Contributing Factors to Teachers' Perceived Readiness for Changes Implemented in General Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Awi Zone

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Abstract*:* This study examined the perceived readiness of teachers for changes implemented in preparatory and secondary schools of the Awi zone. It also attempted to determine the factors contributing to teachers' perceived readiness for implementing the changes. To meet these two purposes a correlational design was employed. Data were collected from 242 randomly selected preparatory and secondary school teachers. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that the mean scores of teachers' readiness for change, the process factors, and the context factors were significantly higher than the respective test values at $p<.05$. There was no statistically significant mean difference in readiness for change between female and male teachers as well as among teachers with different fields of study. Age, experience in teaching, experience in management positions, and level of qualification were found to have no statistically significant correlation with readiness for change. Except for organizational politics, all the context and process factors have a statistically significant positive correlation with readiness for change. Of all the factors considered in the study, only the quality of change communication, the attitude of top managers towards the change, and staff cohesiveness were found to be statistically significant contributors to the variation in the teachers' readiness for change. Thus, readiness for change is an essential component of the educational change management process that principals should pay attention to the success of change efforts. Teachers' level of perceived readiness for change depends on how principals manage some of the process and context factors of the school. Based on the findings, conclusions are drawn. Finally, recommendations pertinent to the practitioners and researchers are forwarded.

Keywords: *change management, teachers' readiness for change, process factors, context factors, individual factors*

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational change is a process that transforms organizations from their current situations into an improved state (Inandi & Gilic, 2016). Schools as educational organizations share this meaning of change. Fullan (2001) suggests that educational changes involve changes in beliefs, values, and practices of actors in educational organizations. Educational changes can occur at different levels, for example at the teacher, the school or any other higher levels in the sector. According to Fullan, changes at the school and classroom levels are highly important because they have a direct effect on the attainment of stated educational goals. Fullan further claims that new policies and programs introduced in the education sector will end up requiring actors in schools to make changes in their beliefs, values, and practices. In this regard, he states that the policy and program changes usually imply changes in:

> (1) the possible use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies), (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches (i.e., new teaching strategies or activities), and (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs) (p.25).

The above ideas denote that schools are venues of planned changes intended to improve practices and fulfill educational goals. The changes are realized through actors such.as teachers, students, school leaders, parents, community and higher administrative bodies in the sector (Holt, Armenakis, Field & Harris, 2007).

Literature in the area shows that actors respond to the changes initiated in their organizations in different ways. Their responses are manifested in the form of a continuum of behaviors ranging from resistance to a change on one end to readiness for a change on the other (Berkovich, 2011; Caporarello & Viachka, 2010). Resistance to change, as a response to change initiatives, has been the focus of many studies following the seminal work of Coch and French (1948, cited in Holt et al., 2007). A number of studies have been carried out in search of the attributes that explain resistance to change behaviors, the causes to resistance to change and strategies to overcome resistance (Ford & Ford, 2009; Karabal, 2018; Kotter, 1995; Oreg, 2003; Self & Schraeder, 2009). However, scholars like Coetsee (1999), Collins (1998) and Shah (2009) argue that resistance to change is a negative behavior or a passive response that actors exhibit in reaction to change initiatives. They claim that dealing with such negative behavior and associated factors have little contribution to the successful implementation of change initiatives. Emphasizing this point, Holt et al. write that "overcoming resistance to change by itself may be a necessary but insufficient condition for the successful implementation of planned changes" (p. 292).

Recognizing the limitations inherent in dealing with resistance to change, scholars shifted their focus to the other end of the continuum, i.e., readiness for change, and it has gained new attention as a desirable behavior of employees for the successful adoption of change initiatives (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Desplaces, 2005; Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015). In this regard, Bernerth (2004) suggests that readiness for change is

the key to successful change efforts as it creates the positive energy needed by actors, and it is the initial step in the avenue to the desired change outcomes.

Accordingly, readiness for change has recently regained attention among change scholars and researchers (Rafferty, Jimmieson & Armenakis, 2013) who claim that an effective organizational change management process should focus on ensuring actors' readiness for change because it has twofold advantages. First, it helps to engage actors in positive and productive behaviors, and second, it reduces resistance to change. Supporting this claim, Elving (2005) suggests that effective organizational change will result in high levels of readiness for change or low levels of resistance to change by employees. With this notion in mind, advocators of readiness for change provided different explanations for the concept (Armenakis et al., 1993; Bouckenooghe, Devos, & Broeck. 2009; Howley, 2012; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015) and attempted to outline different factors

With regard to the concept of readiness for change, there are different views. Some authors explain it in terms of actors' cognitive responses to planned changes. An example of such definitions is the one posited by Zayim and Kondakci (2015). These authors describe readiness for change as "the cognitive signal of employees' supportive or opposing behaviors towards the proposed changes." (p.611). This definition also highlights that negative or positive responses to planned changes can be used to describe readiness for change. Other authors claim that the concept readiness for change should include more aspects of actors' behaviors and tend to stress the positive aspect of the actors' response to planned changes. For instance, Armenakis et al. (1993) describe readiness for change as a behavior of actors reflected in their beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed, and the organizations' capacity to successfully make those changes. Howley (2012) strengthened this idea with the suggestion that readiness is not a simple refrain from resistance; instead, it is a more active engaged willingness and ability to adopt a new practice. Underlining on the positive behaviors that readiness for change conveys, Bouckenooghe et al. (2009) describe it as a multi-faceted concept that comprises a cognitive dimension of change, an emotional dimension of change, and an intentional dimensions of change. Many recent studies have also recognized and used these interrelated dimensions to measure organizational members' readiness for change. The works of Inandi and Gilic (2016), and Zayim and Kondakci (2015) are cases in point. This study also uses the three dimensions as a conceptual framework to examine teachers' readiness for change.

Teachers' readiness for change in itself is a function of different factors. It depends on how much teachers value the change, and how favorably they appraise key determinants of change implementation capability. i.e., "task demands, resource availability, and situational factors" (Weiner, 2009, p.1). Hence, studying the factors that determine the teachers' readiness for planned changes has become an area of interest among change scholars. Teachers, as key components of the school system and the change process, are influenced by the change management process the school leaders employ, the leadership approaches chosen and the organizational cultures. Researchers in the area identified different antecedents of readiness for change. Despite the inconsistency of the factors they suggested, the works of Armenakis et al. (1993), Inandi and Gilic

(2016), Miller, Johnson and Grau (1994), Winardi, and Prianto (2016), Rafferty and Simons (2006), and Zayim and Kondakci (2015) are examples in this regard. The variations in the antecedent factors suggested by different researchers could possibly be attributed to differences in the kind of organizations studied, the nature of change treated as well as the scope of the research. Based on the suggestions of Bouckenooghe et al. (2009), this study considers the range of antecedents that can be categorized under individual, process and context factors discussed in the literature review section of this paper.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the growing importance readiness for change is gaining in the change management process, there seems little evidence about its development in the change management of educational organizations (Kondakci, Beycioglu, Sincar, & Ugurlu, 2017; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015). For instance, Zayim and Kondakci endorse that research reports of readiness for change in educational settings are scarce. Also Kondakci et al. (2017) stated that contributing factors to readiness for change have been relatively under-investigated in educational organizations. On top of the scarcity of researches in education, the points presented in the previous section and the literature review show the existence of inconsistencies in the kind and number of factors affecting readiness for change even in the general management domain. Such knowledge gaps and inconsistencies are among the main reasons that justify the need for undertaking this research.

When we examine the practice in the local context, it is evident that different changes had been initiated and implemented in Ethiopian schools. For instance, the introduction of GEQIP with its six programs (MoE, 2008), satellite TV lessons, continuous professional development (CPD) programs, curriculum changes, changes in teaching methods, and assessment techniques are some to mention. Although years have passed since the introduction of such changes in Ethiopian schools, little is known about teachers' readiness for change and the change management practices of principals as far as the researchers' knowledge is concerned. The local studies conducted on the implementation of programs like SIP (Abdi, 2016; Edamo & Netshitangani, 2018; Melesse, 2016; Mitchell, 2015), and CPD (Tulu, 2019; Wondem, 2015) considered neither readiness for change as a variable nor its antecedent factors. The same is true for the local studies conducted on the implementation of active learning strategies (Begna, 2017; Mulatu & Bezabih, 2018), continuous assessment (Dessie, 2015), and Satellite TV lessons (Abera, 2013; Bitew, 2008) in general secondary and preparatory schools of Ethiopia. All the local studies cited above emphasized the level of the change implementations and the factors affecting those implementations disregarding teachers' readiness for the changes and how principals approached the change management process at the initial stage. Thus, gaps in local research were evident regarding the level of teachers' readiness for changes in schools as well as the extent to which the individual, context, and process factors are manifested in the schools. The same is true concerning the contributions of the factors to the teachers' readiness for the changes.

Thus, knowledge about the readiness of teachers for changes implemented in schools and its contributing factors seems a missing link in the literature and investigations of educational change in general and in the context of Ethiopian educational organizations in particular. Awi Zone, where one of the researchers is working, is not different from the realities of schools in the country. The stated gaps in research and knowledge at the global and national levels about teachers' readiness for change and its contributing factors initiated the researchers to take up the issue and conduct their investigation at Awi Zone. The investigation is organized around the following five research questions: (1) To what do teachers perceived that they were ready for changes (programs in GEQIP, CPD, satellite TV lessons, active learning strategies, assessment techniques, changes in the curriculum, and new demands to meet professional competences) implemented in secondary and preparatory schools of the study site?, (2) To what extent are the antecedent factors of perceived readiness for change manifested in secondary and preparatory schools of the study site? (3) Does teachers' perceived readiness for change relate to or vary as a function of differences in background characteristics? (4) Is there a statistically significant correlation between the readiness dimensions and antecedent factors (individual, context, and process)? (5) Do individual, process and context factors contribute to teachers' perceived readiness for change?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Readiness for Change

As stated earlier, readiness for change is a construct that has received significant attention in the general change management literature. Researchers and authorities have provided various descriptions about the concept of readiness for change, its dimensions and predicting factors. With regard to the concept, Goh, Cousins and Elliott (2006) suggested that readiness for change is the degree of openness or receptiveness of individuals to change and innovation. This description explains that when readiness for change exists, individuals tend to embrace change and resistance is reduced. Hence, the concept of readiness for change emphasizes more on actors' attitude towards change than resistance. According to Holt and Vardaman (2013), readiness for change refers to the extent to which the organization and its members are inclined to accept, embrace and adopt a particular effort aimed at altering the status quo of an organization or established practice of individuals. Readiness for change mainly addresses the actors' feelings and beliefs about the necessity of the planned change. The description by other authorities extended the concept to include the perceptions of actors about the capacity of individuals and organizations regarding their ability to realize the anticipated change. In this regard, Bouckenooghe et al. (2009) note that readiness for change reflects not only individuals' beliefs, feelings, and intentions to the needed changes but also to the perceived capacity they have to successfully enact those changes. Stating differently, readiness for change refers to the key beliefs individuals hold regarding the change, their recognition to the fact that a problem needs to be addressed and their agreement with the changes that individuals and the organization must make (Holt & Vardaman, 2013).

The ideas authorities forwarded to explain the concept of readiness for change indicate that it is a multifaceted concept that involves different dimensions. Despite the observed variations in the proposed list and types of dimensions of readiness for change, there seems some level of agreement among a considerable number of researchers in explaining the concept as tridimensional construct comprising of emotional, cognitive and intentional components (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009; Kondakci et al., 2017; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015).

According to Kondakci et al. (2017), emotional readiness for change refers to the positive or negative feelings the individual holds about the change interventions. The cognitive readiness for change explains the thinking of an employee about the pros and cons as well as the need for change. The cognitive aspect also deals with the contribution of change to the organization and the capacity of the organization in dealing with the planned change (Kondakci et al., 2017). Cognitive readiness for change encompasses the beliefs that change is needed and the organization possesses the ability to accomplish it successfully; that change is the right response to a situation and the organization is ready to provide the necessary support; and that change is beneficial to the employee's role in the organization (Kondakci et al., 2017). Intentional readiness for change, as a third component, refers to the personal intent of an organizational member to exhibit behaviors backing change practices (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009). Thus, the readiness of teachers for changes introduced in schools can be viewed from these three perspectives. In other words, the change effort will be effective when teachers have emotional, cognitive, and intentional readiness for change.

The realization of planned changes is often affected by an array of factors. So is the readiness of actors for the change. Strengthening this argument, Holt et al. (2007) state that:

> Readiness for change is a comprehensive attitude that is influenced simultaneously by the content (the nature of the change), the process (i.e., how the change is being implemented), the context (i.e., circumstances under which the change is occurring), and the individuals (i.e., characteristics of those being asked to change) involved and collectively reflects the extent to which an individual or a collection of individuals is cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo (p. 326).

In view of the ideas presented so far, the following section presents the factors affecting teachers' readiness for change in detail.

Factors Affecting Teachers' Readiness for Change

Literature in change management has outlined varieties of content, process, context, and individual related factors that influence the individuals' readiness for change (Dhingra&Punia, 2016; Lizar, Mangundjaya, & Rachmawan, 2015; Soumyaja, Kamlanabhan, & Bhattacharyya, 2015). Content refers to what has been changed; process factors address how the change went on; context refers to the situation in which the change was done, and individual factors cover the characteristics of actors involved in the change. Since the content factors focus on the nature of the change, it entails

studying specific change initiatives and thus would not be applicable for a study that approaches change at a general level. For this reason, this study delimits itself to the process, context and individual factors. However, an attempt was made to bring such changes as programs in GEQIP, CPD, active learning strategies, assessment techniques, curriculum changes, satellite TV lessons, and demands to meet the new professional competences to the attention of the participants to base their judgment on to the readiness for change and the antecedent factors. The following sub-sections present some details about the three categories of factors of readiness for change considered in this study.

Process Factors

The process factors refer to the steps or actions involved in the change process during implementation (Armenakis et al., 1993). These factors include actions undertaken during the enactment of an intended change. The steps followed or actions taken are believed to influence the individuals' readiness for change. Despite lack of consistency, literature and research in the general management domain outlined different process factors as predictors of readiness for change. For instance, the work of Soumyaja et al. (2015) reported participation in decision making and quality of communication as important antecedents to readiness for change. Similarly, Kondakci et al. (2017) pointed out participation in change decision, social interaction and knowledge sharing as factors that influence individuals' readiness for change. After reviewing the works of different authorities and researchers, Bouckenooghe et al. (2009) have provided a list of process factors to readiness for change. The list includes (1) quality of change communication, (2) participation in change decision, (3) attitude of top management towards the change and (4) the support provided by supervisors to the individuals during the implementation of change interventions. This comprehensive list of factors is used as a framework for the process aspect of this study.

Context Factors

Context refers to the conditions and environment within which employees function (Soumyaja et al., 2015). Literature in the domain of change management shows that the context in which the employees are involved in the change implementation plays a key role in the readiness of employees for the change (Oreg, 2006; Soumyaja et al., 2015). Different authorities have suggested various contextual factors that could affect employees' readiness for change. For instance, Soumyaja et al. suggested trust in top management and history of change as context factors that affect the employees' readiness for change. Similarly, Oreg identified power and prestige, job security, and intrinsic rewards, trust in management, and social influence as context factors for readiness for change. One of the limitations in the literature of readiness for change is the lack of consistency in the types of factors suggested as antecedents to readiness for change. Cognizant of this fact, the researcher decided to follow the context factors suggested by Bouckenooghe et al. (2009) for they are relatively exhaustive and applicable in the school context. These include: trust in leadership, politicking and staff cohesion.

Individual Factors

Literature in change management considers different individual factors as predictors of readiness for change. Some are demographic and the others are non-demographic in nature. However, there lacks constancy in the type and predicting power of the factors suggested by different authorities and researchers. With regard to the type of factors, many researchers (Dhingra & Punia, 2016; Kondakci et al., 2017; Lizar et al., 2015; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015) suggested age, sex, work experience, management experience and level of education as demographic factors that have some level of impact on employees' readiness for change. Other researchers examined intelligence (Soumyaja et al., 2015), a sense of one's ability to accomplish change (self-efficacy), employees' preference to work in a team, and psychological capital (Lizar et al., 2015) as non-demographic individual factors contributing to readiness for change. The findings reported by these researchers about the influence of demographic and other individual factors are not consistent and calls for further examination. In this study, the researchers delimited the individual factors to the demographic variables for manageability reason.

Hypothesized Conceptual Framework of the Study

Change is an inevitable experience of all organizations. According to the teleological theory of change, organizations go through a sequence of goal formulation, implementation, evaluation, and modification based on the level of goal achievements as well as pressures from the external environment (Burke, 2018; Van De Ven & Poole, 1995). Burke further suggests that organizations change as goals and purposes change, and this process is ongoing and iterative.

Nevertheless, nearly two-third of the change efforts do not succeed for different reasons (Desplaces, 2005; Soumyaja et al., 2015). Regrettably, authorities relate the failures to the pitfalls in the change implementation phase rather than the faults inherent in the change initiative itself (Choi & Ruona, 2010). Literature and research on the contrary reveal that change efforts at the initial stage significantly determines the success of the change implementation and institutionalization process (Hussain, Akram, Haider, Hussain & Ali, 2018; Weiner, 2009). All the change efforts undertaken at the initial stage belong to the unfreezing phase of Lewin's change theory (Hussain et al., 2018). The unfreezing phase serves to alter the organizational members' beliefs and attitudes about the change (Weiner, 2009). Leaders' inability to undertake the unfreezing process effectively contributes a lot to most of the change failures in the subsequent phases (Hussain et al., 2018). In other words, the change initiatives cannot succeed unless and until the unfrozen condition has been achieved (Burke, 2018).

Given the above points, individuals' readiness for change is a desirable behavior that should be achieved at the unfreezing phase of the change process to make school-level change initiatives successful. That means, readiness for change is grounded in the unfreezing phase of the Lewin's change theory (Choi & Ruona, 2010; Hussein et al., 2018). In the change management process, leaders need to use different strategies to create readiness by unfreezing the existing mindsets and creating motivation for change (Weiner, 2009). Thus, making employees ready for change must be the primary step managers should take to successfully adopt and implement

changes because changes cannot happen without the acceptance and active involvement of actors (Holt et al., 2007). According to Weiner, when employees are ready for change, they are likely to initiate change, exert effort, exhibit greater persistence, and display more cooperative behavior, and the result is more effective implementation. In other words, the unfreezing phase is regarded as successful when individuals become ready for a change initiative (Choi & Ruona, 2010)

Based on the systems notion, Burke (2018) claims that organizational conditions significantly influence the individuals' reactions to change. These conditions are the antecedents of individuals' reactions to the change and include (a) change recipient individual characteristics, (b) change process, and (c) change content (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). Other researchers extend the types of antecedents to include context factors (Holt et al., 2007). According to Choi and Ruona (2010) the individuals' evaluation of such organizational conditions can influence their readiness for change. In this paper, however, the content factors are excluded from the study for the reasons stated in the "Factors" sub-section.

From the above points, it is clear that individuals' readiness for change grounds itself on Lewin's conception of unfreezing (Choi & Ruona, 2010; Hussein et al., 2018). In addition to the empirical evidence, the system perspective is another theoretical base that explains the relationship between readiness for change and its antecedent factors (Burke, 2018). It means readiness for change depends on changes in the antecedent factors. Based on the stated theoretical backgrounds and empirical evidence, the following conceptual framework has been proposed to guides the research.

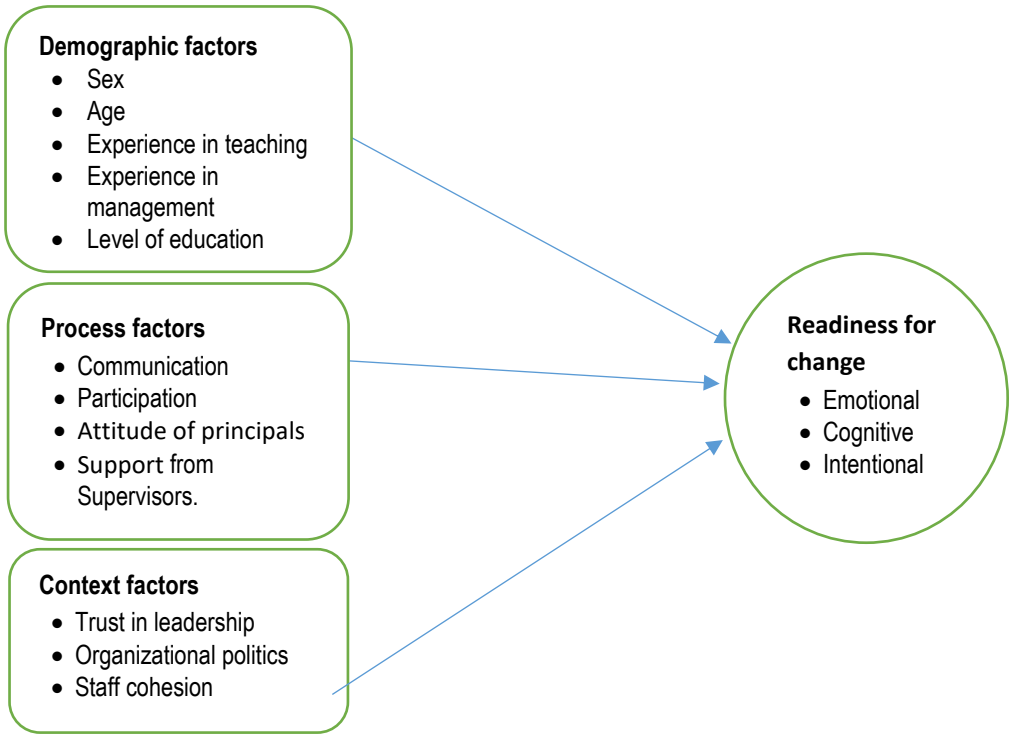

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework of the study (Adapted from Bouckenooghe et al., 2009)

METHOD

Design

The main objective of this study is to find out the level of teachers' readiness for change and the factors influencing their readiness for change. This entails examining the judgments of teachers about their perceived emotional readiness, cognitive readiness and intentional readiness for the changes they had been through. The study also examines the relationships among the antecedent factors and determines the factors contributing to readiness for change. This nature of the study entails the application of a quantitative study approach particularly correlational design (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Sample

The population of this study was general secondary and preparatory school teachers in Awi Zone. There were 30 secondary schools located in 11 Woredas of the Zone (ANRSEB, 2018). The researcher employed multi-stage sampling to get a representative sample of the population. First, five Woredas were selected using simple random sampling technique. The sample Woredas represented 45% of the Woredas in the Zone. There were a maximum of three schools in each sample Woreda. Applying proportionate and simple random sampling techniques one school was included in the sample population of schools from the sample Woredas. This resulted in five secondary and preparatory sample schools. The total number of teachers in the selected sample schools was 554. A proportionate number of teachers (45%) was considered from the respective sample schools to determine the sample size. This made the sample size 250 teachers. Finally, individual sample teachers were selected from the sample schools using systematic random sampling technique.

Instrument

A questionnaire that consisted of four sections was used to collect data from the teachers. The first section contained items dealing with the demographic variables that were believed to have some influence on the respondents' readiness for change. The second section contains nine "Yes/No" type items designed to bring the changes implemented in schools into the attention of respondents. The nine items required participants to confirm whether changes related to programs in GEQIP, CPD, active learning strategies, assessment techniques, curriculum changes, satellite TV lessons and demands to meet the new professional competences had been implemented in their schools. However, these items were not used in the analysis because they were intended just to confirm the implementation of those change initiatives and to create a kind of mindset that facilitates teachers' responses to the items in the subsequent sections. Section three consisted of items for emotional readiness (6 items), cognitive readiness (6 items) and intentional readiness (3 items). Section four contains 45 items designed to measure four process variables and three context variables. The items in each of the context variables ranged from four to twelve. All the items in parts three and four were five-point Likert-type scales partly adapted from the work of Bouckenooghe et al. (2009)

and partly developed by the researchers from literature. The scale represents: 1= strongly disagrees (SD), 2= Disagree (DI), 3= Somewhat agree (SwA), 4= Agree (AG) and 5= Strongly agree (SA).

Content and face validity of the instrument was ensured by getting the professional comments of three persons qualified in educational planning and management or leadership, and three well-experienced teachers chosen from Ankesha General Secondary and Preparatory School. After making the necessary improvements in the content of the instrument, it was pilot tested involving 40 teachers selected from the pilot site. The reliability of the instrument was checked by employing Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cohen et al., 2007; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). Item-total statistics were run to determine the items that improve the reliability indices of the sub-scales. This resulted in the rejection of 12 items from different sub-scales and reduced the total number of items from 60 to 48. The reliability indices of the sub-scales ranged from .628 (trust in leadership) to .887 (quality of change communication) and satisfied the minimum acceptable criteria r=.65 (Cohen et al., 2007) at least marginally.

Analysis techniques

Both descriptive and inferential statics were employed to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the background information of respondents as well as the variables used to measure readiness for change and the factors affecting readiness for change. Among the inferential statistics, one-sample t-test was run to determine the level of teachers' readiness against the three dimensions (RQ1) as well as the status of the process and context factors (RQ2). Independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were computed to test whether teachers differ in their readiness for change by some of the individual variables considered in the study (RQ3). Pearson's correlation coefficient was another inferential statistics employed to examine the relationship between some background variables and readiness for change (part of RQ3), among the readiness dimension, and between the factors and teachers' readiness (RQ4). Finally, stepwise multiple regression was run to determine the contributions of the demographic, process and context factors to teachers' readiness for change (RQ5). SPSS version 20 was used to run both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

RESULTS

To answer the research questions raised, data were collected from 242 (with 96.8% return rate) randomly selected teachers in the five general secondary and preparatory schools of the study site, and the following analyses were carried out based on the data obtained.

Characteristics of the respondents

Table 1a.
Summary of demographic characteristics of the respondents

Sex	Freq.	%	Age	Freq.	%	Exp.in Teaching	Freq.	%	Exp. in Mgt.	Freq.	%
F	37	15.3	<25	8	3.3	<=2	9	3.7	<=2	119	49.2
M	205	84.7	25-30	94	39.2	3-5	30	12.4	3-5	54	22.3
			31-35	75	31.3	5-10	65	26.9	6-10	41	16.9
			36-40	35	14.6	11-15	78	32.2	11-15	21	8.7
			41-45	14	5.8	>=16	60	24.8	>=16	7	2.9
			>= 46	14	5.8						
Total	**242**	**100**		**240***	**100**		**242**	**100**		**242**	**100**

* Two respondents didn't indicate their age interval

Table 1b
Continuation of the demographic characteristics

Level of qualification	Freq.	%	Field of study	Freq.	%
Certificate	-	-	Language	34	14
Diploma	9	3.7	Social sciences	76	31.4
First Degree	206	85.1	Education	4	1.7
Post graduate Diploma	7	2.9	Mathematics	29	12
2nd Degree	20	8.3	Natural sciences	99	40.9
Total	**242**	**100**		**242**	**100**

As shown in Table 1a, the great majority of teachers involved in the study (84.7%) were males. Only 15.3% of the teachers were females. Despite the wide difference in the number of male and female teachers, the involvement of both sexes in the study provides an opportunity to examine the contribution of sex on readiness for change. In terms of age, the great majority of teachers (70.5%) were between 25 and 35 years of age. The ages of the other respondents were distributed over different intervals of years. Teachers had different years of experience in teaching. Their experience was distributed over the different intervals with the smallest number falling under the interval less than or equal to two years (3.7%) and the highest number of teachers (32.2%) falling under 11-15 years interval. The representation of teachers from different years of experience would help to see the contribution of teaching experience in readiness for change. Nearly half of the teachers (49.2%) had two or fewer years of experience in management positions. The remaining one-half of teachers had served in a management position for more than two years, and they were evenly distributed over the different interval of experience in management positions.

Additionally, Table 1b revealed that the great majority of teachers (85.1%) had a first degree. The rest were educated at Diploma, Post Graduate Diploma or Master level. Teachers also

varied in terms of field of study. A good number of them were qualified in fields of natural science (40.9%) and social sciences (31.4%). The rest were qualified in Language (14%), Mathematics (12%) and Education (1.7%).

In general, it seems clear who teachers participated in the study vary to some extent in their demographic characteristics. These variations entail the examination of possible relationships between the demographic variables and readiness for change.

Teachers' Perceived Readiness for Change

One of the research questions aims to determine the level of teachers' perceived readiness for change in the study area. To answer this question, one sample t-test was computed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
One-sample t-test for perceived readiness for change and its dimensions

	Mean	Test Value	Mean Difference	t	Sig (2-tailed)
EMRE	11.23	9	2.23	14.083	.000
COGRE	21.96	18	3.96	15.437	.000
INRE	11.68	9	2.68	16.970	.000
RFCH	44.87	36	8.87	19.353	.000

N = 242, df = 241, EMRE: Emotional readiness, COGRE: Cognitive readiness, INRE: Intentional readiness RFCH: overall readiness for change

The result shows that the observed mean of the three components of perceived readiness (EMRE=11.23, COGRE=21.96, INRE=11.68) and the overall score of perceived readiness for change (RFCH= 44.87) are significantly higher than the respective test values (9, 18, 9 and 36) with the respective positive t (14.083, 15.437, 16.970 and 19.353) at $p < .05$. These findings imply that teachers in the study site had emotional, cognitive and intentional readiness for the changes introduced in schools. In other words, teachers were ready for the change initiatives introduced in schools.

The Status of Process and Context Factors

Table 3

One-sample t-test for the process and context factors of perceived readiness for change

Factors		Mean	Test Value	Mean Difference	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Process of change	Quality of change communication	24.54	21	3.54	11.226	.000
	Participation	33.52	30	3.52	9.895	.000
	Attitude of top management	14.32	12	2.32	10.683	.000
Context of change	Support by supervisors	17.25	15	2.25	10.312	.000
	Trust in leadership	10.33	9	1.33	9.778	.000
	Organizational politics	12.17	12	.165	.753	.452
	Cohesion	9.71	9	.71	4.08	.000

N = 242, df = 241

The result in Table 3 shows that the mean scores of all the process factors (QCC=24.54, PAR=33.52, ATP=14.32) and two of the context factors (TRL=10.33, COH=9.71) were found to be significantly higher than the respective test values with t (11.23, 9.90, 10.68, 9.78 and 4.08) respectively at $p<.05$. Unlike the other factors, the mean score of organizational politics (12.17) was not significantly different from the test value (12) with t=.753 and $p>.05$. These results imply that the change process involved high-quality change communication, high participation of teachers, positive attitude of management towards the change, and strong support by supervisors. Changes in the schools were also carried out in a context where there was high trust in leaders and strong staff cohesion. Schools are also characterized by some extent of politicking described in terms of power struggle among school leaders, use of staff members as instruments to fulfill principals' interests, and use of favoritism as an important way to achieve something. In contexts where politicking prevails, school leaders also take advantage of conflicts among groups in making decisions.

Background Variables and Perceived Readiness for Change: Relations and Differences

Examining the possible relationships or differences in readiness for change associated with the respondents' characteristics was one of the objectives of the study. Accordingly, independent sample t-test, one way ANOVA and Pearson correlation were computed depending on the nature of demographic variables.

Table 4

Independent t-test of female and male teachers for their perceived readiness for change (dimensions and overall)

Readiness dimensions	Sex	Mean	Mean difference	t	Sig. (2- tailed)
EMRE	Female	11.42			
	Male	11.19	.231	.525	.600
COGRE	Female	21.78			
	Male	21.99	-.206	-.289	.773
INRE	Female	11.62			
	Male	11.69	-.071	-.162	.872
RFCH	Female	44.83			
	Male	44.87	-.047	-.037	.971

N=242 (F= 37, M= 205), df = 240, *p<.05, EMRE: Emotional readiness, COGRE: Cognitive readiness, INRE: Intentional readiness RFCH: overall readiness for change

The result in Table 4 revealed that the mean differences between female and male teachers for the three dimensions and overall readiness were not statically significant. This result implies that there was no difference between female and male teachers in terms of their readiness for change.

Table 5

One way ANOVA of perceived readiness for change by qualification of teachers

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
EMRE	Between Groups	15.697	4	3.924	.646	.630
	Within Groups	1439.495	237	6.074		
	Total	1455.192	241			
COGRE	Between Groups	140.297	4	35.074	2.250	.064
	Within Groups	3695.290	237	15.592		
	Total	3835.587	241			
INRE	Between Groups	51.451	4	12.863	2.170	.073
	Within Groups	1405.049	237	5.928		
	Total	1456.500	241			
RFCH	Between Groups	367.367	4	91.842	1.834	.123
	Within Groups	11870.619	237	50.087		
	Total	12237.986	241			

*p < .05, EMRE: Emotional readiness, COGRE: Cognitive readiness, INRE: Intentional readiness RFCH: overall readiness for change

Similarly, the result in Table 5 reveals that there was no statistically significant variation in readiness for change among teachers with different qualifications because all the p values were

found to be higher than .05 alpha level. That means all teachers exhibit a similar level of readiness for change irrespective of their variation in qualification.

Table 6

Pearson correlation between demographic variables and perceived readiness for change

Variables	**EMRE**	**COGRE**	**INRE**	**RFCH**
Age (N=240)	-.029	.028	.110	.044
Experience in Teaching (N=242)	-.028	.052	.030	.030
Experience in Management positions (N=210)	-.069	-.079	-.033	-.089
Level of qualification (N=241)	.030	-.074	.053	-.013

*p<.05, EMRE: Emotional readiness, COGRE: Cognitive readiness, INRE: Intentional readiness RFCH: overall readiness for change

The computed Pearson correlation in Table 6 shows that all the correlations between demographic variables including age, experience in teaching, experience in management positions, level of qualification, and perceived readiness for change were very weak and statistically not significant at p<.05. This result implies that there was no statistically significant relationship between the four demographic characteristics and perceived readiness for change. In other words, changes in age, experience in teaching, experience in management positions, and level of qualification do not result in a variation in the level of teachers' perceived readiness for change.

The fourth research question examined the correlation among the antecedent factors and perceived readiness for change. This would help to examine two important aspects of the study. The first helps to identify the factors that have a strong and statistically significant relationship with the overall perceived readiness for change (RFCH). The second aspect is to examine the multicollinearity of the antecedent factors, a requirement for regression analysis. Table 7 depicts the results of the inter-correlation matrix.

Table 7

The inter-correlation matrix for the process factors, context factors and readiness for change

	EMRE	COGRE	INRE	RFCH	QCC	PAR	ATC	SBS	TLE	POL	COH
EMRE	1										
COGRE	.374**	1									
INRE	.424**	.526**	1								
RFCH	.701**	.870**	.786**	1							
QCC	.364**	.326**	.443**	**.461****	1						
PAR	.259**	.085	.328**	**.250****	*.619***	*1*					
ATC	.344**	.277**	.322**	**.385****	*.650***	*.461***	*1*				
SBS	.232**	.104	.294**	**.239****	*.610***	*.585***	*.651***	*1*			
TLE	.184**	.100	.228**	**.198****	*.524***	*.442***	*.492***	*.611***	*1*		
POL	-.079	.166**	-.056	**.047**	*.036*	*-.169***	*-.024*	*-.109*	*-.149**	*1*	
COH	-.002	.228**	.094	**.159***	*.002*	*-.155**	*-.053*	*-.085*	*-.146**	*.489***	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
EMRE: Emotional readiness, COGRE: Cognitive readiness, INRE: Intentional readiness RFCH: overall readiness for change, QCC: Quality of change communication, PAR: Participation in change decision, ATC: Attitude of to management towards the change, SBS: The support provided by the supervisor, TLE: trust in leadership, POL: politicking, COH: staff cohesion.

The result in Table 7 shows that all the process factors (QCC, PAR ATC, and SBS) have a statistically significant positive correlation with overall perceived readiness for change (RFCH) at $p<.05$. Similarly, two of the context factors (TLE and COH) have a statistically significant positive correlation with overall perceived readiness for change at $p<.05$. The third context factor (Organizational politics-POL) was found to have no statistically significant correlation with overall perceived readiness for change. Thus, except organizational politics, an increase in every process and context factor will result in a significant increase in the teachers' overall perceived readiness for change.

The inter-correlations among the process and context factors (see the italicized coefficients) also testify that the factors are free from multicollinearity problems for their correlation coefficients are far less than the .85 (Kline, 2011). This is one of the assumptions to be fulfilled to run multiple regression. Regarding normality, the distributions of the data for the context, process, and the dependent variables were checked using histograms IBM SPSS FREQUENCIES. All of them were found to be fairly symmetrical. The following section presents the regression analysis of the process and context factors on the dependent variable.

Contributors to Perceived Readiness for Change

Table 8

Stepwise multiple regression analysis for process and context factors predicting perceived readiness for change

Models	Independent Variables	B	t	Sig.	R^2	F	Sig.	α with RFCH
Model 1	Constant = 28.437		13.644	.000	.212	64.60	.000	
	QCC	.461	8.038	.000				
Model 2	Constant = 24.276		9.578	.000	.237	37.16	.000	
	QCC	.460	8.146	.000				
	COH	.158	2.805	.005				
Model 3	Constant = 22.885		8.833	.000	***.253***	26.83	.000	
	QCC	**.354**	4.791	.000				**.461***
	COH	**.167**	2.979	.003				**.159***
	ATC	.164	2.222	.027				.385*

*p<.05, df. For model 3 is 3, 238

The analysis carried out in Tables 4 and 5 proved that the demographic variables such as sex and qualification did not result in any variation in perceived readiness for change. Similarly, the other demographic factors such as age, experience in teaching, experience in management and level of qualification failed to relate with perceived readiness for change (see Table 7). Thus, all the demographic factors were excluded from the regression analysis. Only the process and context factors were included in the regression analysis.

As shown in Table 8, the stepwise multiple regression analysis resulted in three models. The third model is the model that determined all the factors that have a statistically significant contribution to perceived readiness for change. The third model explains that 25.3% of the variance in teachers' perceived readiness for change is explained by the joint contributions of QCC, COH, and ATC. The other process and context factors were excluded from the model because they didn't have any unique contribution to the variation in the perceived readiness for change. When the β coefficient of each of the identified factors is multiplied by the respective α with the dependent variable (RFCH), it gives the percentage of the contributions of each factor on perceived readiness for change. Accordingly, the highest contribution for the variation in perceived readiness for change comes from QCC (16.3%), followed by ATC (6.3%) and COH (2.7%). This finding indicates that quality of change communication, the attitude of top management towards the change initiatives, and social cohesiveness of the staff are the significant contributors to the 25.3%

variation in perceived readiness for change. The remaining 74.7% variation in teachers' perceived readiness for change is accounted for other factors that were not treated in this study.

DISCUSSION

The findings for the research question that pertains to the teachers' perceived readiness for change revealed that teachers in the study site were ready for planned changes in schools. Their readiness was expressed in terms of emotional, cognitive, and intentional aspects. The emotional readiness indicated that teachers had good feelings about the planned changes carried out in schools- they experienced the changes positively and regarded the changes as refreshing. Consistent with this finding, the work of Holt and Vardaman (2013) suggested that readiness for change is manifested in terms of individuals' feelings and beliefs about the necessity of the planned change. Similarly, Kondacki et al. (2017) noted that actors' positive or negative feelings to change initiatives explain their emotional readiness level.

The cognitive readiness of the teachers in the study site is also expressed in terms of their understanding of the change initiatives as inevitable and continuous processes that have a positive effect on students' development. This means teachers believe that changes introduced in the school can bring about the expected result if properly managed. They understand change as a process that improves and simplifies the works of the teachers and the school. In this regard, Kondakci et al. (2017) suggest that the cognitive aspect of readiness for change explains the thinking of teachers about the pros, cons and the need for change. The teachers under study seem to exhibit this behavior and can be understood as having cognitive readiness for change.

The result also shows that the teachers' intentional readiness was significantly higher than the test value and implies that the teachers in the study site had a strong intent to commit themselves for the change processes, the willingness to make significant contributions to the planned changes, and the will to put their utmost effort to the realization of the anticipated changes. Such behaviors that actors show during the change process are manifestations of their intent to change initiatives (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009).

When viewed from the description of readiness for change suggested by Bouckenoogheet al. (2009), Zayim and Kondakci (2015), and Kondakci et al. (2017), the finding of the current study confirms that teachers in the study site have exhibited the three dimensions of readiness for change. Such positive feelings, attitude, and perception of teachers to the change process facilitates their willingness and openness to organizational change (Sikh, 2011).

Examining whether readiness for change is linked with teachers' demographic characteristics was one of the concerns of this study. In this regard, the results in Tables 4 and 5, show that teachers did not differ in their perceived readiness for change by sex and area of qualifications. Similarly, the result in Table 6 shows that there was no statistically significant relationship between demographic variables (such as age, experience in teaching, experience in management positions, and level of education) and overall perceived readiness for change. Thus, teachers' perceived readiness for change was not associated with the background variables treated in the study. Despite the difference in the study context, this result is to some extent in conformity

with the work of Sikh (2011) and partly contradicts the work of Vakola and Nikolaou (2005). Sikh found that except age, the other demographic variables such as sex, experience, and level of education have no any relationship with readiness for change. With regard to age, Sikh claims that the younger the employees the more ready they are for change. On the contrary, Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) found that sex and education are significant predictors of the attitude of employees towards organizational change, but not age. The observed inconstancies of research findings in this regard could be attributed to the difference in the context of the study, nature of the organization studied, the content of change or difference in the proportion of participants represented from the different categories of demographic characteristics. This inconstancy of findings calls for further research.

In addition to the demographic variables, this study examined the extent to which the process and context factors of change were manifested in the study area. The result in Table 3 shows that all the process and context factors of perceived readiness for change examined in this study were strongly evident in the study area. This means teachers have agreed that the change management in secondary and preparatory schools of Awi zone was characterized by good quality change communication, high participation in change decisions, positive attitude of top management towards change, and strong support from supervisors. The literature reviewed under the sub-heading of "process factors" revealed the importance of the process factors in ensuring teachers' readiness for change.

The results concerning the status of the change process and context factors in the study area show that the planned changes in Awi Zone General Secondary and Preparatory Schools were carried out in contexts that involve high trust in leaders, strong staff cohesion and some level of organizational politics. The importance of these contextual factors in the change process are recognized by different authorities (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009; Oreg, 2006; Rafferty and Simons, 2006; Soumyaja et al., 2015; Zayim and Kondakci, 2015) as process factors. The literature presented under the sub-heading "context factors" corroborates the findings of this study that these factors are reported as antecedents to readiness for change.

Recognizing the fact that the mere presence of the process and context factors in the study site does not ensure the causal relationship between the factors and the dependent variable, the researchers first examined the correlations between the two in Table 7 and further analyzed the contributions of the factors to perceived readiness for change by running stepwise multiple regression in Table 8. The Pearson correlation result in Table 7 revealed that all the process factors and two of the context factors have a statistically significant positive correlation with perceived readiness for change. That means, the more the quality of change communication, the level of participation, the managers' positive attitude towards the change process, and the quality of support provided by supervisors, the greater will be teachers' perceived readiness for change. Similarly, the better the trust in leadership and staff social cohesion are, the higher will be the teachers' perceived readiness for change. Organizational politics, the third context factor, is positively related to perceived readiness for change but not at a statistically significant level. This

result implies that organizational politics has no statistically significant relationship with readiness for change although it was evident to some extent in the schools of the study site

These correlational findings are consistent with the literature and research findings in the area. If we start with the process factors, we can find ample literature and research evidence that support our findings. For instance, Soumyaja et al. (2015) suggested that good quality of communication helps to increase employees' understanding of the need for the planned change, reduce the change-related uncertainty and shape employees' readiness for change. On the contrary, poorly managed change communications are likely to result in rumors and resistance to change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998). With regard to participation, literature suggested that participation develops not only teachers' positive attitude towards the change but also their feelings of ownership and recognition (Kondakci et al., 2017). The principals' or managers' attitude towards the change is another process factor that could be described in terms of their overall positive or negative judgment of the change initiative. The kind of attitude principals have affects the attitude of teachers towards that change (Faghihi & Allameh, 2012). In other words, if leaders have a positive attitude towards the change and can instill it on teachers, then their readiness for change increases (Andrew, 2017; Bouckenooghe et al., 2009).

Since planned changes require a change in employees' perception and practice, they entail close support from supervisors. According to Lonescua, Meruì ă and Dragomiroiua (2014), the support provided by supervisors may include communicating the change, providing direction on how the change can be implemented, training and coaching the employees to develop the required knowledge and skills, and identifying and solving causes for resistance to change. Also the work of Sikh (2011) confirmed that the higher the quality of support provided by supervisors or managers the greater will be the readiness of employees for change.

Research and literature in the area also corroborate the correlation results obtained for the context factors. For instance, the work of Rafferty and Simons (2006) proved that trust in peers and management has positive relationships with readiness for change. About staff social cohesion, Nicolaidou (2005) notes that staff collaboration and social cohesion are organizational features necessary to facilitate change in schools. That means, the more the groups are socially cohesive the greater will be their readiness for change. The existence of organizational politics to some extent and the absence of a significant correlation between politicking and readiness for change are findings consistent with the literature in the area. Scholars in the area do not promote high politicking because of its negative consequence on readiness for change. For instance, Makhdoom, Mehmood, and Atta (2017) suggested that school teachers perceiving a high level of politics in the organization would indulge in more counterproductive work behaviors and tend to resist change.

Though it is a precondition, correlations may not necessarily imply causal relations between the factors and readiness for change. Cognizant of this fact, the researchers regressed the four process and the three context factors on perceived readiness for change employing stepwise multiple regression. All the individual factors were excluded from the regression analysis for they have no statistically significant association or relationship with overall perceived readiness for change as discussed in the "result" section. As shown in Table 8, a comprehensive model of

regression was generated in three steps. The result of the regression analysis as indicated in the third model confirmed that only three of the seven factors found to significantly contribute to perceived readiness for change (two from the process and one from the context). These factors are quality of change communication, the attitude of top management to change initiatives, and staff cohesiveness. These three factors together accounted for 25.3% of the variation in teachers' perceived readiness for change. Concerning the independent contribution of each factor, quality of change communication contributed 16.7% to the variation in teachers' perceived readiness for change followed by the attitude of top managers to change initiatives (6.3%) and staff cohesion (2.7%). Consistent with the works of Soumyaja, Kamalanabhan and Bhattacharyya (2011), and Wanberg and Banas (2000), quality of communication appeared to be the strongest contributor to readiness for change compared to the other factors treated in the respective studies. Generally, this study supports only three of the thirteen factors proposed in the conceptual framework of the study.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, it is possible to conclude that teachers had perceived readiness for the changes introduced to their schools. Principals also effectively practiced the proposed process and contextual factors to readiness for change. However, of all the process and context factors practiced in schools, only the three: the quality of change communication, principals' positive attitude towards the change initiatives, and staff cohesion contributed to teachers' readiness for change. That means, communicating change-related information properly, holding a positive attitude toward the changes, and ensuring staff cohesion are the school settings that principals need to emphasize to ensure teachers' readiness for changes.

Although the identified contributors to readiness for change are few and have a small percentage of contribution, the study verified that readiness for change and its contributing factors are areas worth attending in the change management process of secondary schools. That means, change success depends on what the principals do on the mindsets and attitudes of teachers at the initial stage of the process. The success also depends on the proper application of Lewin's change theory and the system's perspective to organizations. In other words, readiness for change requires effective management of the Lewin's unfreezing stage and proper handlings of essential organizational conditions. In sum, the shift from resistance to readiness for change is necessary for effective management of changes in schools though it needs further search for more powerful contributors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings dictate that principals and those in charge of initiating change in Secondary and Preparatory schools are advised to focus more on improving the quality of change communication, developing their positive attitude towards the change initiatives, and strengthening staff cohesion to positively influence the teachers' readiness for change. That means,

- principals need to regularly inform teachers on how the change in school is going on, establish good two-way communication with teachers and position incumbents, explain the necessity of the change, provide sufficient details about the change progress to teachers, and share change-related decisions to relevant position incumbents such as unit leaders, department heads, vice principals, supervisors in addition to teachers. Providing periodic feedback on the change implementation progress is an aspect of communication that maintains the teachers' readiness for change.

- principals are expected to exhibit a positive attitude towards the change initiative. That means principals need to set and share a positive vision of the future of the organization, involve actively in the change initiatives, and provide consistent support to teachers.

- Principals are also advised to ensure strong staff cohesion among teachers. They need to create a kind of social environment that fosters collaboration among teachers, reduces conflicts among staff through proper conflict management mechanisms, and builds the spirit and confidence of teachers by advocating that expertise of each staff member is useful for the change initiatives and everyone has a stake in the change implementation.

Since the instrument used in the present study is adapted from general management literature, there seems a needs to make it more relevant to the context of schools and educational organizations. In its current form, the instrument was used once and in a specific context. It needs to be validated by administering it in different contexts of schools. These would help to validate the instrument and increase its reliability. Thus, developing a more relevant instrument or validating the current instrument by replicating it in different school contexts could be an area that researchers may work on for better measurement of readiness for change and its antecedents.

Furthermore, the regression result of this study shows that the larger percentage (74.7%) of the factors contributing to teachers readiness for change remain unknown. Thus, researchers are advised to include additional aspects from individual, process and context factors that were not covered in this study and find out new factors that contribute to the teachers' readiness for change. Including the content factors is another aspect researchers may consider. Validating the factors identified by this study by replicating the study in different contexts and using a large sample size could be another area of engagement for researchers.

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