



# Ready for Change? A Literature Review on Assessing Organizational Readiness for Change



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## Problem: Low Rate of Change Success

- ❖ Change refers to “multiple, simultaneous changes in staffing, work flow, decision making, communication, and rewards systems” (Weiner, 2009, p. 4).
- ❖ Organizations are challenged to adapt to changes in their environment to survive.
- ❖ The median success rate for all types of change is less than 33 percent (Smith 2002).

## Research: Literature Review

- ❖ A literature review was conducted on 18 databases using the following search criteria: **organization change readiness, assessment change readiness, assessing organizational readiness for change, assessing change readiness, assess organization readiness, and readiness assessments.**
- ❖ The literature review revealed that over the last two decades, a steady stream of research has sought to understand and assess organizational readiness for change.

## Results: Variety of Studies, Theories, Levels of Analysis, Focus Areas

### Primarily Empirical Studies Focused on Assessments

Study Type	Count	%	Study Type – Primary approach to study
Empirical	28	78	Empirical: Conducts field research to investigate or test hypotheses
Conceptual	8	22	Conceptual: Develops framework or concept, not tested empirically
Theoretical	2	5	Theoretical: Reviews, integrates or proposes theory, not tested empirically
Review	1	3	Review: Analyzes and investigates multiple studies
Multi-Type	(3)	(8)	Multi-type: Includes two or more of above types in study
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	

  

Study Objective	Count	%	Study Objective – Primary intent of study
Assessment	22	61	Assessment: Develops and empirically tests tool to assess readiness
Critical Success Factors	5	14	Critical Success Factors: Investigates and analyzes CSFs to change
Investigation	4	11	Investigation: Studies one or more phenomenon related to change
Definitional	2	6	Definitional: Seeks to clarify terms as used for readiness and change
Other	3	8	Other: Case study, anecdotal, or other study not included above
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	

### Growth Internationally and on Specific Change

Year of Study	Assessment Focus				Total
	General	Specific	NA	Total	
1990-1994	1	0		1	
1995-1999	1	2		3	
2000-2004	3	3		6	
2005-2009	7	8	1	16	
2010-2014	5	5		10	
<b>All Years</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>36</b>	

  

Year of Study	Locations Involved in Study				Total
	U.S.	Outside U.S.	N/A	Total	
1990-1994	0	0	1	1	
1995-1999	3	0	0	3	
2000-2004	3	3	0	6	
2005-2009	6	9	1	16	
2010-2014	0	9	1	10	
<b>All Years</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	

Growth in studies conducted outside the U.S.

Growth in assessments focused on specific types of change

## Method: Content Analysis

- ❖ Content analysis is a systematic study of research data identifying salient factors and elements.
- ❖ A content analysis was conducted on 36 articles published in 30 management journals from 1993 to 2014 focused on organizational change readiness in public, private and not-for-profit settings and which used theoretical, conceptual, or empirical approaches.
- ❖ Articles excluded focused on readiness in education, mental health, substance abuse, and other social areas.
- ❖ Outcomes of the analysis include: use of theory, type of study, study objectives, level of analysis, assessment focus, and locations involved in the study.

### Level of Analysis Expanding Beyond Individual

Year of Study	Level of Analysis					Totals
	Individual	Group	Organization	Individual & Group	Individual & Organization	
1990-1994	0	0	0	0	1	1
1995-1999	0	2	0	0	1	3
2000-2004	0	1	0	0	5	6
2005-2009	3	0	2	1	10	16
2010-2014	2	1	4	0	3	10
<b>All Years</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36</b>

Unit of analysis varies across studies; and may include multiple levels

### Variety of Theories, Models and Frameworks in Studies

Theories / Models / Frameworks Referenced
Individual differences, social differentiation, social relationship
Model (center of excellence)
Margin in Life, demographics
Readiness for change
Model (motivation and personality attributes)
Organization functioning and change process
Factor analysis using expert panel
Six phases of technology implementation, employee characteristics
Organization readiness, individual performance, fear of change
Individual differences, five message components
Competing values framework, organization reshaping capabilities
Individual beliefs and behaviors
Discrepancy valance, appropriateness, efficacy, principal support
Critical success and failure factor analysis
Promoting action on research implementation in health services
Technology acceptance model and theory of planned behavior
Act frequency approach
Transactional model of stress and coping, cognitive appraisal
Climate of change, process of change, readiness for change
Texas Christian University program change model
Change commitment, change efficacy, structural attributes
Socio-technical system
Individual attitudes and behaviors towards change
McKinsey 7S Framework
Capability maturity model
Readiness model
Social identity
Design science

No agreement or common ground for assessing readiness

Summary of Organizational Change Efforts <sup>1</sup>			
Type of Change	Number of Studies	Sum of Sample Sizes	Median Success Rate
Strategy Deployment	3	562	58%
Restructuring and Downsizing	9	4,830*	46%
Technology Change	5	1,406*	40%
Mixed Collection of Change Efforts	1	23	39%
TQM-driven Change	5	863	37%
Mergers and Acquisitions	9	395*	33%
Re-engineering and Process Design	7	3,442*	30%
Software Development and Installation	6	31,480	26%
Business Expansion	1	200	20%
Culture Change	3	225*	19%
All	49	43,426*	33%

\*One or more reports did not state the sample size  
<sup>1</sup>Smith, M. E. (2002). Success rates for different types of organizational change. *PFI Performance Improvement, 41(1)*, 26-33.

## Potential: Improving Readiness for Change

- ❖ Organizational readiness refers to “organizational members’ shared resolve to implement a change (change commitment) and shared belief in their collective capability to do so (change efficacy)” (Weiner, 2009, p. 4).
- ❖ Organizational readiness for change is a major factor in change success (Bouckenoghe, Devos, Broeck, 2009).
- ❖ Creating readiness for change has the potential to enable organizational change (Armenakis et al, 1993).

Publications Used in Review	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014
1. Applied Psychology (APPS)			1		
2. British Journal of Management				1	
3. Business Process Management Journal				1	
4. European Journal of Operational Research			1		
5. GSTF Business Review (GBR)					1
6. Health Services Research (HSR)			1		
7. Human Relations	1				
8. Human Resource Development Quarterly (HRDQ)		1		1	
9. Implementation Science				2	2
10. Information and Management				1	
11. International Journal of Enterprise Information Systems					1
12. International Journal of Intelligent Information Technologies				1	
13. International Journal of Knowledge Management				1	
14. International Journal of Technology Management				1	
15. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science				3	1
16. Journal of Change Management					1
17. Journal of Enterprise Information Management					1
18. Journal of Management Studies				1	
19. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology			1		
20. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management			1		
21. The Journal of Psychology				1	
22. Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment			1		
23. Library Management				1	
24. Medical Care Research and Review				1	
25. MIS Quarterly		1			
26. National Productivity Review (NPR)		1			
27. Research on Social Work Practice				1	
28. Technovation					1
29. Thunderbird International Business Review					1
30. The TQM Magazine				1	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>

Databases Searched (18)
Academic OneFile
ACM Digital Library
BioMed Central
Business Insights: Essentials
Business Source Complete
Computer Database
Emerald Group Publishing Limited
General OneFile
Health & Wellness Resource Center
Health Reference Center Academic
Hindawi Publishing eJournals
IEEE Publications Database
Institute of Physics eJournals and Archive
Opposing Viewpoints in Context
PsycARTICLES
ScienceDirect
SciTech Connect
WorldCat.org

## Discussion: The Dynamic of Organizational Readiness for Change

- ❖ The 36 articles were published by a variety of periodicals, showing broad interest in organizational readiness for change from a diverse set of disciplines.
- ❖ A majority of the articles (78%) were empirical studies developing assessments of readiness for change.
- ❖ Interest has grown in assessing readiness for defined, rather than general, types of change (e.g. ERP, knowledge management); research has expanded internationally.
- ❖ Broad use of theory, conceptual frameworks, and analytical models of organizational readiness for change.
- ❖ Assessments typically focus on the individual – using survey instruments to capture individuals’ perspective on the role of hypothesized factors on change success.
- ❖ Increasingly, individuals are asked to address organizational-level constructs (culture, structure, technology) to support research on organizational factors and their impact on change success.
- ❖ Individual responses on assessments have also been aggregated and used as a proxy for evaluating organizational-level readiness.

References:  
Armenakis, A. A., Harris, S. G., & Mossholder, K. W. (1993). Creating Readiness for Organizational Change. *Human Relations, 46(6)*.

Bouckenoghe, D., Devos, G., & van den Broeck, H. (2009). Organizational Change Questionnaire-Climate of Change, Processes, and Readiness: development of a new instrument. *The Journal of psychology, 143(6)*, 559-599.

Weiner, B. J. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation science : IS, 4*.