

**Cinite, I., Duxbury, L.E., Higgins, C. (2009). Measurement of perceived organizational readiness for change in the public sector. *British Journal of Management*, 20(2), 265-277.**

## **Summary**

Perceived organizational readiness for change (PORC) is defined as employees' belief that the organization not only can initiate a change, but also engages in practices that will lead to its successful implementation. The construct is intuitively appealing, but the fact that it has not yet been operationalized limits its practical applicability. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to develop a measure that can be used to assess PORC in public sector organizations.

Using the Act Frequency Approach, we developed and operationalized two constructs: perceived organizational readiness for change and perceived organizational unreadiness for change. Using a sample drawn from five Canadian public sector organizations, it was found that perceived readiness for change can be conceptualized with three sub-constructs: Commitment of Senior Managers to the Change, Competence of Change Agents, and Support of the Immediate Manager. Perceived unreadiness for change had two sub-constructs: Poor Communication of Change and Adverse Impact of Change on Work. Using structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques, the measurement scales of all these constructs were tested for reliability and validity using Job Stress and Perceived Organizational Support as outcome variables.

One of the merits of this study is that it addresses the shortcoming of the existing measures of organizational readiness to change that do not seem to have taken into consideration the members' perspective on what needs to be measured in order to assess PORC. From a practical point of view, the measure developed in this study allows organizations to quantify perceived readiness for change and to acquire a better understanding of specific organizational actions that require more attention.

The findings imply that organizations that want to be perceived by their employees to be ready for change should pay a close attention to the behaviours of their leaders, change agents, immediate supervisors at all levels, organizational practices around the change, and how these practices impact people's daily work. All managers who have direct reports, therefore, need to be ready and well equipped to communicate change to their staff and provide the necessary support. It is the organization's responsibility to prepare all those who supervise others to deal with change and involve them in designing and implementing this change. Furthermore, of the organizational practices, poor communication in particular appears to be detrimental to PORC. This happens when employees perceive that the outcomes, benefits and reasons for the change are not well explained and when employees do not understand the vision behind the change. In addition, PORC is affected by the impact the change is perceived to have on people's work. Not phasing out the old duties when the new ones are assigned, discouraging people from saying "no" to work, and heavy workloads that hinder employees from getting involved in the change initiative are all actions that may make employees believe the organization is not ready for change.

Tags: change management, perceived organizational readiness for change, public sector, measurement scales, act frequency approach, structural equation modeling.