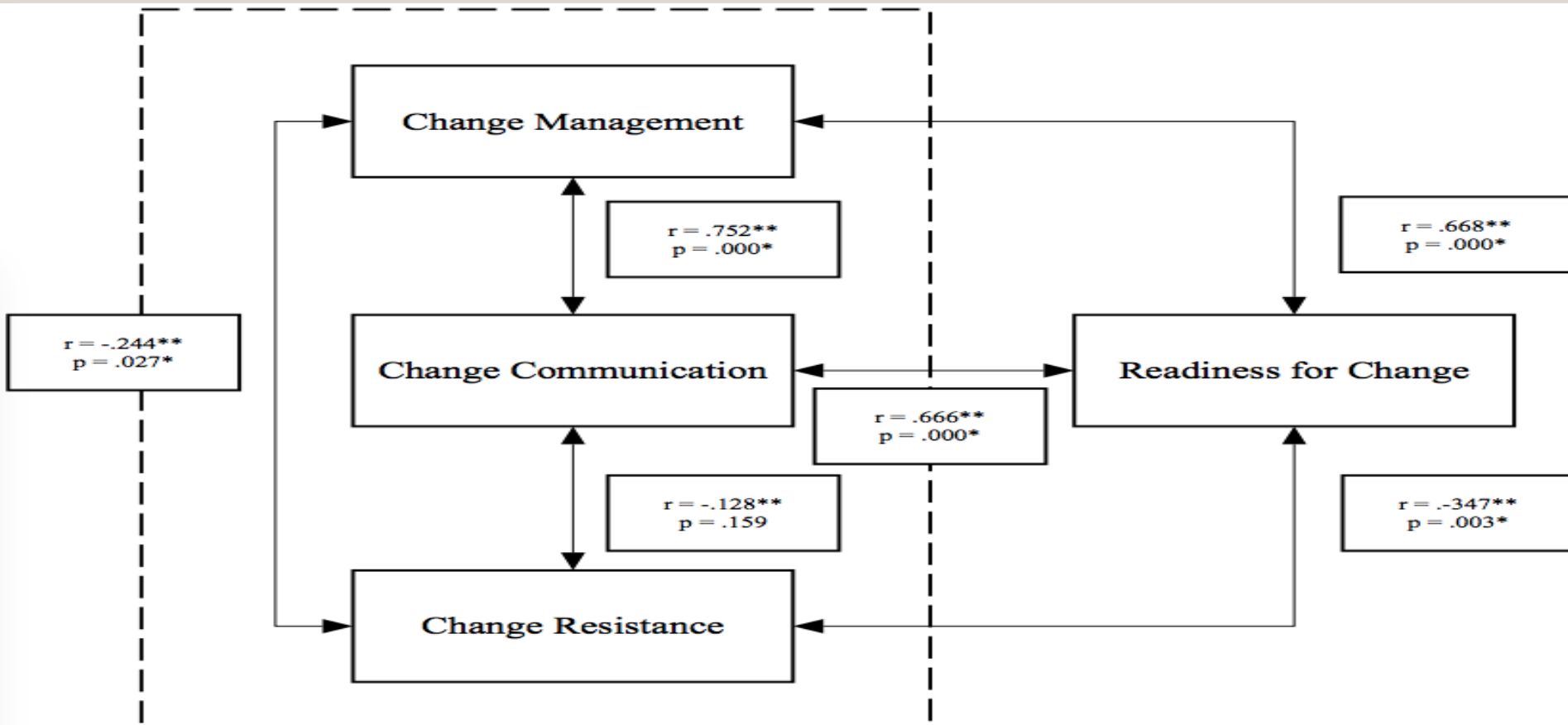
- Pretested, self-completion, written survey questionnaire was administered by a research assistant in focus groups to whole population of MSAF employees, in 8 locations of Fiji.
- Questionnaire contains 5 sections, 73 questions and statements, and 5-point Likert scale.
- Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis [using the backward elimination method) of building the multiple linear regression model] was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences [16].

# Results & Discussions

- Demographics:
  - Response rate was 95%, and the completion rate 100%.
  - 75% males while there were only 25% females.
  - Indigenous Fijians 75% and 25% Fijians of Indian origin.
  - Age 31-40 years (29%), 21-30 years (27%), and 41-50 years (25%).
  - Technical roles dominated (67%) over non-technical roles (33%).
  - Gross income per annum of respondents (FJD)11,000 to 20,000 (62%) followed by 21,000 to 30,000 (16%) [16].
- Reliability:
  - Instrument considered reliable, with high degree of internal consistency - Cronbach's alpha value for instrument (.860) and the individual sections (ranging between .711 and .941) [16].

# Results & Discussions

- Bivariate Pearson's Correlations:



# Results & Discussions

- Multiple Linear Regressions:
  - A backward elimination multiple regression was conducted to evaluate whether three independent variables, namely, Change Management, Change Communication, and Change Resistance were necessary to predict Readiness for Change (dependent variable). At step 1 of the analysis the three independent variables were entered into the regression equation. Change Communication ( $p = .003$ ), Change Resistance ( $p = .018$ ), and Change Management ( $p = .026$ ), with  $p$ -values  $< .05$  contributed to the model:  $F(3,59) = 24.289$ ,  $p < .0005$ ,  $R^2 = .553$  [16].

# Results & Discussions

- Multiple Linear Regressions:
  - All of the three variables added statistically significantly to the prediction,  $p < .05$
  - The multiple correlation coefficient ( $R^2 = .553$ ) indicated approximately 55.3% of the variance of Readiness for Change could be accounted for by Change Communication, Change Resistance, and Change Management. Thus, the regression equation for predicting Readiness for Change was:

$Y_{\text{predicted}} = b_0 + b_1 \cdot x_1 + b_2 \cdot x_2 + b_3 \cdot x_3$  ( $Y_{\text{predicted}}$  was the dependent variable Change Readiness)

Readiness for Change = (.678) + (.358\*Change Management) + (.695\*Change Communication) – (.378\*Change Resistance) [16].

# Results & Discussions

- Multiple Linear Regressions:
  - For this model, Change Management,  $t(59) = 2.2820$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Change Communication,  $t(59) = 3.0500$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and Change Resistance,  $t(59) = -2.4400$ ,  $p < .05$ ; were significant predictors of Readiness for Change. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant correlation; and at least one of the variables (Change Management, Change Communication, and Change Resistance) belongs in the model [16].

# Conclusions

- Established a prediction model that suggests independent variables (change management, change communication and change resistance) are antecedents that added statistically significantly to the prediction of the dependent variable readiness for change [16].
- History has shown that the majority of organisational change efforts fail as a result of a number of factors [22]. Hence, this research provides insight, to enable organisations to be 'ready for change' and break this cycle of failure.
- While the theme of this convention is 'Today's talent, tomorrows future', it is important to note that talent cannot be fully capitalized on, either now or into the foreseeable future, if the organisations that employ that talent are not managing their communications, managing their change programs, addressing any resistance to change, and are 'ready for change'.

# Limitations

- This study has several limitations:
  - Sample size is small as only one public sector undertaking formed the basis of this research.
  - Findings were not generalisable.
  - The focus being a small country necessitated protecting the confidentiality of our participants.
  - This research only covered an analysis of three independent variables in the prediction model for Readiness for Change, whilst other independent variables exist [16].



# Future research & Contributions

- Suggested future research:
  - More in-depth, empirical studies [23], and longitudinal studies [24], of the reform process and readiness for change in various contexts [23], practical directions for successful reform [23], and the prediction of readiness for change.
- Contributions to knowledge:
  - Contribution to the scarce theoretical strands relating to change efforts of public enterprises in non-western countries such as Fiji, and providing a statistically significant model for prediction of readiness for change in support of such future research [16].

Thank you



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