

Individual-level change readiness in middle management.

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Abstract

Organisations are facing increasingly challenging landscapes, one of the most recent being the Covid-19 pandemic. This has placed pressure on organisations to adapt and be agile in response to the change in the external and internal environments that they operate in. The constant change in organisational landscapes has driven organisations to change to remain competitive, improve their business process, and adopt new methods of doing ordinary business. This has emphasized that organisations be ready for change when it happens. Readiness takes place on two levels, namely organisational readiness and individual level readiness. Though it is important for organisations to demonstrate high readiness levels, the concept is often misunderstood and fails to address a fundamental cause of failure in organisational change initiatives called resistance. In the centre of the organisational structure, middle managers find themselves responsible for instituting change initiatives and are also subject to the change themselves. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to uncover the readiness levels of middle-level managers across three industries to determine their overall readiness levels in response to change. The study followed a quantitative approach to gain a deeper insight into the readiness levels of middle-level managers. A quantitative study was conducted, and the findings indicated that there were high overall levels of individual-level readiness in middle management but that there was no significant relationship between the middle management readiness levels of individuals and the industry they worked in.

Keywords

Change management, Individual-level readiness, Middle management, Industry effect, Middle management readiness

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The challenges facing organisations and their environments have seen new heights, from the 2008 global financial crisis to the Covid-19 pandemic. These challenges are driven by the need for organisations to adapt and change to remain competitive and relevant, and survive (Hartmann & Lussier, 2020). The most recent challenge, the Covid-19 pandemic, has seen the world enter various states of lockdowns and economic shuts to curb the spread of the virus, impacting organisations' abilities to conduct business. Lockdowns restricted people's movement within countries and forced a temporary closure of companies that were not essential services.

1.2 The Research problem

Organisations are impacted by external and internal forces that directly and indirectly influence the organisation (Jalagat, 2016). External forces take the shape of changes in technology, regulations, social norms, economic changes, political changes and changes in ecological landscapes (Vecchiato & Roveda, 2010) and internal forces that influence organisations such as operational changes, internal processes and modernisation of the organisation (Jalagat, 2016). Organisations enter a state of uncertainty and then have to assess the impact of the change on the organisation and formulate a response to the change. Many organisations are overly focused on the effect of the change and are insufficiently focused on the reaction to the change (Vecchiato & Roveda, 2010). Increased competition amongst firms has also attributed to the need for organisations to continually adapt and respond to product changes and other value-added services provided by competitors in the business environment (Jalagat, 2016). Nicolaidis & Katsaros (2013) state that organisations respond continuously to external environments to remain competitive by increasing their ability to deal with change. Organisations can prepare for change by increasing their readiness levels of the organisation and individuals in the organisation (Napier, Ambroski, And Pesek 2017). The research problem that is investigated is the individual readiness levels of middle management across three industries.

1.2.1 Change management

Change is viewed in organisations today as an ongoing process instead of a singular disruption of the business equilibrium, becoming more complex and occurring in greater volumes faster than ever before (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). Change can have a positive and negative impact on organisations, and this has emphasised the need for organisations to manage change as it shapes management decisions in response to the change and will ultimately determine the success of the organisation's reaction to the change (Jalagat, 2016). Change management is defined as the abilities, techniques, and disciplines required by an organisation to convert complexity and specialisation into actions and results in line with the organisation's vision (Herrero, Amrellini & Solar-Pelletier, 2020).

Change management is crucial to organisations that are looking to reinvent themselves into better organisations. Change initiatives include performance increases, improving culture in response to changes in the industry or environment and turning an organisation around that is in a bad position (Kotter, 2007). Technology has driven significant business transformations, and more often than not, organisations neglect their readiness as a whole and the human element individual level readiness (Napier et al., 2017). Change management is a process and not an act, and one of the most prominent mistakes organisations make when implementing their change initiatives is that it will occur as an event. This obscures the perception that the organisation is now ready to implement the change initiative (Napier et al., 2017).

Change is broken down into two aspects: organisational change, which is the progression of an organisation away from its current state to the desired state in the future to increase effectiveness; and individual-level change, which is defined as the perception of individuals related to their commitment to the organisation and the change (Herrero et al., 2020). The organisational change aims to create a sustainable fit between the organisation, the external environment, and its stakeholders (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). To achieve this fit, change is required at an individual level where readiness levels to adapt to new capabilities and competencies of employees to navigate through volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) landscapes are demonstrated (Herrero et al., 2020). Change in

organisations can take place on various levels in the organisation such as organisation-wide, subsystem, transformational, incremental, remedial and developmental, each level requires a different response from the organisation, but each level is met with the same challenge, resistance (Jalagat, 2016).

1.2.2 Resistance

Getachew and Zhou (2018) state that most organisational changes fail due to resistance, which is the resistance experienced by stakeholders when implementing change initiatives. Resistance to change initiatives occurs as a by-product of change and leads senior managers to view employees as obstacles to change (Buick et al., 2018). Resistance to change can be overcome and pre-empted by creating readiness for change throughout the organisation (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). Napier et al. (2017) state that most organisations only consider readiness when the change initiative is already in progress, increasing resistance and lowering the success levels of the change implementation. High levels of readiness amongst employees signal that they are more likely to exhibit more significant effort, persistence, and acceptance of the change when faced with obstacles in the change execution (Getachew and Zhou, 2018). Benefits of change readiness contribute to the overall change management effectiveness of the organisation through improving employee confidence, improving the organisation's competitive advantage, supporting growth, and increasing the organisation's dynamic capabilities (Jalagat, 2016).

Individual readiness is crucial to the success of a change strategy. Most organisational changes are initiated by top management; however, middle managers are involved in executing the dynamics of these strategies. Middle managers are central to the organisation in support, execution and feedback, and their role capacity allows them to engage with lower and upper levels of the organisation, providing crucial feedback to the levels (Buick et al., 2018). This places prerogative on middle managers' readiness for change as they will communicate, create buy-in, and execute the change in the organisation (King, Bauer, Weng, Schriber and Tarba 2020).

1.2.3 Middle-level management

Middle managers can provide employees with detailed information, support and address uncertainties regarding change events; this emphasises the role of middle management as brokers enabling feedback, communication and employee participation (Buick et al., 2018).

Buick et al. (2018) indicate that middle management is usually responsible for implementing the change initiative in the organisation. Middle managers translate and make sense of the change initiative and translate it to the operational levels in the organisation. Middle-level managers play a crucial role in overcoming resistance and increasing change readiness in the organisation. However, they can be a constraint in a change initiative if they do not exhibit high levels of change readiness as most middle managers are responsible for implementing change initiatives and are also subjected to it (Buick et al., 2018).

Change management and implementation are usually formed by senior-level managers who believe that change failure is due to employee resistance, cynical views toward change, that people naturally resist change, and that buy-in from employees will overcome these factors (Buick et al., 2018). This belief by senior management often contributes to change resistance. It can result in a breach in implicit and explicit agreements, reinforcing the importance of middle management in the organisation to act as change agents, build relationships, build and restore trust, and legitimise the change effort (Buick et al., 2018). Middle management is responsible for confronting problems created by the change initiatives that they did not plan and dealing with employee fears associated with the change (King et al., 2020).

The business environment has become increasingly volatile, affecting varying industries differently as they drive to meet the demands and pressures of changing landscapes specific to their business dynamic (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021). Some industries are central to regulations, and others are central to rapid innovation and technological advances, all dependant on the industry and life cycle of the business. Innovation has surpassed the regulation rate and has driven the impact of changes in various industries (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021). Whilst no industry is immune to changes, some industries experience higher levels and faster rates of change,

leading to the question of which industries are more prepared for change than others (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021). A vital example of this is when lockdowns were implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and some industries were not allowed to operate whilst other industries were allowed. In response, manufacturing industries adopted their business models to manufacture essential goods, whereas other industries were forced to change how they conduct their business and adopt a work from home strategy. While this reflects the extreme of cases, it is nonetheless relevant to the industry effect of change and, more specifically, the readiness to deal with change on both an organisational and individual level (Seetharaman, 2020).

The unknown effect of change within varying industries on middle-level management individual level readiness will contribute to the development of the theory and change and change readiness. The main research question for this research study has been formulated as follows: what the level of individual change readiness amongst middle-level managers is, and what is the industry effect on individual-level readiness.

1.3 Scope of the research

This research investigates the individual level readiness of middle managers in the retail, manufacturing, and service industries. The scope of this research in these three industries represents the industries and middle-level managers in South Africa operating within these industries. The context of this research will be valuable to industries and middle-level managers in South Africa and internationally as it can be applied throughout business landscapes. All three industries rely heavily on middle management to navigate through change, and these industries are still recovering from a significant recent change caused by lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The literature examines change management and narrows it down into the individual change readiness components and how it can be measured. This research did not include international organisations in primary research, though international organisations have been identified and explored in secondary research.

1.4 Contribution of the study to academia

This study contributes to academia by expanding on the understanding of the readiness levels of individuals in a specific management level and industry. A study conducted by Armenakis & Harris (2013) set the foundation of a scale instrument to measure individual readiness levels. This scale has not been vastly applied to specific management levels and different industries. Weiner J, (2009) indicates that half of organisational change efforts fail due to low levels of readiness. Given the large failure rate, there is a need to expand research on readiness, more specifically individual level readiness, to align academic development with the business context. There is an abundance of literature on the importance of middle management but not on their readiness levels, ignoring the fact that even though they can act as change agents, they are subjected to change themselves. The output of this research will help develop literature on the individual readiness components post-Covid-19 in a South-African context.

1.5 Contribution of the study to business

The findings from this research will help organisations understand the various components of individual-level readiness. Organisations can measure their organisations' individual readiness throughout the change process and focus on the components leading to resistance and ultimately failure of the change initiative. Organisations will gain insight into their readiness levels and provide them with an indication of how ready they are in response to a crisis, planned change or change response. The findings of this study will help identify which industries display higher levels of change readiness and what could be taken from these industries and adopted into other industries to increase their overall readiness.

1.6 Purpose statement

The purpose of this research is to measure the individual level readiness of middle-level managers across three industries, manufacturing, service, and retail industries. The research objective is to determine which industries have higher levels of individual-level change readiness in middle management and what can be learned from these industries by other industries to increase their middle management individual-level change readiness levels. Understanding the levels of individual-level

readiness in middle managers will allow insight into how ready organisations are to change in response to the VUCA dynamics and new emerging trends from the 4-IR and how successful they stand to implement change.

1.7 Conclusion

The current literature provides an extensive understanding of change management, organisational readiness, and individual level readiness. The literature, however, does not cover in-depth the specific management level when assessing the individual level readiness or the industry effect of readiness. The findings from this research will provide insight into the middle-level management individual level readiness and the industry effect of readiness on these managers. This will contribute to the body of knowledge on how organisations can create higher levels of individual-level readiness in middle management to reduce the failure rate of change initiatives and what can be gathered from different industry levels of readiness to be applied by other related industries to increase their readiness in response to change.

1.8 Layout

The structure of the following sections of the research report is as follows:

(i) Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 provides a review of the current literature that is applicable to change management and specifically individual level readiness.

(ii) Chapter 3: Research Hypotheses

Chapter 3 presents the hypotheses that were developed to support the research problem.

(iii) Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Design

Chapter 4 explains the research methodology and defends the methods selected.

(iv) Chapter 5: Results

Chapter 5 presents the results of the application of the research methodology

(v) Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

Chapter 6 offers and interprets the results found in Chapter 5 and links to Chapter 2 with the existing literature.

(vi) Chapter 7: Conclusion

Chapter 7 provides a summary of the report, with suggestions on future research and limitations of the study conducted.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review for this study was conducted to explore and understand the dynamics of change and how change readiness impacts the success of change initiatives, and the industry effect of change on the individual level readiness of middle managers. The literature review covers change management and how change management theories have developed over time in response to the high failure rate of organisational change initiatives (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). The literature review uncovers two crucial aspects of change management: organisational readiness and individual level readiness. For the purpose of this study, the focus is drawn to the importance of individual-level readiness and how it can be measured in individuals to aid in the successful implementation of change initiatives.

Section 2.2 discusses change management as a whole and how change management theories have developed to where they are today, highlighting the importance of change management in organisations. Most change management literature is focused on the structure of the organisation, the readiness of the organisation in terms of resources and the ability to meet the demands of change. However, it fails to consider the importance of individual-level readiness on a specific management level that could reduce resistance and increase readiness. Section 2.3 provides an overview of resistance to change, the causes and methods of dealing with resistance to change. Section 2.4 discusses the importance of organisational level readiness in change initiatives and how organisations can measure the level of readiness. Section 2.5 discusses the work of Armenakis and Harris (2013), who state that the common element ignored by scholars when investigating change readiness is the human element of change and resistance and how it can be overcome by increasing individual level readiness. Section 2.6 discusses the importance of middle management in the organisation and the crucial role they play in change initiatives. Section 2.7 discusses the industry effect of change management and argues that some industries experience more change than others.

2.2 Change management.

Change is primarily driven by the constant evolution of the business environment, specifically the external environment (Herrero et al., 2020). Internal barriers to successful change include lack of resources and planning, weak principal support, lack of communication and readiness amongst individuals in the organisation (Karaxha, 2019). Change management theories have evolved and emphasised the need of organisations and individuals to be ready for change. Readiness has often been attributed to the success or failure of organisational change (Getachew & Zhou, 2018). Organisations are obliged to change to remain relevant to client needs, accept government policies changes, and remain competitive in their operating environment (Herrero et al., 2020). External change employs changes in structure, practice and policies, and internal change describes the transition individuals experience for the change initiative to be successful (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013).

Change can positively or negatively affect organisations depending on how they respond to the change (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021). Change management is defined as the abilities, techniques, and disciplines required by an organisation to convert complexity and specialisation into actions and results in line with the organisation's vision (Herrero, Amrellini & Solar-Pelletier, 2020). Traditional change management responses included planning, contingency planning, and achieving an optimal fit with the organisation within the changing environment (Al-haddad & Kotnour, 2015). As the concept of change and change management evolved, organisations focused on the reason behind the change occurring and establishing causality (Al-haddad & Kotnour, 2015). This improved organisations response to changes occurring in the external environment and yielded a competitive advantage for organisations when executing planned changes. Modern change theories integrate causality, organisational dynamics, individual dynamics and follow a systematic approach to creating change readiness and successful change response (Weiner J, 2009). This emphasises the complexity of change and change management, and there is no one-time solution or “silver bullet” in response to change. It is a complex and multi-level construct.

Change management has pros and cons for organisations. Change management helps organisations effectively respond to changing demands as a result of 4-IR, it

allows flexibility and agility in the organisational decision-making process and allows organisations to identify problems that would require change efforts (Jalagat, 2016). The adaptability of organisations in response to situations helps organisations remain competitive and relevant in constantly changing environments (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). Change management can help organisations build confidence by reassessing task demands and resource availability and creating a collective commitment to the organisation's goals (Weiner J, 2009). Some of the negative aspects of change management are that the organisation might not have identified the need to change effectively, steering the organisation away from its vision and goals. Change management can be exhaustive on organisational resources such as people and finances. It can also create confusion and fear amongst members of the organisation (Jalagat, 2016). Nicolaidis & Katsaros (2013) argue that while organisational change may amplify organisational performance, it may raise obstacles to strategic planning and implementation within the organisation. Change initiatives can significantly impact the organisation's culture, leaving employees feeling left out and misaligned with the organisation's new mission (Herrero et al., 2020).

The concept of change is not new to organisations, yet many organisations still fail when responding to change, Kurt Lewin's change model dates back to 1951, Kotter's 8 stage model to 1996 and McKinsey's 7s model to 1982 (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). The McKinsey 7s model focuses on seven change areas and has two main categories: soft and hard areas (Jalagat, 2016). The soft areas include skills, staff, style and shared values and the hard elements consist of system, strategy and structure. While this model deals with many external and internal factors, it fails to recognise the importance of support and communication regarding the change initiative (Holt et al., 2007). Communication is key to the success of change initiatives, and no matter how good the plan may seem, if it is not communicated effectively amongst employees, its effect will be questioned by employees and result in resistance caused through the credibility of the change effort (Jalagat, 2016). Among the most popular change management theories, Kurt Lewin's change management model paved the way to modern theories. The model describes changes as the organisation moving away from its current state to the desired state by leveraging driving forces to overcome resistance and making the changes permanent (Moon, 2009). The model consisted of unfreezing, changing, and

refreezing. Unfreezing is the state of the organisation that released the current systems. The change moved the organisation to its desired state, and refreezing incorporated the change into its strategic objectives (Jalagat, 2016). Jalagat (2016) and Armenakis and Harris (2013) argue that change is more complex than simply transitioning from one state to another and that change has a common obstacle relating to the failure of change initiatives called resistance.

Another popular model used to prepare organisations for change was Kotters 8 step model, which was developed from research that investigated 100 organisations going through a change initiative and outlined a procedure for organisations to use when approaching a change initiative (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). The model provided a holistic approach that, when taken into consideration, was found to cause around 70% of the failure rate in many organisations (Jalagat, 2016). The model consisted of 8 steps:

- Step 1 - Increase urgency
 - Step 2 - Build a guiding team
 - Step 3 - Develop the vision
 - Step 4 - Communicate for buy-in
 - Step 5 - Empower action
 - Step 6 - Create short term wins
 - Step 7 - Do not let up
 - Step 8 - Make the changes stick
- (Jalagat, 2016)

This model recognised the importance of communicating and pursuing action to overcome resistance and the importance of culture in preparing organisations for a change initiative (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). However, the model does not deal with specific traits of individual perceptions and beliefs regarding the change initiative and how this can be leveraged to increase readiness and overcome resistance (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). Armenakis and Harris (2013) outline that change initiatives are met with resistance from employees leading to the failure of most change initiatives. This is due to individuals not aligning to the change efforts and the change not matching the organisation's visions and goals (Jalagat, 2016).

The significant failure rate of change initiatives has emphasised the development of change readiness. Armenakis and Harris (2013) have developed a conceptual framework for change readiness arguing that change readiness is achieved through organisational level readiness and individual level readiness. Holt et al. (2007) argue that resistance can be overcome by increasing change readiness through conducting an assessment of readiness before the change initiative takes place. Drivers of innovation and change are organisational features that create more reception for change in individuals, meaning the context and content of change is equally essential when overcoming resistance (Weiner J, 2009).

2.3 Resistance

Resistance to change has been identified as one of the key causes of the failure of change initiatives (Vos & Rupert, 2018). Resistance occurs in recipients due to their personal characteristics, lack of motivation, uncertainties and stress brought from the change initiative (Vos & Rupert, 2018). Armenakis and Harris (2013) argue that resistance occurs when participants in a change initiative experience discomfort, may dislike the change or do not view the change as an appropriate response to the situation at hand. Vos and Rupert (2018) further state that resistance can also arise due to poor communication regarding the change initiative.

There are direct and indirect influencers of resistance to change. The direct factors that influence change are the disposition towards change, the participant's attitude towards change and the anticipated impact of the change (Vasiliki, Stergjan, Dimitrios & Prodromos, 2017). The indirect factors that influence resistance levels are personality traits, job perceptions, job security, communication quality, participation in decision-making, and employee management relationship (Vasiliki et al., 2017). This demonstrates the complexity of resistance in participants in a change initiative and enforces the importance of change readiness as a pre-emptive measure and possible indicator when used as an assessment tool to identify factors that could cause higher resistance levels in participants (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019).

AbuTahoun & Khan (2019) suggest that resistance and change readiness are the same phenomenon viewed from different perspectives. Resistance is perceived before or during a change initiative, and readiness is used as a pre-emptive measure to curb resistance before the change initiative takes place.

Other resistance reduction techniques include providing support to employees during the change initiative or simply forcing the change (Karaxha, 2019). A study conducted by Karaxha (2019) found that using support or forcing employees into the change initiative as a resistance reduction technique was not successful in reducing resistance to change. They found that support, communication, engagement, and encouragement were instrumental to overcoming resistance. These findings corroborate closely to studies conducted by Armenakis & Harris (2013) and Holt et al. (2007), which found that resistance can be overcome through support, communicating the change message, and creating readiness for change amongst employees.

Contrary to most studies conducted regarding resistance, there is a view that states that resistance can be used as a tool for organisations to determine the legitimacy of the change initiative (Buick et al., 2018). This view states that employees that exhibit resistance identify strong commitment towards the success of the organisation and exhibit resistance due to the organisation moving away from its current identity (Buick et al., 2018).

2.4 Organisational readiness

Organisational level readiness is defined as “the collective change commitment and collective capabilities of the organisation to change” (Weiner J, 2009). In past literature, change commitment was defined as “a positive, proactive behavioural intent towards a change initiative” (Stevens, 2013). This definition failed to account for the attitudes or beliefs of individuals towards change that could lead to positive intent that is currently referred to as change readiness (Armenakis & Harris, 2013).

Organisations are viewed as complex systems with each part interacting with a counterpart and underpins the importance of change readiness as change will impact individual parts of the system and affect the system as a whole (Diab et al., 2018). Organisational level readiness focuses on the three determinants to successfully implement change: the task's demands, resource availability, and situational factors, and is considered a crucial precursor to complex change (Weiner J, 2009). Situational factors include the timing of the change initiative, the context of the change as well as the capability of the organisation to direct its efforts towards the

change initiative (Weiner J, 2009). When organisational readiness is high, employees are more likely to exhibit more effort and commitment when challenges occur during the change initiative (Getachew & Zhou, 2018). Low organisational readiness can lead to the organisation being strained on resources, low organisational culture, and the change initiative's failure (Diab et al., 2018). Organisational level readiness has been seen to lead to an increase in organisational performance but can bring a range of challenges for managers in planning and implementing strategies due to the time spent creating optimal readiness (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). Napier et al. (2017) argue that another reason for the high failure rate in change initiatives is since organisations only consider readiness when the change initiative is underway and not as a planning instrument. With the focus of organisational level readiness on the task resources and situational factors, there is no emphasis on the human element of change and how the common challenge of change models and change initiatives, resistance, can be overcome (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021).

Change is closely related to individuals in the organisation, and a large part of the success in change initiatives is attributed to how successful the human dimensions of change are recognised and utilised (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). Organisations are systems, and it is vital to consider the sectors, networks, national structures and focus on capacity development to support the successful implementation of a change initiative (Diab et al., 2018).

2.5 Individual-level readiness

Change can have a severe impact on both organisations and individuals. Organisations could be depleted from resources or experience a significant loss of market share and revenue whilst individuals are impacted personally. Change creates a feeling of uncertainty and stress within individuals in the organisation and can significantly affect the beliefs and perceptions of individuals towards leadership, the change initiative and the organisation as a whole (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). These feelings contribute to the destruction of employee well-being in an organisation and directly affect the organisational culture. Employees can feel left out and will not perceive shared commitment towards the organisation (Gigliotti et al., 2019). To reduce the adverse impact of change on individuals' organisations has

steered away from traditional top-down change strategies and has started clearly communicating the change concept and how it will impact each individual (Weiner J, 2009). Individuals who are better informed and have less uncertainty regarding the change initiative display higher levels of commitment to the change initiative due to their perceptions regarding the change initiative (Gigliotti et al., 2019). Social exchange theory suggests that individuals who are involved in the change process will display higher levels of trust in the organisation and contribute to the preservation of psychological safety perceived by employees in the workplace (Gigliotti et al., 2019). The crucial roles that individuals play in organisations and change response or initiatives have driven the development of creating readiness in individuals within the organisation to ensure the well-being and alignment between individuals and the organisation's vision (Jalagat, 2016).

Change management is a multi-level construct, and a multi-level perspective should be taken when attempting to understand change. However, there are few insights into change management's individual level readiness component (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). Individual-level readiness is defined as “an individual’s perception towards the degree of commitment towards the change initiative” (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). Most change initiatives share a common obstacle called resistance, and this is when employees resist the change initiative leading to the failure of the initiative as a whole (Jalagat, 2016).

Resistance can be minimised by effective communication, coercion, negotiation with employees, and learning and managing stress levels. This as strategy still requires the readiness component as individuals who are not ready for change will not buy into the strategy due to the affective and cognitive components of individual-level readiness to prepare employees for the change initiative (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). Individual-level readiness is defined as “The comprehensive attitude that is simultaneously influenced by the content, process, context, and individual characteristics involved” (Holt et al., 2007).

Armenakis and Harris (2013) have developed a multi-level review of change readiness and suggest there are two components of individual-level readiness, the cognitive component of change readiness and the affective components of change readiness. The first cognitive component of readiness argues that the change

readiness must create a sense of discrepancy, or a belief that the change is required (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). The definition of discrepancy has since emerged to recognise the difference between the current state and desired future state and recognise the legitimacy of the reasoning behind the change initiative (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). The second cognitive component is identified as appropriateness and is defined as the individual's belief that the change initiative is an appropriate response to an issue or goal of the organisation (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Armenakis & Harris (2013) argue that individuals must have a view that there is a sufficient need for change to occur in the organisation. The third cognitive component is efficacy and refers to the individual's perception of their capability to implement the change (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). Change efficacy is an important driver of performance as it influences the confidence and behaviours of individuals participating in change initiatives (Taufikin, IAIN Kudus Ningsih Fadhilah, IAIN Pekalongan Wahab, UIN Walisongo Semarang Zamroni, IAIN Samarinda Setyoningsih, IAIN Kudus Ulya, IAIN Kudus Ida Vera Sophya, IAIN Kudus Munawar, UIN Walisongo Semarang Ahmad Muthohar, IAIN Samarinda Farida, IAIN, 2021). Self-efficacy influences the persistence, effort and goals employees select for themselves within an organisation and is a key driver of performance and learning in individuals (Lunenburg, 2011). A study conducted by Buick et al. (2018) found that middle managers self-efficacy was instrumental in acting as change agents due to their brokering role in the change process, but managers demonstrated low levels of self-efficacy. This led to a timing issue when implementing change initiatives, as middle managers were found to try and overcome resistance rather than prevent it due to their low levels of self-efficacy and principal support.

The fourth cognitive component is principal support, which is the degree to which the employee believes that the organisation will provide support in resources and information to enable the change (Armenakis and Harris, 2013). Principal support can be derived from peers, leaders and change agents and is argued to be a crucial influencing tool to overcome resistance in organisational change initiatives (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). The final cognitive component is valence, which is the degree to which an individual weighs up benefits versus costs of the change (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). Holt et al. (2007) also stated that valence defines the perceived benefits of an individual towards the change initiative. Therefore, personal valence is directed at individuals' perceived benefit instead of the organisational benefit

brought on from a change initiative (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). This concept is supported by a study conducted by Jalagat (2016), who outlines that employees exhibit selective perception meaning they are more likely to support change initiatives if they are impacted positively by it and often ignore the importance of the change initiatives impact on the welfare of the organisation as a whole.

Affective components include the different emotions an individual may experience in a current or future change event (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Affect is an essential component of individual readiness as it indicates an individual's emotions towards accepting, adopting, and embracing change (Armenakis and Harris, 2013). Employees' emotions affect change initiatives by influencing the complex communication process, motivation, and distribution of power within an organisation (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). The emotional component of change readiness is often ignored when assessing the individual level readiness of employees. The emotional component increases individuals inclination to embrace and implement change initiatives (Getachew & Zhou, 2018). Failure to consider the effect of emotions in change readiness has distorted the view of change readiness in literature and practice (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). The failure to assess the affective components of individuals readiness levels will ignore the effect of behaviours exerted by these individuals during the change process (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Rafferty & Minbashian (2019) argue a direct link between individual-level readiness and change supportive behaviour by stating that change agents that exert positive affective perceptions towards the change initiative will enhance compliance and cooperation amongst individuals overcoming resistance in Figure 1: Change readiness attributes to outcomes below.

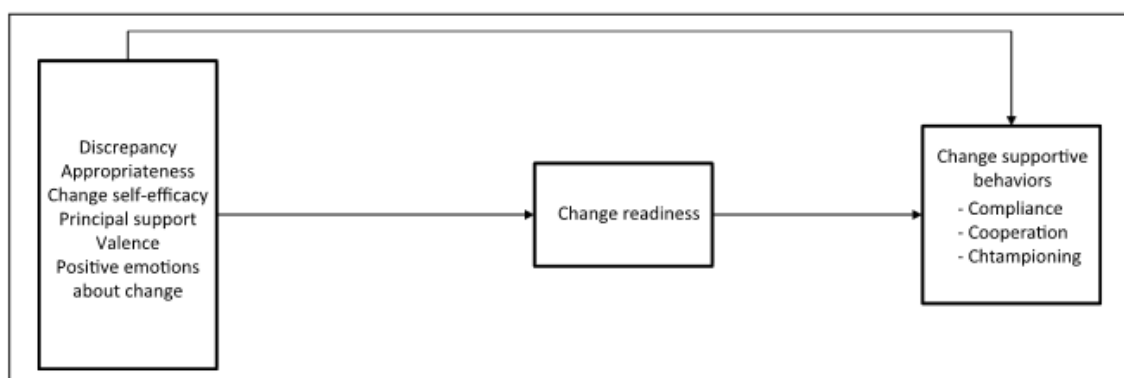


Figure 1: Change readiness attributes to outcomes

Source: Rafferty & Minbashian (2019)

Rafferty & Minbashian (2019) argue that positive emotions towards change initiatives unlock results tendencies often referred to as free activation, which leads to unprovoked readiness to engage in change initiatives whenever they present themselves. Stimulating positive emotions amongst individuals towards a change initiative is a crucial element in preventing and conquering resistance. Nicolaidis & Katsaros (2013) argue that emotions are distinguished from motives as emotions arise from external events and motives arise from internal events directed towards external environments. This suggests that emotions lead to perceptions pursuing action or disruption and that motives identify the reason behind their actions. This theory is further supported by Helpap & Bekmeier-Feuerhahn (2016), who state that positive emotions lead to increased change commitment and change efficacy in individuals.

Individual-level readiness will increase the competence of change agents overcoming resistance and improving the organisation's overall readiness through mediating the change, ensuring readiness amongst other business levels and communicating uncertainties (Jalagat, 2016). In support of this view, AbuTahoun & Khan (2019) argue that individual-level readiness can increase the organisation's overall readiness due to individuals being socially interactive communicating their beliefs throughout the organisation. Armenakis and Harris (2013) argue that should individuals be aligned with the affective and cognitive components of change readiness, they will be less likely to exhibit resistance and more likely to become change agents furthering the success possibilities of the change initiative. A study conducted by AbuTahoun and Khan (2019) reviewed the cognitive components of the individual level readiness model created by Armenakis and Harris (2013) but failed to consider the affective or emotional components of individual-level change readiness. The study reviewed employees' perceptions of the cognitive components and if the components were interrelated, sampling employees from various levels in the organisation. The outcome of this study found that the cognitive components of individual change readiness contributed to promoting the individual change readiness levels in an organisation.

Jalagat (2016) has identified that individual-level readiness can be caused by selective perception when individuals exhibit high readiness levels only due to the positive impact on their personal goals and objectives. This causes the illusion that individuals are ready to promote organisational change initiatives and organisational welfare. To overcome this, Armenakis and Harris (2013) suggest that readiness should be assessed as a multi-level construct on the organisational level and the individual level. In the pursuit of readiness, organisations can expect that the increase in individual-level readiness will counteract the negative perceptions of change in employees when employees have specific information to help them reduce change uncertainty, increased feelings of empowerment and control and increased confidence in their self-efficacy to contribute to the change initiative (Heyden, Fourné, Koene, Werkman, & Ansari, 2017). Individual level readiness is a key tool for management to design change managements strategies and assess the prospects of success and the impact it will have on the stakeholders in the organisation (Trivedi, 2021).

2.6 Middle management

Hermkens (2021) defines middle management as “a person responsible for the organisation's operations who reports to top management”. Middle management plays a crucial role in organisations due to their input in change management, formulating strategies and managing performance (Hermkens, 2021). Change is often perceived differently across the levels in an organisation; for example, change is viewed by senior managers as an opportunity and by employees as an intrusive process that bears the potential of loss (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial for organisations to effectively communicate the change message throughout the organisation to reduce uncertainty, anxiety and increase the efficacy of employees to enable them to face the change process (Nicolaidis & Katsaros, 2013). At the centre of the organisational levels, middle managers find themselves as change agents to foster the change initiative's communication (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). Incompetent change agents can result in the change agent promoting their own interests above those of the organisation and will result in failures and misunderstandings between management and employees regarding the change initiative (Jalagat, 2016). This view is supported by Hermkens (2021), who states that middle managers need to be comfortable with change, have clarity on the

organisation's direction, be thorough, have participative management styles, and be persistent in pursuing performance.

Middle managers are often conveyors of results and do not possess complete freedom in their decision making; despite this, managers still make decisions based on a rational basis of interest that in most cases represent the group's interest (Diab et al., 2018). Middle management and their decision making is therefore crucial to the support of change initiatives and to help employees cope with pressures of their roles in the change initiative. This will lead to positive organisational outcomes such as employee engagement, motivation and overall well-being (Kirrane et al., 2017).

Middle management is an integral part of managing organisational change playing a pivotal role regardless of bottom-up or top-down leadership styles (Costello & Arghode, 2019). Middle managers can strike a balance between continuity and change by leveraging their large informal network in the organisation and acting as a bridge between top management and operations (Hermkens, 2021). Therefore, a specific focus on middle management across industries will indicate middle management readiness for change and show which industries have stronger performing middle managers. High levels of individual-level readiness will allow organisations to change more successfully and effectively, achieving a fit between the organisation, stakeholders, external environment, and employees by increasing dynamism and employee confidence in change management (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019).

Change readiness is perceived as a state rather than a trait, and middle management plays an instrumental role in creating this state, increasing their confidence in their abilities to overcome the demands presented by change initiatives and have a favourable view and approach to change initiatives (Buick et al., 2018). Middle managers are located in a unique position in the organisational structure as they are not viewing the organisation from the cockpit level but are closer to the operational levels of the organisation (Hermkens, 2021). The structural proximity of middle-level managers enables them to communicate and influence situational orientations towards change. Middle-level managers are more attuned to the stance and positioning of employees, allowing them to influence the affective state towards the change of the employees (Buick et al., 2018). Middle-level managers play a crucial

role by translating strategy and managing day to day operations, working as mediators disseminating information up and down the organisation (Hermkens, 2021). Middle managers can translate strategic objectives into operational outcomes by using more relatable language to the appropriate level of employee (Heyden et al., 2017).

During a change initiative, middle management is provided with an opportunity to foster their beliefs in an organisation's primary strategic objectives and increase their influence by strengthening their role or position (Diab et al., 2018). Buick et al. (2018) state that middle-level managers are instrumental to the change initiative due to their central positioning in the organisation if they can become change agents, whilst recognising that middle-level managers are also subjected to change. This view recognises that middle managers themselves are subjected to change, emphasising the individual-level readiness of middle managers, acknowledging the possibility of middle management contributing to resistance. The study conducted by Buick et al. (2018) found that for middle-level managers to be successful change agents, they require principal support from top management, middle management needs to deem the change necessary to support the change and can display cynicism towards a change initiative. This closely ties back to the main themes of individual readiness themes identified by Armenakis & Harris (2013), specifically principal support, appropriateness and discrepancy. The findings illustrate how middle management readiness is instrumental to enabling them as change agents and increasing individual readiness levels amongst employees. It becomes easier for middle managers to convey the appropriateness and feasibility of a change initiative to employees when they understand it is making them more effective change agents (Heyden et al., 2017).

Traditional attempts to increase readiness amongst individuals include creating employee buy-in through using social exchange theory and providing organisational support to employees throughout the change (Gigliotti, Vardaman, Marshall, and Gonzalez 2019). This view does not account for the discrepancy and appropriateness components of individual-level readiness, meaning that although individuals are actively involved in the change and are supported by the organisation, they might still think the change is unnecessary and does not fit the vision of the organisation and might not be capable of executing the change (Armenakis & Harris,

2013). Therefore, it is crucial for middle-level managers to understand change readiness and have high readiness levels to act as change agents in the change initiatives to provide support and direct employees towards achieving the change initiatives (Buick et al., 2018).

The notion of resistance in change efforts usually does not account for the possibility that change agents can contribute to resistant behaviours and communications through being incompetent, not taking action or taking the wrong course of action and mismanagement due to their own levels of readiness being low (Neves et al., 2018). Middle managers can also contribute to resistance when they themselves do not hold favourable views toward the change initiative, leading to breakdowns in the communication of the change initiative throughout the organisation (Hermkens, 2021). These views hold true to the importance of middle managers having high individual level readiness when acting as change agents to improve the prospects of success in a change initiative (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). When middle managers act as change agents to convey the change message, not only will they reduce resistance, they will increase readiness by influencing the attitudes and beliefs of individuals that will ultimately lead to the change in behaviour of those individuals creating positive and active participation in the change initiative (Stevens, 2013). The position of middle managers helps to break down power and information asymmetries between employees and management, increasing favourable attitudes amongst employees towards a change initiative despite having complete legitimacy of power compared to higher levels of management (Heyden et al., 2017).

In conclusion, middle-level managers are instrumental to the change initiative due to their proximity in the organisation, their role as change agents and their undue influence across the levels in the organisation (Heyden et al., 2017). Due to middle management being subjected to change themselves, they can be a constraint in the organisation if they do not have high readiness levels (Hermkens, 2021). Therefore, it is of great value to organisations to determine the overall readiness levels of middle management when planning for change in the organisation (Stevens, 2013).

2.7 Industry effect

Change is a regular feature in any industry, and whilst no industry is immune to change, some industries experience change at a faster and more complex pace than others due to regulations, innovation, or regulations affecting the industry (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021). This suggests that some industries are experiencing more change than others and could exhibit higher change readiness levels on both an individual and organisational level. Key to this argument is the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown measures implemented to curb the spread of the virus, some industries were able to adapt their businesses to fit into the new context only to survive, whilst others capitalised on the new opportunities presented by the crisis (Seetharaman, 2020). Other factors driving industry change are the rapid innovation of technology and automation in functions to remain cost-competitive (Sony & Naik, 2020). Industries are rapidly experiencing demand to digitise their process and offerings to maintain relevance and keep up with the pace of changing customer demands (Machado et al., 2019).

Change in the context of manufacturing industries includes rapid innovations in technology, increased legislation and resource scarcity in terms of water and electricity; this provides a challenge to the industry as a whole as the industry is forced to change to adapt to constantly shifting demands (Cai, Lai, Lui, Wei, Ma, Jia, Jiang and Lv 2019). Similarly, retail and service industries are also subject to change on a large scale; during the Covid-19 pandemic and worldwide lockdowns, retail businesses were forced to close down temporarily depending on the essential nature of goods supplied, and service industries were forced to adopt working from home practices instilling change on the organisation as a whole having to redefine the way the organisation operates and how outputs will be guaranteed (Seetharaman, 2020). Retail industries are being digitised with self-checkout functions that are changing the organisation's structure at its core, whereas banking service sectors have adopted this approach long ago (Mukerjee et al., 2019). Retail industries are forced to expand into the platform economy as the retail landscape has shifted into online purchases (Hänninen et al., 2018). This suggests that the service industry had a higher past level of readiness to adopt changes in technology, as they have had online offerings prior to that of the retail industry in the form of banking, insurance and medical aids demonstrating the industry effect of change readiness.

Whilst each industry is presented with its challenges creating change, it is maintained that some industries experience a higher rate of change and some industries experience a higher frequency of change (Vecchiato & Roveda, 2010). Service industries, particularly in the financial service space, are experiencing intense levels of competition from technological companies outside the traditional service sense (Hermkens, 2021). The increase in competition is forcing service organisations to rapidly adopt newer forms of technology to remain relevant in their offerings that fundamentally change their business models (Hermkens, 2021). This suggests that the service sector has to undergo significant changes and emphasises the importance of maintaining readiness on an organisational and individual level.

2.8 Conclusion

The literature highlights the importance of individual-level readiness and that it has not been applied to a specific management level or observed the industry effect on individual-level readiness. This section reviewed the literature regarding change management, change readiness, middle management, and change influences in industries. Using the individual readiness model developed by Armenakis and Harris (2013) to measure the individual-level readiness of middle-level managers across various industries will provide insight into the shortcomings in the existing literature on applying the theories to a certain level of employees and the industry effect of change readiness. Diab et al. (2018) argue that it is vital for an organisation to conduct a change readiness assessment to determine the readiness of the conditions, attitudes and resources at all the levels in the organisational system. Understanding the level of readiness contributed to a specific management level will contribute to the understanding of change readiness and the dynamics of successfully executing a change initiative.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

3. Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this research is to measure the individual level readiness of middle-level managers across three industries, manufacturing, service, and retail industries. The research objective is to determine which industries have higher levels of individual-level change readiness in middle management and what can be learned from these industries by other industries to increase their middle management individual-level change readiness levels. The individual level readiness perceptions framework developed by Armenakis & Harris (2013) will be used to gain insight into the readiness levels of middle level managers. Understanding the levels of individual-level readiness in middle managers will allow insight into the readiness levels of individuals in organisations. Understanding the readiness levels of individuals will assist in the understanding of the response to the VUCA dynamics and change in organisations.

- *H₀ There is a significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the retail industry compared to the service and manufacturing industry.*
- *H₁ There is no significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the retail industry compared to the service and manufacturing industry.*
- *H₀ There is a significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the service industry compared to the retail and manufacturing industry.*
- *H₂ There is no significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the service industry compared to the retail and manufacturing industry.*

- *H₀ There is a significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the manufacturing industry compared to the service and retail industry.*
- *H₃ There is no significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the manufacturing industry compared to the service and retail industry.*

The outcome of testing the above hypotheses will measure the level of individual readiness in middle managers and if the industry affects the readiness levels of these managers. This will indicate the individual readiness levels of middle management as a whole and which industries tend to have middle managers with higher individual readiness levels.

The methodology that was applied to the study and hypotheses is explained in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This research design aimed to describe the levels of middle management individual readiness for change in the manufacturing, service, and retail industry. Descriptive research seeks to produce an accurate representation of events and situations (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Hartmann & Lussier (2020) indicate that management readiness for change is essential to organisations survival in trying times and crucial in innovation in organisations. Individual change readiness has been attributed to the high failure rate of organisational changes. Thus, this research design aimed to measure the readiness of middle management for change (Getachew & Zhou, 2018). Contrasting to exploratory studies, which seek to ask new questions around a situation or phenomenon, this study aimed to describe the current state of middle management readiness for change (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

The research design aligned with a positivism philosophy as the research set out to uncover observable social realities employed to facilitate replication (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This allowed the investigation into the correlation between industries and individual change readiness of middle managers. Given the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic in communication, trade, and operations, a positivism philosophy uncovered the social realities from a middle managers perspective (Hartmann & Lussier, 2020).

A quantitative research approach was followed to ensure a deductive approach. A deductive approach involves using a research strategy to test a theoretical proposition. This study tested the formulated hypotheses, defining and closing the knowledge gap between which industry had the highest level of individual change readiness in middle management (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). A quantitative study's benefits include allowing the researcher to measure specific constructs and allowing for a sizable sample of the target population. Other benefits include reaching a more significant sample more effectively through survey methods, given the time constraints (Birks, 2016). Holt et al. (2007) argue that while a qualitative assessment of readiness can provide rich information, a quantitative study is more appropriate as

it can be distributed widely in short periods and that a reliability and validity test can be conducted on the readiness assessment. A deductive approach allowed the researcher to gather specific data concerning the problem statement/question and research objectives mentioned in point 1.6, allowing testing of the detailed data collected regarding the individual level readiness of middle-level managers.

A mono method research design was followed using a single data collection method (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Due to this study's time constraints, it was not feasible to conduct a pluralistic research method.

The research strategy was in line with a descriptive research design, and data was collected using a standardised survey tool that measured the individual level readiness of middle management based on the constructs provided in a model by (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). A survey method allowed the researcher to collect responses from many respondents on the same constructs, which enabled the researcher to gain data from a large group of middle-level managers in the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

Due to the time constraints in completing this research, a cross-sectional time horizon was followed. This allowed the researcher to gain a snapshot at a given time of the research setting at a particular time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.2 Population

The population is defined as the complete set of group members, the population described for this study is middle-level managers that work in the retail, service, or manufacturing industry (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Middle management plays an integral part in managing organisational change, regardless of bottom-up or top-down leadership styles (Costello & Arghode, 2019). While top-level management bears the responsibility of initiating and planning change strategies, it is up to middle management to execute the strategy and manage the dynamics thereof by communicating and providing support and feedback to individuals affected by the change (King et al., 2020). The criteria for selecting the sample from the population to survey was middle-level managers working in either the retail, service or manufacturing industries. For the purpose of this study, middle management is

defined as an individual responsible for running the organisation who reports to top management (Hermkens, 2021).

4.3 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis was the perspectives and views of middle-level managers in the retail, service, or manufacturing industry. Drawing from existing literature and using the cognitive and affective components of individual-level readiness as set out by Armenakis & Harris (2013), the research measured the individual level readiness of middle-level managers in the service, retail, and manufacturing industry.

4.4 Sampling method and size

A sample is defined as a subgroup of the entire population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). For the purpose of this study, probability sampling was followed using a cluster sampling technique. A sampling technique is defined as a process of selecting a smaller number of representative individuals from a population that has been defined, and the individuals will provide a source of data for the researcher to investigate during the research (Sharma, 2017). A Cluster sampling technique is used when groups have occurred naturally. Middle-level managers exist in each of the three industries identified in the population (Sharma, 2017). When sampling middle level managers from the various industries, middle management was clearly defined as above to avoid a sampling error in the different industries due to different definitions.

A target list defining companies in the three industries was compiled from YelloSa, a business directory that provided contact details and organisations' locations. The sample was drawn by contacting five organisations from each industry and enquiring how many middle managers were willing to participate in taking a survey. Middle management is defined for this study as an individual responsible for running the organisation who reports to top management. Middle-level management formed the only criteria, and support staff was not included in the sample. The sample size suggested was 30 individuals from each of the three industries identified to establish a fair representation of the population identified in 4.1 and the unit in 4.2 to a minimum

of 90 respondents. All the middle-level managers that were willing to participate in the survey were selected to survey.

The sample was chosen to align well with the research objective and ensure that the hypothesis was effectively tested. Köhler, Landis, & Cortina (2017) indicate that the sample characteristics should be part of the research design and should be specified to ensure the accuracy of the data collected.

4.5 Measurement instrument

The measurement instrument took the form of a questionnaire and measured 33 themes of organisational readiness for the cognitive component as set out by Armenakis & Harris (2013). A questionnaire developed by Armenakis & Harris was developed to measure 33 various components of cognitive readiness however the questionnaire for this specific study was amended to fit local conditions.

The questionnaire was designed using nominal data to establish the demographics of the respondent. Questions with a pre-determined response indicated the age, highest level of education, gender, tenure, and position in the organisation. The questionnaire measured the level of agreement with the statements on a scale. A Likert-type scale was used, and the scale ranged from 1, indicating strongly disagree and 5, indicating strongly agree.

The questionnaire consisted of six screening questions and thirty-three questions measuring self-efficacy, personal valence, appropriateness, organisational support, and discrepancy. Six additional questions were placed in the questionnaire to measure individual readiness's affective components and to measure respondents' emotional perceptions of change. The questionnaire measured affective and cognitive components and applied to middle-level managers in South Africa as these are standard constructs that can be measured universally.

A pilot study was conducted amongst five colleagues to test the validity and clarity of the questionnaire. Feedback from this pilot study suggested that the questionnaire clarifies what is being measured by providing some context to the study. The pilot study indicated that sufficient time was allowed to complete the questionnaire and

capture all responses. During the pilot, it was identified that some office mail servers were restricting access to the survey. To overcome this, participants were notified that the survey could be completed using a smartphone as well. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1: Questionnaire.

4.6 Data gathering process

Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire. A self-administered questionnaire's benefits include cost-effectiveness, no interviewer bias, and is convenient for the researcher when gathering data (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Self-administered questionnaires enabled the researcher to collect data accurately and effectively by including appropriate questions aimed at the correct target audience (Taherdoost, 2016). The Human Resource Manager distributed the questionnaire to employees, and employees were given 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Other distribution methods included direct mailing with information obtained from the Human Resource Manager. Two weeks were allowed for respondents to complete the questionnaire before action was sought to gather feedback. The questionnaire made use of a cover page that explains the process of completing the questionnaire and how respondents should enter their responses.

4.7 Analysis approach

The data gathered from the questionnaire was captured in SPSS in a data matrix to perform the analysis. The variables were calculated and given exact names, then coded, and the data captured. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample of the study. A Cronbach's alpha and Pearson's correlation test was used to determine the reliability and validity of the scale, constructs, and measurements. An exploratory factor analysis was used to determine if questions could be grouped into one item and discussed further under point 5.4. A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to establish if the data was normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test is based on correlations between the given observations and normal scores (Rani Das, 2016). Based on the output, if the p -value is less than 0.05, the data is not normally distributed, and a parametric test cannot be used (Rani Das, 2016). A Kruskal Wallis H test was a non-parametric alternative to a one-way ANOVA to measure if significant differences exist between middle management individual level readiness

and the industry they work in. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is preferred for this study as it is not as sensitive to outliers as a one-way ANOVA and is used when the assumptions of normality, independence and homoscedasticity are not met (Das et al., 2020).

The data was collected from three industries and allowed the researcher to measure the individual change readiness levels between the three groups (Birks, 2016). A study conducted by Holt et al. (2007) used a one-way ANOVA to determine if participants reported higher mean readiness than other participants. This test was justified as they had a normal data distribution.

The researcher studied the data's output, specifically the p -value and chi-square, to determine if there were significant differences between the industry groups of middle-level managers and their individual readiness levels. A p -value of more than 0.05 will indicate that there is no statistical significance between the variables and that the null hypothesis should be accepted (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). A 95% confidence interval will be used when testing the hypotheses. Data was stored on the online survey tool and, after that, on a file created in SPSS. The focus of the analysis strived to present accurate and non-manipulated data to avoid turning non-significant relations into significant relations. This ensured there was no inflation of significance levels and no publication bias (Meyer, Van Witteloostuijn, & Beugelsdijk, 2017).

4.8 Quality controls

To ensure the questions were reliable, the respondents were asked the same question under the same condition on two occasions, and the results were compared. However, for the practicality of this study, a test re-test was not used. Instead, Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the scale's reliability (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). A Cronbach's alpha value larger than 0.65 is generally acceptable, with ranges below 0.65 becoming questionable on the scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

The internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha value to correlate the items measuring the same construct. The Cronbach's alpha value was tested before the questionnaires were distributed to ensure the internal consistency reliability.

Saunders & Lewis (2018) provide direction of the questions in ensuring the questions will provide sufficient data to answer the research question and meet the research objective they, therefore, suggest testing the questions for content validity and construct validity not only to ensure that the research questions are answered but also that the questions asked are collecting data that it was intended to measure.

4.9 Data rigour and ethics

Chidlow, Ghauri, Yeniyurt & Cavusgil (2015) state that the researcher needs to be rigorous in the data collection method. They define rigour as the extent to which the researcher is thorough and precise in the data collection procedures. The researcher needs to establish rigour in the research procedure to increase the research's reliability and reduce non-response bias (Chidlow et al., 2015). Thus, the researcher improved the survey's quality by providing respondents with a pre-survey notice and clear instructions on using the survey. Multiple users timed the survey during a pilot test, and it was established that there was sufficient time to complete the survey.

To reduce non-response bias, the researcher followed a mailing technique set out by Chidlow et al. (2015), which consisted of sending the first communication notifying potential participants and human resources managers of the survey and asking them to complete the survey. A second communication was sent out to thank participants who have already completed the survey and remind those who have not completed the survey that their responses would be appreciated. After the second communication was sent out, a respondent indicated that they could not open the survey as the organisation's firewall was blocking it. A third communication was sent out with a link to the survey to remind potential participants to complete the survey and the purpose. The third communication explained that participants could also complete the survey on a mobile device should they experience difficulty in accessing the survey on a work device. The multiple contacts allowed for a more extensive collective capability to elicit potential participants' responses to complete the survey.

To ensure the study was conducted ethically, the good code of practice as set out by Saunders & Lewis (2018) was used to ensure the following:

- The research conducted did not cause harm to participants.

- Participants had the right to receive clear instructions.
- Participants had the right to give their informed consent of participating in the study.
- The study was free from coercion, with honesty and transparency being the centre of the relationship between the researcher and participants.

To ensure anonymity, no names of individuals were requested, no names of individuals or organisations were being reported, the data was stored without any identifiers and only aggregated information was reported. The data gathered complies with the data storage act, and no participants or respondents were discriminated against due to the findings (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). The data will be stored on a cloud drive for a minimum of ten years to ensure access to data in the future.

4.10 Limitations

Possible limitations of this methodology are that the responses are guided in line with the questionnaire and will only measure the desired response. It is assumed that the respondents and participants will be fair and unbiased in their responses and that they will fully complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed only to measure the constructs set out in point 4.5, confining responses only to what the questionnaire will allow. Other possible limitations include getting access to the correct number and suitable level of managers in the organisation to participate in the survey. Limitations of a cross-sectional study are that the data is gathered at a specific point in time and not over a period. This suggests that respondents may be subjected to circumstances that could influence their response (Spector, 2019).

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the results of the research methods discussed in Chapter 4. As explained in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, the purpose of this study is to measure the individual level readiness of middle-level managers across three industries, manufacturing, service, and retail industries. The research objective is to determine which industries have higher levels of individual-level change readiness in middle management and what can be learned from these industries by other industries to increase their middle management individual-level change readiness levels. Data were obtained from 95 respondents through an online questionnaire to measure the individual readiness levels of the participants.

Individual-level readiness was used as the independent variable in the testing performed for all three hypotheses. In all three hypotheses, the null hypothesis was accepted. The descriptive statistics will be discussed before the details of the inferential statistics to support the conclusions outlined above.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

5.2.1 Description of data collected

A total of 95 responses were received, of which all respondents indicated that they were employed as middle-level managers. Of the responses received, 31 respondents indicated that they were employed in the manufacturing industry, 37 respondents indicated that they were employed in the service industry, and 27 respondents indicated that they were employed in the retail industry. The targeted sample was 90 respondents, with 30 respondents from each of the respective industries. The responses received totalled 95 respondents that met the screening criteria of industry and management level, and all responses were used in the analysis. In the retail industry, however, the sample was not met as only 27 responses were received. During the data gathering, process responses were delayed due to firewall servers on company computers not allowing respondents access to the survey. Human resource managers encouraged participants to

complete the survey on their personal devices, but many of the targeted participants failed to complete the survey given the circumstances. The sample size of participants in the three industries was not equal, which voided the assumption of equal variances.

5.2.2 Gender

Figure 2: Gender profile below indicates the gender profile of the respondents that participated in the survey. The profile consisted of 41% of the respondents were female, and 59% of the respondents were male.

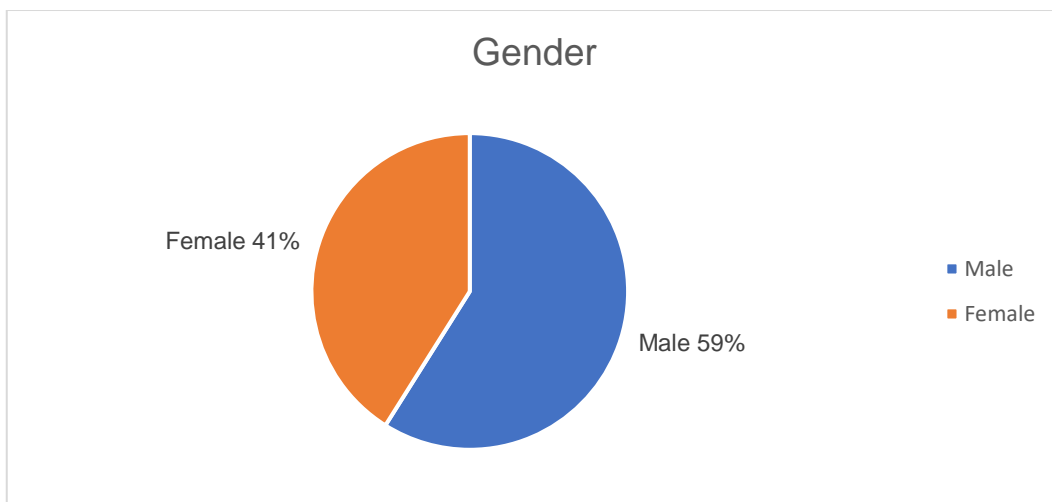


Figure 2: Gender profile

Source: Authors own (2021)

Further analysis of the gender profile of the respondents indicated that the majority of responses received from the manufacturing and service industry were male, with the majority of responses from the retail industry being female.

5.2.3 Age

Table 1: Age categories of respondents below illustrates the frequency of age selected by respondents. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 26-35, representing 48.4% of the sample. The skewness may be attributable to the cluster sampling technique used by the researcher and the target responses being middle management.

Table 1: Age categories of respondents

Age	Number of respondents (N)	% Of total
Less than 20 years old	0	0%
20-25 years old	2	2.1%
26-35 years old	46	48.4%
36-45 years old	22	23.2%
46-55 years old	9	9.5%
56 years and older	16	16.8%

Source: Authors own (2021)

5.2.4 Education level

Table 2 below indicates the level of education of the respondents.

Table 2: Education level of respondents

Highest level of education	Number of respondents	% Of total
Matric	20	21.1%
Diploma	6	6.3%
Bachelor's degree	25	26.3%
Higher diploma	20	21.1%
Master's degree	24	25.3%
PhD	0	0%

Source: Authors own (2021)

Most of the respondents indicated that they had some form of tertiary education.

5.2.5 Length of service

The length of service in Figure 3 below indicates that most respondents worked for their current organisation for 6-10 years, with 31.6% of respondents selecting this category. 7.4% of respondents indicated that they worked for the same organisation between 11-15 years. The service length was used as a demographic variable to assist in interpreting the findings of the research.

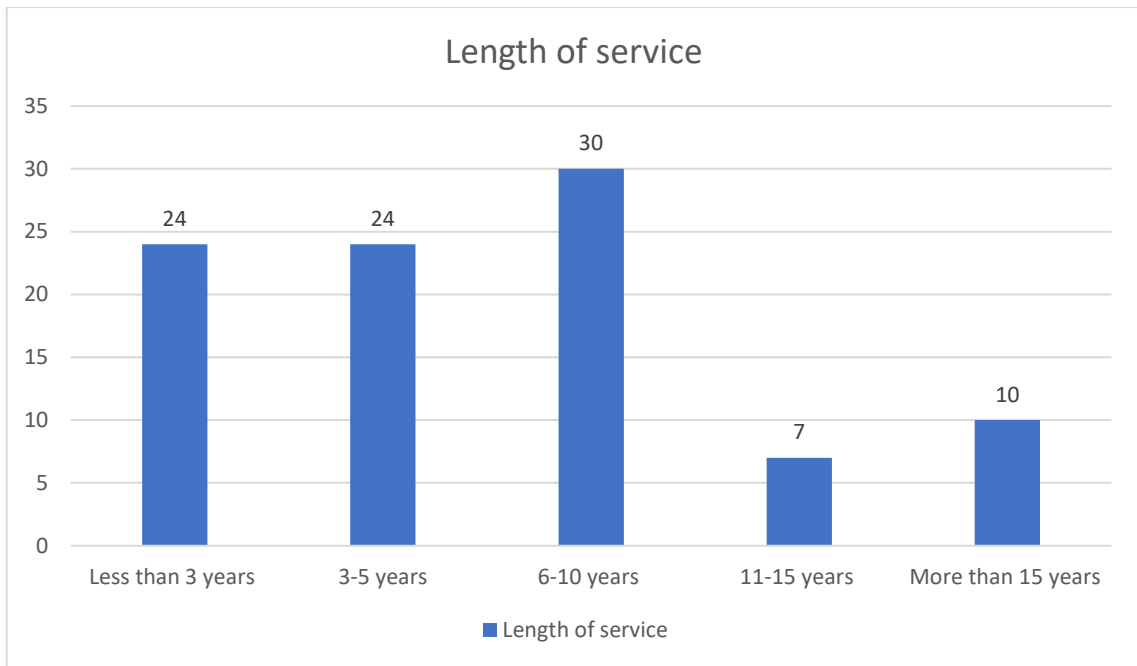


Figure 3: Length of service

Source: Authors own (2021)

5.2.6 Position held

The position of managers held was used as a demographic variable to ensure that the correct level of management completed the survey. The sample selected was middle-level management and, as discussed in chapter 4, does not include line support staff. The results indicated that all 95 responses were received from middle-level managers.

5.2.7 Industry

Respondents were surveyed across three industries, namely the manufacturing, service and retail industry. As illustrated in Table 3, the responses indicated that 32.6% of respondents worked in the manufacturing industry, 38.9% of respondents in the service industry, and 28.4% in the retail industry.

Table 3: Industry

Industry	Number of responses	% Of total
Manufacturing	31	32.6%
Service	37	38.9%
Retail	27	28.4%

Source: Authors own (2021)

5.3 Individual level readiness perceptions

This section shows the responses received from respondents who have completed the survey. Table 4 below reflects the responses.

Table 4: Individual readiness perceptions Self-Efficacy

Individual level readiness perceptions					
Question 11 was recoded as it was negatively worded.					
Self-efficacy	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
7. I am capable of implementing the change	1.1%	2.1%	7.4%	46.3%	43.2%
8. I have the capability to perform my duties with the proposed change	1.1%	0%	3.2%	51.6%	44.2%
9. My experience in the organisation makes me confident in performing well after the change is initiated	1.1%	2.1%	3.2%	52.6%	41.1%
10. I have the skills to implement this change	1.1%	2.1%	7.4%	48.4%	41.1%
11. There are some tasks I do not think I can do well when the change is required	0%	21.1%	27.4%	40%	11.6%
Question 15 was recoded as it was negatively worded					

Personal Benefit (Valence)	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
12. This change will create opportunities for me	0%	1.1%	18.9%	43.2%	36.8%
13. I will experience more self-fulfilment in my job with the proposed change.	0%	2.1%	22.1%	46.3%	29.5%
14. I expect to earn a higher salary after the change is initiated	4.2%	16.8%	42.1%	22.1%	14.7%
15. My future job will be limited because of the change in the organisation	2.1%	6.3%	30.5%	43.2%	17.9%
16. I will feel more self-accomplished after the change initiative has taken place	1.1%	2.1%	13.8%	60.6%	22.3%
Question 20 was recoded as it was negatively worded					
Appropriateness	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
17. I believe the proposed organizational change will have a favourable effect on the organisation	0%	2.1%	6.3%	65.3%	26.3%
18. The change in our organisation will improve the performance of our organization.	0%	0%	11.6%	62.1%	26.3%

19. The change we are implementing is helping the organisation to achieve its vision	0%	0%	6.3%	65.3%	28.4%
20. This organizational change will result in losses of some of the best assets of the organisation.	0%	18.9%	26.3%	41.1%	13.7%
21. This change is a short term solution to more significant problems in the organisation	0%	1.1%	13.7%	56.8%	28.4%
Question 24 and 25 were recoded as they were negatively worded					
Discrepancy	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
22. The way things are done in the organisation needs to change	5.3%	7.4%	16.8%	49.5%	21.1%
23. There are legitimate reasons behind making the change in the organisation	0%	1.1%	12.6%	63.2%	23.2%
24. No one has explained the reasoning why the change should be made.	0%	11.6%	22.1%	45.3%	21.1%
25. The time spent on change should be spent on something else	0%	8.4%	13.7%	51.6%	26.3%
26. This change is clearly needed	2.1%	0%	21.1%	53.7%	23.2%

Question 30,31 and 33 were recoded as they were negatively worded					
Principal Support	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
27. Management has indicated clearly that the organisation is going to change	1.1%	9.5%	16.8%	49.5%	23.2%
28. I am supported throughout the change	1.1%	12.6%	23.2%	46.3%	16.8%
29. The senior management of the organisation have been advocating the change	0%	4.2%	13.7%	57.9%	24.2%
30. Senior management have not been personally involved in the change implementation	0%	18%	16.9%	49.4%	15.7%
31. Management have given me very little guidance explaining the expectations after the change	0%	20.7%	25%	37%	17.3%
32. The top managers in this organization are putting what is said in action	1.1%	7.4%	25.3%	58.9%	7.4%
33. I feel the time spent on the change is wasted due to senior management not wanting the change	0%	14.7%	13.7%	52.6%	18.9%

34. I feel I have the support to follow through with this change	1.1%	4.2%	18.9%	61.1%	14.7%
Question 36,37 and 39 were recoded as they were negatively worded					
Emotional Components	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
35. I feel positive towards the change	0%	2.1%	8.4%	62.1%	27.4%
36. I feel uncertain about the change	0%	16.8%	22.1%	52.6%	8.4%
37. I feel sad about the change	0%	3.2%	22.1%	51.6%	23.2%
38. I feel confident about the change	1.1%	2.1%	14.7%	56.8%	25.3%
39. I feel scared about the outcome of the change	0%	17.9%	28.4%	41.1%	12.6%

Source: Authors own based on survey responses (2021)

5.4 Results of reliability and validity of the data

5.4.1 Validity

Adequate research is dependent on sound measurement, which is obtained through validity. Validity is the degree to which a measurement instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Furr & Heuckeroth, 2019). To measure the different components of Individual-level readiness, questions were adapted from a model developed by Armenakis & Harris (2013) and adapted for the context of the study. For each construct of individual-level readiness, a sub-construct was created using a compute variable. The questions were grouped into the different factors of individual-level readiness. The item totals created were:

- I. Self-Efficacy
- II. Personal Benefit
- III. Appropriateness

- IV. Discrepancy
- V. Principal Support
- VI. Emotional components

A Bivariate correlation using a Pearson’s correlation was used in SPSS to determine if there was internal validity. The item totals were selected based on the requirement that there was a significant correlation. A significant correlation is established when the p -value is less than 0.05. Based on the results as shown in Table 5 below, there was a sufficient correlation between the questions and the item total, indicating internal validity is successful, and the item totals can be accepted. A p -value indicates the probability of the finding that is observed.

Table 5: Pearson’s correlation test for internal validity

Construct	SPSS Label	Correlation between item total and questions
Self-Efficacy	SETotal	0.00
Personal Benefit	PBTotal	0.00
Appropriateness	ATotal	0.00
Discrepancy	DCTotal	0.00
Principal Support	PSTotal	0.00
Emotional components	ECTotal	0.00

Source: Authors Own SPSS results (2021)

5.4.2 Reliability

To determine the reliability of the measurement, scale a Cronbach’s alpha test was used. A Cronbach’s alpha value larger than 0.65 is generally acceptable, with ranges below 0.65 becoming questionable on the scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). A value greater than 0.65 is considered reliable.

The constructs were measured individually to determine the reliability of the scale instrument to measure the construct.

Questions 11, 24, 25, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37 and 39 were recoded as they were negatively worded. Negatively worded questions can fail to correlate with the total item score, this suggests that items that are uncorrelated with the total score will lower the value of Cronbach’s alpha (Roszkowski & Soven, 2010). The questions were recoded to increase Cronbach’s alpha value. Table 6 below shows the preliminary Cronbach’s alpha.

Table 6: Preliminary Cronbach's alpha

Construct	Change	Cronbach's alpha initial value	Cronbach's alpha change value
Self-efficacy	Question 11 recoded as it was negatively worded	0.73	0.73
Personal valence	Question 15 removed	0.50	0.65
Appropriateness	Question 20 removed	0.66	0.78
Discrepancy	Question 24 and 25 recoded and question 22 removed	0.59	0.69
Principal support	Question 30, 31 and 33 recoded	0.85	0.85
Emotional components	Question 36, 37 and 39 recoded	0.74	0.74

Source: Authors own (2021)

As shown in Table 7, the revised Cronbach's alpha test results show that the scales were reliable.

Table 7: Cronbach's alpha test results

Item	Scale name per Spss	Number of questions per scale	Cronbach's alpha	Outcome
Self-efficacy	SETotal	5	0.73	Construct is reliable
Personal valence	PBTotal	5	0.65	Construct is reliable
Appropriateness	ATotal	5	0.78	Construct is reliable
Discrepancy	DTotal	5	0.69	Construct is reliable
Principal support	PSTotal	8	0.85	Construct is reliable
Emotional components	ECTotal	5	0.74	Construct is reliable

Source: Authors own (2021)

5.5 Exploratory factor analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was used as a dimension reduction technique to group the different variables into factors for ease of analysis and hypothesis testing. Dimension reduction techniques can be done using a confirmatory factor analysis or an exploratory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis simplifies and orders interrelated measures and explores possible relationships between observed variables by observing their correlations (Alavi, Visentin, Thapas, Hunt, Watson &

Cleary., 2020). Confirmatory factor analysis is used to verify a structure between observed variables when the instrument had been previously tested or when a questionnaire has been adapted from existing literature (Suhr, 2006). To use a confirmatory factor analysis, a comparative model fit needs to exist. Due to this requirement and expectation of a poor model fit, an exploratory factor analysis was used instead (Suhr, 2006).

A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted to determine if the sample size is adequate for the analysis and if there are sufficient correlations between the variables (Beavers, Lounsbury, Richards, Huck, Skolits & Esquivel., 2013). The output of the KMO test should generally be greater than 0.7, with 0.5 being the cut off as it indicates that the sample size is large enough for the analysis (Yong & Pearce, 2013). When using Bartlett's test of sphericity, the p -value needs to be less than 0.05 to determine if there are sufficient correlations between the variables indicating if the principal component analysis is suitable (Yong & Pearce, 2013). Both tests yielded satisfactory outcomes as the results indicated below in Table 8:

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity results

Construct	KMO test of sampling adequacy	Bartlett's test of Sphericity-Sig. value
Self-efficacy	0.8	0
Personal Benefit (Valence)	0.62	0
Appropriateness	0.76	0
Discrepancy	0.65	0
Principal support	0.75	0
Emotional components	0.66	0

Source: Authors Own (2021)

As seen from the table above the constructs, "Personal Benefit", "Discrepancy", and "Emotional components", the KMO test showed that the sample size is slightly smaller than would be advised but still acceptable as it is higher than the 0.5 cut off.

A principal component analysis was conducted to determine how many components can be extracted for dimension reduction. The output of the principal components analysis shows a single component output and indicates that all items load strongly with the component. A correlation of greater than 0.30 is accepted as it shows that

the item is significantly correlated to the component (Beavers et al., 2013). Table 9 shows the total variance explained based on the eigenvalue 1 rule where components were selected. The proportion of retained factors should be 50% and higher, and the results show that all items loaded higher than 50%, and thus the single factors were retained (Samuels, 2016). The detailed results are shown in appendix 2.

Table 9: Summary of Total variance explained

Construct	Sums of squared loadings	% of Variance
Self-Efficacy	2.937	73.424
Personal benefit	1.697	65.580
Appropriateness	2.445	61.134
Discrepancy	1.756	58.533
Principal support	2.541	63.520
Emotional components	2.026	67.526

Source: Authors own (2021)

Based on the loadings, the following questions were grouped together into single items, the component shows the label as shown in SPSS where the respective questions were grouped together as shown in Table 10 below:

Table 10: Factor analysis summary

Questions	Component	Notes
Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10	SETotal	Q11 removed due to low variable contribution
Q12, Q13, Q16	PBTotal	Q14 and Q15 were removed due to low variable contribution
Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21	ATotal	Q21 removed due to low variable contribution
Q23, Q25, Q26	DTotal	Q22 and Q24 were removed due to low variable contribution
Q27, Q28, Q31, Q34	PSTotal	Q29, Q30, Q32 and Q33 were removed due to low variable contribution
Q35, Q37, Q38	ETotal	Q36 and Q39 were removed due to low communalities

Source: Authors own (2021)

The questions were grouped together for ease of analysis, and loadings were sufficient to group the items.

5.6 Test for normality

It is common in statistical analysis to assume that the data is normally distributed (Rani Das, 2016). Two identification methods exist: graphical tests or analytical test procedures (Rani Das, 2016). It is recommended to use a Shapiro-Wilk test to test for normality as it is based on the correlation between normal scores and the data (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted in SPSS, and the results are shown below in Table 11:

Table 11: Shapiro-Wilk Test of normality

Tests of Normality			
	Statistic	df	Sig.
SETotal	0.838	95	0.000
PBTotal	0.946	95	0.001
ATotal	0.919	95	0.000
DCTotal	0.953	95	0.002
PSTotal	0.972	95	0.041
ECTotal	0.940	95	0.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Based on the output of the Shapiro-Wilk test, all the items were not normally distributed as the p -values which is demonstrated as the Sig. value above was less than 0.05. This supports the use of a Kruskal Wallis H test as a non-parametric alternative to a one-way Anova.

5.7 Results of Hypothesis testing

This section provides the output of the research methodology and testing applied to the data to test the hypothesis as set out in CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS 3.

5.7.1 Hypothesis testing

The objective of hypotheses was to determine if there is a significant difference between the individual level readiness of middle management in the retail, service and manufacturing industry. For this test, a Kruskal Wallis H test was performed. The Kruskal Wallis H test is a non-parametric alternative to a One-way ANOVA and compares mean ranks between two or more groups. All the assumptions of the test were met, and the test was conducted. The output of the test indicated that there is no significant difference between the readiness levels of middle-level managers and the industry they work in. This is evident from the p -values being greater than 0.05 for all the relationships.

Table 12: Kruskal-Wallis test output

Construct	Test statistic	Degree of freedom	P-value	Interpretation
Self-Efficacy	2.176	2	0.337	No Significant difference
Personal benefit	2.167	2	0.338	No Significant difference
Appropriateness	1.515	2	0.469	No Significant difference
Discrepancy	1.086	2	0.581	No Significant difference
Principal support	0.305	2	0.858	No Significant difference
Emotional components	1.729	2	0.421	No Significant difference

Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Based on Table 12: Kruskal-Wallis test output above and the p -value is higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted for all three hypotheses. Although there is no statistical significance between the variables in terms of their p -values, the practical significance was analysed with graphs below to demonstrate the effect size between the individual level readiness of middle management in the three industries.

5.7.2 Hypothesis 1

The objective of Hypothesis one was to determine if there is a significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the retail industry compared to the service and manufacturing industry. Based on the output of the

Kruskal Wallis H test in Table 12 the p -values for the subconstructs are higher than 0.05 indicating that there is no statistical significance between the retail industry and the service and manufacturing industries. This suggests that middle managers in the retail industry do not have higher levels of individual readiness compared to the service and manufacturing industry. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

5.7.3 Hypothesis 2

The objective of Hypothesis two was to determine if there is a significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the service industry compared to the retail and manufacturing industry. Based on the output of the Kruskal Wallis H test in Table 12 the p -values for the subconstructs are higher than 0.05 indicating that there is no statistical significance between the service industry and the retail and manufacturing industries. This suggests that middle managers in the service industry do not have higher levels of individual readiness compared to the retail and manufacturing industry. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

5.7.4 Hypothesis 3

The objective of Hypothesis three was to determine if there is a significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the manufacturing industry compared to the service and retail industry. Based on the output of the Kruskal Wallis H test in Table 12 the p -values for the subconstructs are higher than 0.05 indicating that there is no statistical significance between the manufacturing industry and the service and retail industries. This suggests that middle managers in the manufacturing industry do not have higher levels of individual readiness compared to the service and retail industry. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

When applying the Kruskal-Wallis H test, the scores are grouped into standard scores, and for practical considerations, the graphs below were reworked into unstandardised scores to show the effect in relation to the measurement instrument. As demonstrated in

Figure 4 below, it is evident that although there are no significant differences between the industries and their self-efficacy levels, the service industry indicates a slightly

higher level of self-efficacy than the retail and manufacturing industry. The retail industry median indicates that the retail industry has higher levels of self-efficacy than the manufacturing industry, with it having the lowest median score. The graph indicates that in all three industries, middle-level managers have high self-efficacy perceptions.

Self-efficacy Kruskal-Wallis H test

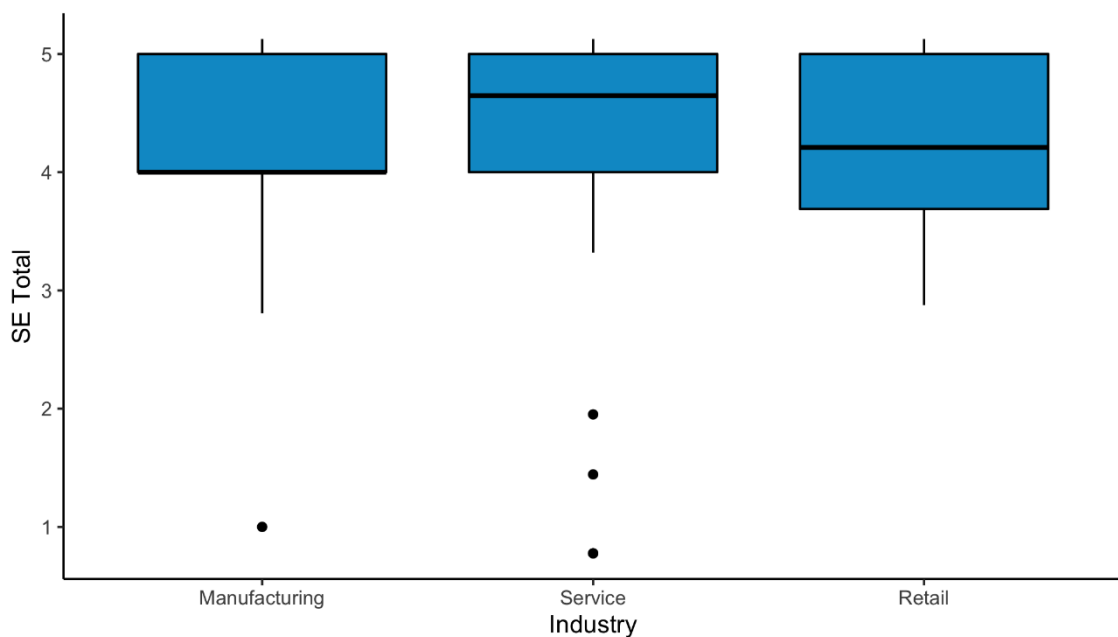


Figure 4: Self-efficacy and industry comparison

Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Figure 5 below indicates that the service industry perceived higher levels of personal benefit than the retail and manufacturing industry in terms of the median. The manufacturing industry indicated a more consistent perception of personal benefit than the service or retail industry. Middle management in all three industries indicated high levels of personal benefit, suggesting that they perceive they will benefit from a change in the organisation. It is worth noting that most of the responses across the three industries indicated that they are neutral in the perception of receiving a higher salary. This suggests that middle managers are unsure if they will receive a higher salary from the change initiative or not.

Personal benefit Kruskal-Wallis H test

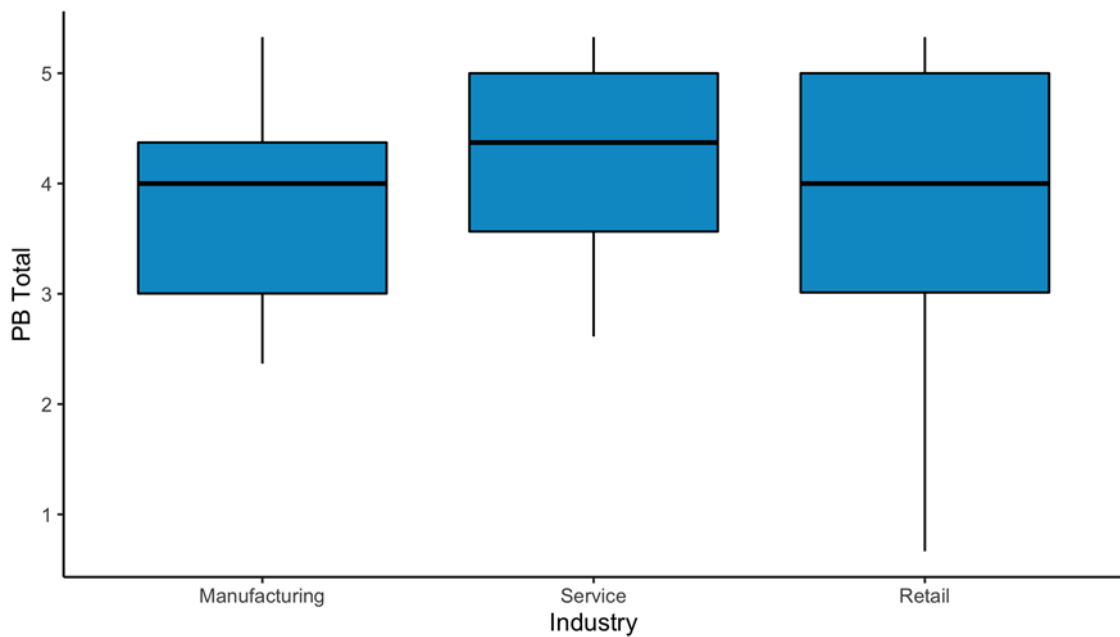
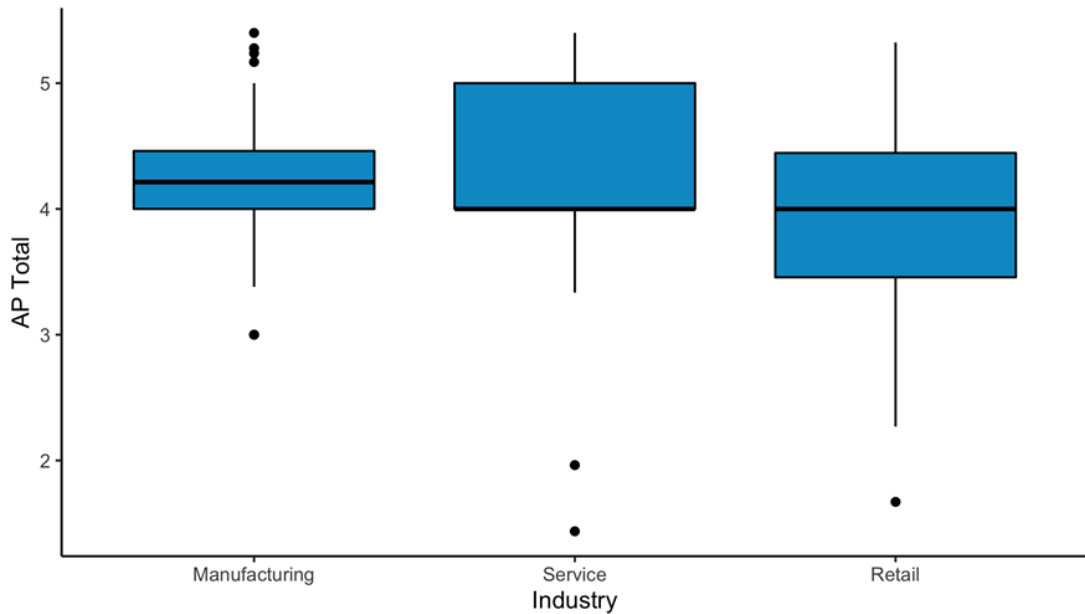


Figure 5: Personal Benefit and industry comparison

Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Figure 6 below indicates that the manufacturing industry has higher levels of appropriateness than the service and retail industry, with almost no difference between the service and retail industry. Extreme outliers are found in the manufacturing industry and outliers in both the service and manufacturing industries, with 25% of the service and retail industry participants having higher overall appropriateness levels. The result indicates that all three industries demonstrated high levels of appropriateness perceptions.

Appropriateness Kruskal-Wallis H test

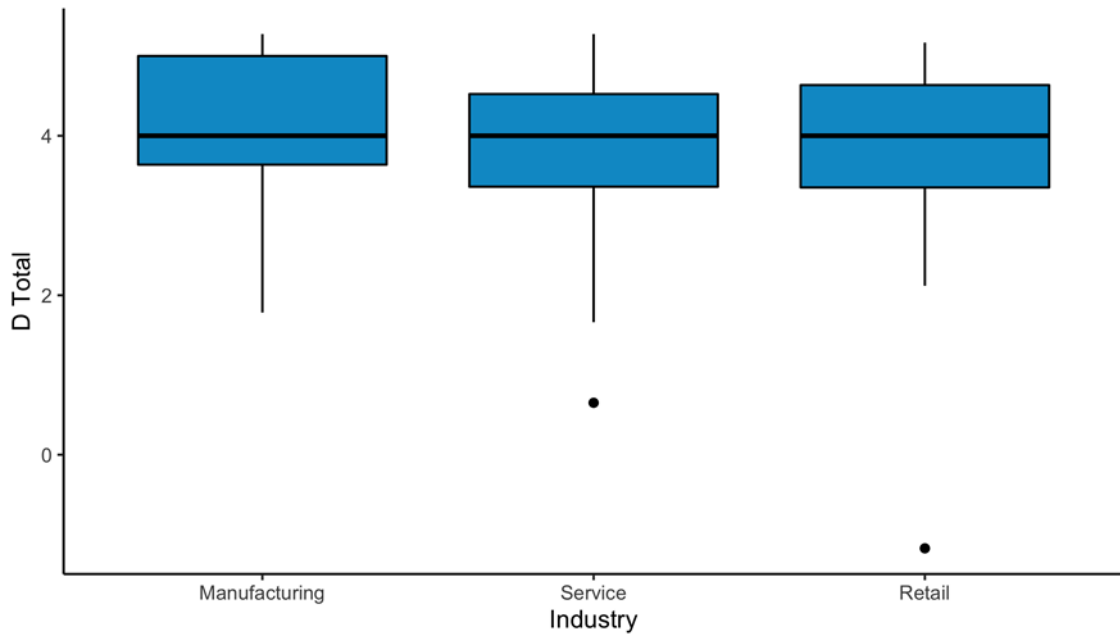


Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Figure 6: Appropriateness industry comparison

Figure 7 below indicates that there is almost no difference between the service, manufacturing, and retail industry in terms of discrepancy. The service and retail industry have yielded more consistent responses. The manufacturing industry indicates that 50% of the respondents have higher levels of discrepancy than the service or retail industry. In general, all three industries demonstrated high levels of discrepancy.

Discrepancy Kruskal-Wallis H test

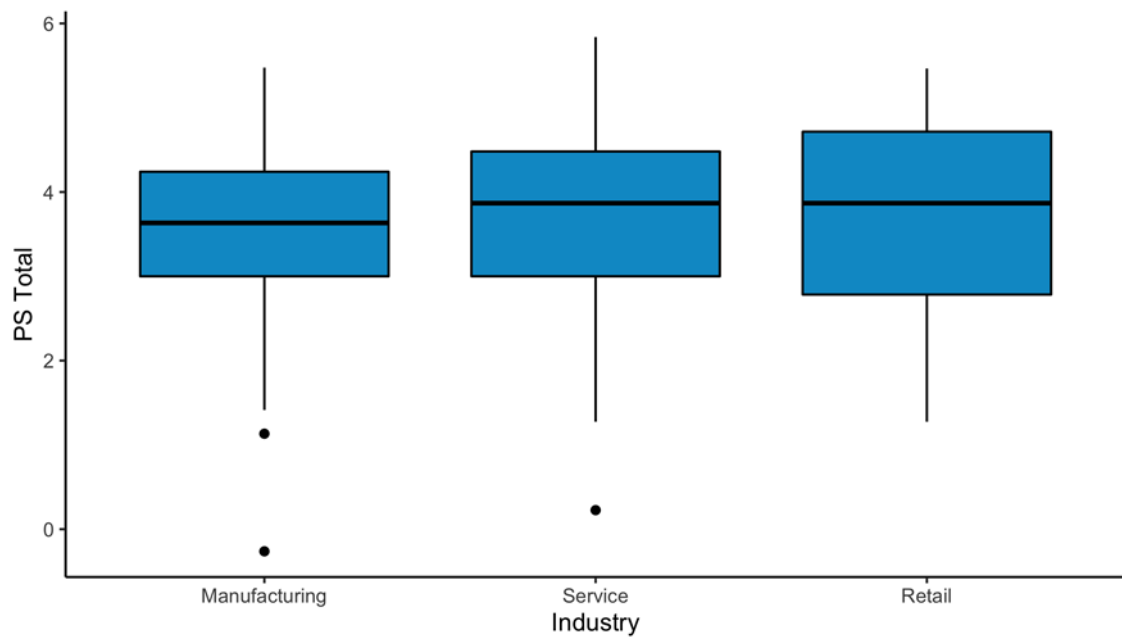


Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Figure 7: Discrepancy and industry comparison

Figure 8 below indicates that the manufacturing, service, and retail industries have very similar principal support levels with outliers present in the manufacturing industry. The retail industry has perceived less consistent levels of principal support but overall higher levels. Principal support perceptions ranked the lowest of all the individual readiness components, be it a high score in relation to the scale.

Principal support Kruskal-Wallis H test

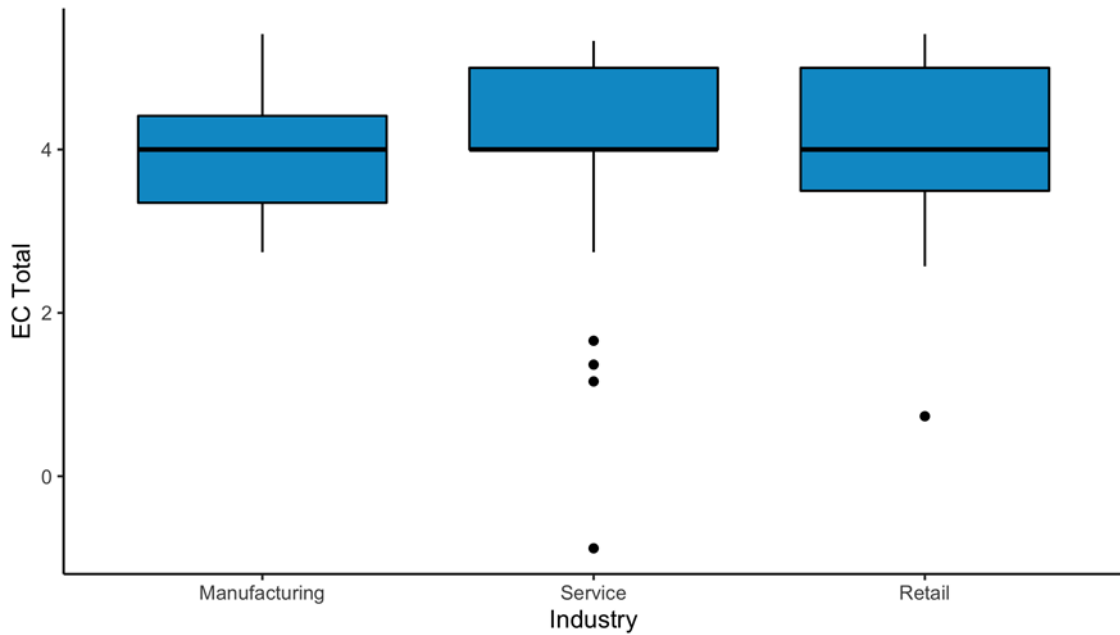


Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Figure 8: Principal support and industry comparison

Figure 9 below indicates that all three industries have similar perceptions of the emotional components in terms of the median. The service industry indicates that 50% of the respondents perceive higher levels of emotional components than the retail or service industry. All three industries showed high levels of positive perceptions towards the emotional components.

Emotional components Kruskal-Wallis H test



Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Figure 9: Emotional components and industry comparison

5.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, there was no statistical significance between the individual level readiness of middle management between the service, retail, and manufacturing industries. When looking at the practical significance, the service industry displayed slightly higher individual readiness levels when assessing the Self-efficacy, personal benefit, and emotional components of individual readiness. The manufacturing industry display higher levels of discrepancy and appropriateness, and the retail industry of principal support. Principal support was found to be the lowest score between the individual readiness components on the scale.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the results of Chapter 5 in the context of the literature review and relate to the research question. The research question was to determine which industries have higher levels of individual-level readiness in their middle managers. To answer the research question, three hypotheses were developed. For hypothesis one, the individual level readiness of middle management in the service industry compared to the manufacturing and retail industry was tested through a Kruskal Wallis H test. Hypothesis two the individual level readiness of middle managers in the service industry was compared to the retail and manufacturing industry using a Kruskal Wallis H test. For hypothesis three, a Kruskal Wallis H test was also used to compare the individual readiness levels of middle managers in the manufacturing industry compared to the service and retail industry.

Chapter 2 discussed the literature review of the existing literature on change management and change readiness. Before discussing the results from Chapter 5, a summary of the literature is presented. Change has been identified as a constant phenomenon in all groups of organisations existing from response to external or internal factors that influence the organisation (Jalagat, 2016). In response to the VUCA dynamics, and 4 IR organisations have focused on change management. Increased competition and macro-economic changes have a significant influence on an organisation's sustainability, which forces organisations to change to remain relevant and competitive in their environment (Weiner J, 2009).

There is a significant failure rate in change initiatives within organisations, and this has been attributed to various factors, amongst them low readiness levels within the organisation and individuals for change (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). In response to the high change rate in organisations, they focus on causality, planning, resources, communication and staffing within the organisation to overcome the barriers of responding to or implementing a successful change (Karaxha, 2019). The focus of this study was on the individual level readiness component of change readiness. Individual-level readiness is defined as “The comprehensive attitude that is

simultaneously influenced by the content, process, context, and individual characteristics involved” (Holt et al., 2007). Individual-level readiness has been broken down into five subconstructs of self-efficacy, appropriateness, personal benefit, discrepancy, principal support and emotional components (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). High levels of readiness occur when individuals have a strong perception of the subconstructs of individual readiness. High readiness levels are vital in overcoming resistance to change in individuals and organisations (Buick et al., 2018). Resistance occurs when individuals do not have a favourable perception towards a change initiative caused by stress levels, insecurity, and pressure experienced by individuals when being subjected to change (Karaxha, 2019). Resistance can be overcome by increasing the individual readiness levels of employees and is used as a pre-emptive measure to change rather than a response to resistance during the change initiative (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). The purpose of this study was to identify the individual readiness levels of specifically middle-level managers. Middle-level managers across three industries. Middle managers are central in the organisational structure and translate strategy into action by communicating up and down the organisational structure (Buick et al., 2018). Due to this central nature, middle managers often act as change agents while subject to change themselves. Therefore, organisations need to understand the readiness levels of middle-level managers as they can contribute to resistance or readiness of other employees in the organisation (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019).

Current literature on Change readiness was observed and found that most organisations focus on the organisational level readiness in terms of resources, structure, and capabilities of the organisation in response to change (Jalagat, 2016). Armenakis & Harris (2013) and Holt et al. (2007) found that while organisational readiness is essential in response to change, most change initiatives fail due to resistance of employees towards the change initiative. They further state that high levels of individual-level readiness contribute to the success of change initiatives by overcoming resistance. Based on the literature regarding change in various industries, some industries experience change at a higher rate and faster pace than other industries due to legal, political and technological developments in the different industries (Vecchiato & Roveda, 2010).

6.2 Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between the individual level readiness of middle managers in the retail industry compared to the service and manufacturing industry

The objective of hypothesis one was to determine if middle-level managers in the retail industry had higher levels of individual-level readiness compared to the service and manufacturing industry. The subconstructs of individual-level readiness for the retail industry was compared to the service and manufacturing industry. The results of the Kruskal Wallis H test in Table 12 indicate that there is no significant difference between the individual level readiness of middle managers in the retail industry compared to the service and manufacturing industry. Based on the graphs shown in

Figure 4 to Figure 9, the retail industry showed slightly higher principal support levels than the service and manufacturing industries when considering the practical significance. The same results indicate that the service and manufacturing industry showed higher levels of self-efficacy, appropriateness, personal benefit, discrepancy, and more favourable perceptions regarding the emotional components. Therefore, it is concluded that middle-level managers in the retail industry still showed high levels of individual-level readiness, which is slightly less than those of the comparing industries.

6.3 Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between the individual level readiness of middle managers in the service industry compared to the retail and manufacturing industry.

The objective of Hypothesis two was to determine if middle-level managers in the service industry had higher levels of individual-level readiness than middle-level managers in the retail and manufacturing industry. The subconstructs of individual-level readiness for the service industry was compared with the retail and manufacturing industry. The results of the Kruskal Wallis H test, as shown in Table 12, indicated that there was no significant difference between the individual readiness levels of middle-level managers in the service industry compared to the retail and manufacturing industry. Based on the results of the subconstructs, the service industry is shown to have slightly higher levels of self-efficacy, personal

benefit and a higher perception of the emotional components than the retail and manufacturing industry. The service industry showed slightly lower appropriateness, discrepancy, and principal support levels than the retail and manufacturing industry. Therefore, considering the statistical significance, it is concluded that the service industry does not have higher individual readiness levels than the manufacturing and retail industries. Considering practical significance, the results indicate that the service industry does indeed have a slightly higher overall individual readiness levels in their middle management.

6.4 Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference between the individual level readiness of middle managers in the manufacturing industry compared to the retail and service industry.

The objective of hypothesis three was to determine if middle-level managers in the manufacturing industry have higher levels of individual-level readiness compared to the retail and service industry. The subconstructs of individual-level readiness for the manufacturing industry was compared to those from the retail and service industry. The results from the Kruskal Wallis H test, as shown in Table 12, indicate that there is no significant difference between the individual level readiness of middle-level managers in the manufacturing industry compared to those in the service and retail industry. The graphs shown from Figure 4 to Figure 9 indicate that middle-level managers in the manufacturing industry show slightly higher levels of appropriateness and discrepancy compared to the service and retail industry.

The results also indicate that the manufacturing industry showed slightly lower levels of self-efficacy, personal benefit, principal support, and a less favourable perception towards the emotional components compared to the service and retail industry. The overall individual level readiness of middle managers in the manufacturing industry was still high. Therefore, it is concluded that middle-level managers in the manufacturing industry do not have higher individual readiness levels than the service and retail industries. Considering the practical significance, the manufacturing industry ranked the lowest in terms of individual readiness levels but still scored high in overall individual readiness levels.

6.5 Literature comparison

Even though the results indicate that there is no significant difference between the readiness levels of middle managers across the three industries, the results do indicate from a practical significance perspective that middle management display high levels of individual-level readiness and supports the theory of Buick et al., (2018) and Hermkens, (2021). This theory argues that middle-level managers need to have high levels of individual readiness due to their position at the centre of the organisational structure becoming change agents. Change agents influence the change process by communicating with employees, encouraging active participation, and addressing employees' concerns to evoke supportive behaviours from employees in the organisation (Stevens, 2013).

Considering the cognitive and affective components of individual level readiness the discussion seeks to describe how middle level managers in the different industries compare. The results indicate that principal support has scored the lowest in the individual readiness components across all three industries. This indicates that middle-level managers across the three industries feel that they lack support from their senior managers when it comes to change. Principal support is the degree to which an individual believes the organisation will provide support in terms of resources and information regarding the change initiative (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). This suggests that middle managers in the retail industry reflect higher levels of principal support received from top management and the organisation than middle managers in the service and manufacturing industries. This finding supports the outcome of a study conducted by Buick et al. (2018) , indicating a lack of principal support to enable middle-level managers as change agents. Although this study is focused on principal support, it ignores the other elements of change readiness such as self-efficacy, personal benefit, appropriateness, discrepancy and emotional components as set out by Holt et al. (2007) and Armenakis & Harris (2013). Karaxha (2019) confirms that although support is a key construct in isolation, it does not decrease resistance in organisations.

Considering the results of Discrepancy which is the perception of an individual that the change is required (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). From a practical significance perspective, the manufacturing industry showed a slightly higher perception of discrepancy compared to the service and retail industries. This suggests that middle managers in the manufacturing industry have a higher perception that change is

required in their industry. The higher perception of discrepancy could be attributed to changes in technology that make daily tasks in the industry easier for individuals or contribute to performance of the organisation or departments (Machado et al., 2019). The result signals that manufacturing industries could be lagging in innovation and technological developments compared to the retail and service industries which is often a result of the costs associated or legacy techniques (Sony & Naik, 2020).

Considering appropriateness in the individual readiness themes the manufacturing industry also ranked the highest in practical significance terms. Appropriateness is an individual's perception that the change is required in response to an issue or goal of the organisation (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Manufacturing industries strive to remain competitive by improving automation to reduce lead times and improve overall service and also to reduce costs to be price competitive (Machado et al., 2019). The same theory is applied to appropriateness that was applied to discrepancy. The perception of middle managers in the industry deem changes appropriate either to align with the organisations goals or to respond to changes in the external environment.(Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). The high levels of discrepancy and appropriateness of middle managers in the manufacturing industry could be biased to the level of the employee, factory workers who have jobs at risk due to automation and digitisation are unlikely to have the same response to change. Efficacy as a subconstruct of individual level readiness refers to the self-perception of an individual in their capabilities of implementing the change (Armenakis & Harris, 2013).

From a practical significance perspective middle managers in the service industry had higher levels of self-efficacy perceptions compared to those in the retail and manufacturing industry. Self-efficacy is derived from past performance, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional cues (Lunenburg, 2011). The higher level of self-efficacy suggests that middle managers in the service industry have more experience in change management and that they display better communication skills. This supports the theory of Onyema & Onuoha (2021), who state that some industries experience change more frequently than others which contributes to the experience of individuals regarding change.

The final cognitive component of individual level readiness is valence or personal benefit which is an individual's perception and weighting of the costs versus the benefit associated with the change (Armenakis & Harris, 2013). The results indicate

that middle managers in the service industry have higher levels of valence compared to those in the retail and manufacturing industry. The finding suggests that middle level managers in the service industry perceive a higher benefit to cost ratio than middle managers in the retail or manufacturing industry. The outcome suggests that the service industry has experienced more frequent rates of change due to innovation and increased digitisation (Trivedi, 2021). The rapid increase in financial technologies and mobile device usage has forced the service industry to respond rapidly to remain competitive and maintain their market position and can be attributed to the dynamics of the industry and offerings (Trivedi, 2021). Innovation in banks and mobile services are usually adopted at some point by the retail industry to synergise the offerings along the value chain as these services are offered to organisations and individuals alike explaining why the retail industry lags the service industry with regards to valence. Key to this argument is the online adoption of shopping prior to services being offered online (Hänninen et al., 2018).

The final component of individual readiness is the affective component which is the emotions on individual experiences during a change initiative (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Positive emotional perceptions are crucial to the success of a change initiative as it affects the change commitment and change efficacy of individuals involved in the change initiative (Helpap & Bekmeier-Feuerhahn, 2016). Based on the practical significance middle managers in the service industry showed slightly higher positive emotional perceptions compared to that of middle managers in the retail and manufacturing industry. The outcome can be attributed to the overall readiness of middle level managers in the service industry and that they have less perceived stress and uncertainty regarding the change initiative (AbuTahoun & Khan, 2019). Therefore it can be concluded that based on a practical significance perspective middle level managers in the service industry have slightly higher overall individual readiness levels compared to middle managers in the retail and manufacturing industry.

Onyema & Onuoha (2021) state that industries experience changes at different levels of intensity and at a different pace due to intensity levels of competition, development of technology, and regulatory developments. Based on the frequency and intensity of change in different industries, it was hypothesised that some industries might display higher readiness levels than others due to their exposure. The results displayed in Table 12 indicate that there is no significant difference

between the readiness levels of middle-level management in the three industries indicating that the industry does not have a meaningful effect on individual-level readiness. From a practical significance perspective, it was found that the service industry has slightly higher levels of individual readiness compared to the manufacturing and retail industries. The slight advantage can be attributed to the rate of innovation and technology adoption rates in response to the rate and frequency of change experienced in this industry (Onyema & Onuoha, 2021).

6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the results that indicate there is no significant difference between the readiness levels of middle managers in the service, retail and manufacturing industry, it could be attributed to the size of the sample and the impact of Covid-19 on middle-level managers. Middle-level managers have been exposed to a significant disruption in business activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of this disruption could, at a point in time, display heightened levels of readiness. Suppose the study was conducted during the start of the pandemic, where there were still high levels of uncertainty with regards to the impact or outcome of the change, it is possible that middle-level managers could display lower levels of self-efficacy, personal benefit, and lower favourable perceptions towards the change from an emotional level. This could have led to lower levels of overall readiness levels displayed by the individuals.

Change management is constant in the business environment and will only increase intensity and complexity as developments in technology and offerings increase market competitiveness. This study provides evidence of the importance of middle management individual-level readiness and indicates that industry has little effect on the readiness levels of middle-level managers. The study finds that the rate and frequency of change caused by technology developments and innovation can lead to slightly higher readiness levels in some industries. The individual readiness framework developed by Armenakis & Harris (2013) is a valuable instrument to measure individual-level readiness and can be used on any employee level or business type to indicate the readiness levels of specific individuals or groups. The instrument's output will provide management with a clear indication of where to focus

their attention to increase the readiness of individuals to overcome resistance and increase the prospects of success in the change initiative.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to combine the research findings with the response to the research hypotheses. The principal findings of the individual readiness levels of middle-level managers in the service, retail and manufacturing industry are discussed, followed by the practical implication for management and other relevant stakeholders. Following the practical implications for management and relevant stakeholders, the contribution to theory will be explained. The limitation of the research is explained to describe the research findings in the appropriate context and scope. Lastly, recommendations for future research on the specific topic will be proposed in pursuit of further research on the constructs in the future.

7.2 Principal findings

The research objective for this study was to determine which industries out of the retail, service and manufacturing industries showed higher levels of individual-level readiness in their middle-level managers. The research found that the industry did not have a statistically significant effect on the individual-level readiness of middle managers. The findings suggest no significant difference between the industries even though industries experience change at different intensities and at a different pace. The findings indicated that the service industry had a marginally higher individual change readiness level than the manufacturing and retail industries from a practical significance perspective. The findings illustrate that middle-level managers have high overall individual change readiness levels, supporting the literature discussed in Chapter 2 on the importance of individual-level readiness in middle management and that change readiness can vary in certain industries due to change frequency and rate.

7.3 Theoretical contribution

To the point where this study was conducted, research on the industry effect and management level has been scant. This study reveals that between the service, retail and manufacturing industries, the industry does not have a meaningful effect on the individual readiness levels of middle management and that middle-level managers have high levels of individual-level readiness. The study confirms the importance of having high levels of individual readiness levels within middle management as they act as change agents within the organisation and, due to their proximity in the organisation, are often subjected to change themselves (Buick et al., 2018). This study contributes to the academic literature by indicating that despite the frequency and pace of change experienced by organisations in different industries, the specific industry does not significantly influence middle management's overall individual readiness levels. The study identified the shortcoming in the literature regarding the framework developed by Armenakis & Harris, (2013), to measure individual level readiness. The framework does not account for the impact of culture as a subconstruct of individual level readiness. This provides an opportunity for the framework to be improved by adding elements that measure individual perception of culture in the organisation.

7.4 Implications for management and other relevant stakeholders

Based on the outcome of this study, management should approach change initiatives systematically and consider the organisational level readiness and the individual level readiness. Management can use the individual readiness framework to establish the readiness levels of individuals and clearly outline a change strategy before embarking on the change initiative. The individual-level readiness framework will help management focus their attention on which elements are causing low levels of individual readiness and establish alignment between employees in the organisation and its goals. Management should not ignore the readiness levels of their change agents as they themselves are often subjected to the change as well. From the findings of this study, principal support seems to be lacking across all the industries, and management needs to be cognisant of the importance this construct bears not only for individual-level readiness for change but also in terms of culture and performance (Buick et al., 2018). This study confirms the importance of principal

support in organisations when faced with change and identifies that principal support can still be improved to increase employees' overall individual readiness levels within organisations. Managers need to take into consideration the rate and frequency of change in their industry due to the VUCA elements and developments in technology and the adoption thereof. This is important for management to establish long term change readiness levels in their organisation. Managers can make use of the individual readiness framework developed by Armenakis & Harris (2013) to measure the readiness levels of employees periodically and before major change initiatives. The benefit of measuring individual change readiness in employees will help management shape their strategy and focus on elements that could cause resistance in the change process to overcome the barriers and increase the prospects of success in the change initiative (Gigliotti et al., 2019). High levels of individual readiness will increase the agility in employees in response to change and help the organisation develop dynamic capabilities in response to change (Jalagat, 2016). As established in the literature in chapter 2 the risks involved in not establishing individual readiness in employees are increased resistance, poor alignment of employees to the organisation's goals, and ultimately failure of the change initiative (Holt et al., 2007).

7.5 Limitations of the research

The limitations of a study indicate what the shortcomings and conditions were surrounding the methodology and conclusions.

The study conducted was bound specifically to the service, retail, and manufacturing industries in South Africa. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to all the industries. The sample size selected was relatively small and can influence the ability to find significant relationships between the constructs. A large sample size contributes to the accuracy of the results towards the population as it represents the population more accurately (Andrade, 2019). This study would have benefitted from a larger sample size as it contributes to the power of the hypotheses.

There was not an equal number of respondents from each industry which voids the assumption of equal variances and reduces the statistical power of the analysis (Daniel et al., 2018). This study was bound to a single research design due to the study's time constraints, which limited the depth of the information collected. The

study was cross-sectional in nature and measured responses at a point in time rather than a period. This suggests that responses could be influenced by factors affecting the respondent on the day (Spector, 2019).

7.6 Suggestions for future research

This study solely focused on the individual readiness levels of middle management. Future research should consider exploring the individual readiness levels of the different levels within an organisation and which components of the individual readiness framework lack within the specific level. For future research, it is recommended that a larger sample be obtained to increase the significance of the statistical relationships between the constructs (Daniel et al., 2018). This study ignored the impact of organisational culture on individual level readiness and can influence the individual readiness components measured. AbuTahoun & Khan (2019) have identified that change can impact the organisational culture and that individual-level readiness could change the organisational culture. A qualitative approach can aid future research as it will uncover in-depth perceptions of individuals towards the readiness components. The study can be replicated using a longitudinal study to measure the perceptions of middle-level managers towards the individual readiness components over a period. The outcome can result in more accurate reflections of respondents and provide a more accurate indication of the individual readiness levels of middle management. A final suggestion for future research is to consider the impact of innovation and digitisation on change readiness and if there is a correlation between technology adoption, vicarious experience and individual change readiness.

7.7 Concluding statements

Change management is a complex and multi-level construct. Change readiness on both organisational and individual levels is vital to organisations adapting and remaining relevant in VUCA landscapes. Individual-level readiness is a vital tool for organisations to increase their prospects of success when implementing a change initiative. Based on the research and findings of high readiness levels in middle managers, organisations are cognisant of the importance of individual readiness.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear Participant

I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfillment of an MBA. I am conducting research on the individual change readiness of middle managers to find out more about the change readiness levels of middle managers readiness for change in the dynamic business environments. You are asked to please complete the online survey. The online survey will not take more than 20 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Your participation is anonymous and only aggregated data will be reported. By completing this survey, you indicate that you are participating voluntarily in this research. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our contact details are provided below.

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The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section is the background section, and this will include basic personal information about the participant. The second section will measure the individual level readiness of the participant using the individual readiness model containing subsections (Appropriateness, Self-efficacy, Principal support, Personal valence and discrepancy). The third section will measure the emotional components towards individual level readiness. Each question contains a statement-based question where the participant needs to state their level of agreement with the statement and tick the appropriate box relating to a recent change or upcoming change in the organisation. The scale ranges from 1 which is strongly disagree indicating the respondent strongly disagrees with the statement to 5 strongly agree indicating the participant strongly agrees with the statement. Below is an example of the scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Section 1:Background information		Code
40. Gender	Female	2
	Male	1
41. Age	Less than 20	1
	20-25	2
	26-35	3
	36-45	4
	46-55	5
	56 and older	6
42. Highest level of education	Matric	1
	Diploma	2
	Bachelors degree	3
	Higher diploma	4
	Masters degree	5
	PhD	6
43. How long have you been working at the current organisation?	Less than 3 years	1
	3-5 Years	2
	6-10 Years	3
	11-15 Years	4
	More than 15 years	5
44. Position	Top manager	1
	Middle manager	2
	Line manager	3
	Technical manager	4
	Supervisor	5
45. Industry	Manufacturing	1

	Service	2
	Retail	3
	Other	4

Section 2: Individual level readiness perceptions					
Self-efficacy	1	2	3	4	5
46. I am capable of implementing the change					
47. I have the capability to perform my duties with the proposed change					
48. My experience in the organisation makes me confident in performing well after the change is initiated					
49. I have the skills to implement this change					
50. There are some tasks I do not think I can do well when the change is required					
Personal Benefit (Valence)	1	2	3	4	5
51. This change will create opportunities for me					
52. I will experience more self-fulfilment in my job with the proposed change.					
53. I expect to earn a higher salary after the change is initiated					
54. My future job will be limited because of the change in the organisation					
55. I will feel more self-accomplished after the change initiative has taken place					
Appropriateness	1	2	3	4	5
56. I believe the proposed organizational change will have a favourable effect on the organisation					
57. The change in our organisation will improve the performance of our organization.					

58. The change we are implementing is helping the organisation to achieve its vision					
59. This organizational change will result in losses of some of the best assets of the organisation.					
60. This change is a short term solution to more significant problems in the organisation					
Discrepancy	1	2	3	4	5
61. The way things are done in the organisation needs to change					
62. There are legitimate reasons behind making the change in the organisation					
63. No one has explained the reasoning why the change should be made.					
64. The time spent on change should be spent on something else					
65. This change is clearly needed					
Principal Support	1	2	3	4	5
66. Management has indicated clearly that the organisation is going to change					
67. I am supported throughout the change					
68. The senior management of the organisation have been advocating the change					
69. Senior management have not been personally involved in the change implementation					
70. Management have given me very little guidance explaining the expectations after the change					
71. The top managers in this organization are putting what is said in action					
72. I feel the time spent on the change is wasted due to senior management not wanting the change					
73. I feel I have the support to follow through with this change					

Section 3: Emotional components					
74. I feel positive towards the change					
75. I feel uncertain about the change					
76. I feel sad about the change					
77. I feel confident about the change					
78. I feel scared about the outcome of the change					

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire and contributing to the development of academic theory and the business application thereof.

Appendix 2: SPSS output total variance explained and components matrix

Table 13: Total Variance explained for Self-Efficacy

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.937	73.424	73.424	2.937	73.424	73.424
2	.453	11.316	84.740			
3	.366	9.162	93.902			
4	.244	6.098	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 14: Total Variance explained for Personal Benefit

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.967	65.580	65.580	1.967	65.580	65.580
2	.663	22.086	87.666			
3	.370	12.334	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 15: Total Variance explained for Appropriateness

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.445	61.134	61.134	2.445	61.134	61.134
2	.655	16.372	77.506			
3	.514	12.854	90.360			
4	.386	9.640	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 16: Total Variance explained for Discrepancy

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.756	58.533	58.533	1.756	58.533	58.533
2	.663	22.096	80.629			
3	.581	19.371	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 17: Total Variance explained for Principal Support

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.541	63.520	63.520	2.541	63.520	63.520
2	.631	15.781	79.301			
3	.529	13.221	92.522			
4	.299	7.478	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 18: Total Variance explained for Emotional components

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.026	67.526	67.526	2.026	67.526	67.526
2	.610	20.341	87.866			
3	.364	12.134	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 19: Principal Component Analysis for Self-Efficacy

Component Matrix^a	
	Component 1
I am capable of implementing the change	.871
I have the capability to perform my duties with the proposed change	.874
My experience in the organisation makes me confident in performing well after the change is initiated	.827
I have the skills to implement this change	.855

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Source: Authors Own based on SPSS output (2021)

Table 20: Principal Component Analysis Personal Benefit

Component Matrix^a	
	Component 1
This change will create opportunities for me	.781
I will experience more self-fulfillment in my job with the proposed change	.881
I will feel more self-accomplished after the change initiative has taken place	.763

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 21 Principal Component Analysis for Appropriateness

Component Matrix^a	
	Component 1
I believe the current and or future organizational change will have a favourable effect on the organisation	.777
The change in our organisation will improve the performance of our organization.	.803
The change we are implementing is helping the organisation to achieve its vision	.829
This change is a potential sustainable solution of the organisation	.714
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 22: Principal Component Analysis Discrepancy

Component Matrix^a	
	Component 1
There are legitimate reasons behind making the change in the organisation	.761
The time spent on change should be spent on something else	.743
This change is clearly needed	.790
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Table 23: Principal Component Analysis for Principal support

Component Matrix^a	
	Component 1
Management has indicated clearly that the organisation is going to change	.721
I am supported throughout the change	.867
I feel I have the support to follow through with this change	.847
Management have given me very little guidance explaining the expectations after the change	.743
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)


Table 24: Principal Component Analysis for Emotional components

Component Matrix^a	
	Component 1
I feel positive towards the change	.843
I feel sad about the change	.750
I feel confident about the change	.868
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Source: Authors own SPSS output (2021)

Source: Authors own output from SPSS (2021)

Appendix 3: Ethical clearance



Ethical Clearance
Approved

Dear Jean-Pierre(JP) Fourie,

Please be advised that your application for **Ethical Clearance** has been approved.
You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.
We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.