INVOLVEMENT,
THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

READINESS FOR CHANGE FROM A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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SUMMARY

Planned change is a rule rather than an exception in organizations (Homan, 2005). As planned change brings uncertainty to employees, a key issue for successful change projects is creating readiness for change (Holt, et al., 2007). The circumstances under which change occurs and the processes of how change is dealt with, have impact on the level of employees' readiness for change (Bouckenooghe, et al., 2009). Despite the relevance of creating the right circumstances, process and level of readiness for change, there is no generally accepted *rigorous* (reliable and valid) questionnaire to assess them (Holt, et al., 2007). However, a rigorous assessment is necessary to create successful change projects (Ten Have & Visser, 2004).

A literature review reveals that the *Organizational Change Questionnaire* (OCQ) by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009) is the most rigorous instrument to measure readiness for change, based on its conceptualizations, conceptual model, and sample size including both managerial and non-managerial respondents. Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009) specify ten claims on readiness for change based on this OCQ, that have not been tested in other studies yet. Bouckenooghe (2010) calls for more research on readiness for change that fosters a multisource data collection method, including non-traditional qualitative methodologies. This is especially important, as questionnaire based studies might have a bias issue due to socially desirable behavior (Gorrell, et al., 2010).

This single-case study investigates eight of these ten OCQ claims on readiness for change by Bouckenooghe, et al., by replicating their study. In addition, it explores a retained key claim of the OCQ by employing two non-traditional qualitative methodologies: a systems constellation and a LIWC analysis. *Systems constellations* apply stand-ins representing the key elements in a client's problem, showing a client's tacitly experienced relationships between these elements (Jurg, et al., 2008). *Stand-ins* are people who neither know the client nor the problem, nor the element they represent. *LIWC* (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) is a computerized text analysis program that classifies texts in psychological categories on a word-by-word basis, in an objective and automated way (Zijlstra, et al., 2004).

The case covers *Siza's Service Organization*, a staff department of a social healthcare organization in the Netherlands. At the start of this investigation, Siza's Service Organization was preparing for a planned change project, including an organizational restructuring and a major redundancy. The preparations consisted of employee involvement in the change process, even though the added value is suggested to be unclear and unproven (Wagenaar, 2007) and it can be perceived as manipulation in planned change projects (Balogun & Hope Hailey, 2008). As the OCQ is validated in organizations just before and during the implementation of large-scale changes and is recommended to be administered in similar conditions (Bouckenooghe, et al., 2009), the planned change project by Siza's Service Organization is a *critical single-case*: a case where the theory has specified a clear set of circumstances within which its propositions are believed to be true (Yin, 2014).

Thus, the main question of this thesis is: 'Which claims on readiness for change by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009) can be retained in a critical single-case study from a multidimensional perspective?'. This main question includes three sub questions:
1. Which OCQ claims on readiness for change are retained by the findings in this case study and which retained claim is the key claim?
2. Is the retained key claim of the OCQ supported by a systems constellation in this case study?
3. Is the retained key claim of the OCQ supported by a LIWC analysis in this case study?

Regarding the first sub question, regression analyses have been applied on 87 completed OCQs, out of the 141 disseminated ones to employees of Siza's Service Organizations (response rate 62%). Display 1 presents the findings on eight investigated OCQ claims on readiness for change by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009).

Display 1 Investigated eight OCQ claims on readiness for change by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009)

OCQ claims on readiness for change by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009)	Findings
1. The scales effectively discriminate for job position	Retained
2. Readiness for change is a multifaceted concept	Retained
3. Positive relationship between trust in leadership and cognitive readiness for change	Rejected
4. Positive relationship between participatory management and emotional and intentional readiness for change	Rejected
5. Negative relationship between politicking and cognitive readiness for change	Rejected
6. Positive relationship between involvement in the change process and emotional and intentional readiness for change	Retained
7. Positive relationship between ability of management to lead change and cognitive and emotional readiness for change	Rejected
8. Positive relationship between attitude of top management toward change and emotional and intentional readiness for change	Rejected

Three claims are retained in this critical single-case study: the scales effectively discriminate for job position, readiness for change is a multifaceted concept, and involvement in the change process relates positively to emotional and intentional readiness for change. Additionally, a relationship between involvement in the change process and cognitive readiness for change is disclosed. The other five investigated claims are rejected in this case study. Involvement in the change process is disclosed as the only independent variable positively effecting all three dependent readiness for change variables. Therefore, involvement in the change process turns out to be the key enabler of readiness for change in this case study. Thus, the retained claim on a positive relationship between involvement in the change process and readiness for change is the key claim explored further.

Regarding the second sub question, a social network analysis has been performed on the video recordings of a systems constellation conducted by Siza's Service Organization's Human Resource manager, to explore the retained relationship between involvement in the change process and readiness for change. This analysis is based on three operational concepts related to structure (Şandru, 2010): degree of connection, centrality, and clusters. *Degree of connection* is the total number of stand-ins each stand-in is in contact with, operationalized by determining face-to-face contacts. *Centrality* is the closeness of a stand-in to the other stand-ins, operationalized as the smallest distance sum from each stand-in in the systems constellation to all other stand-ins. *Clusters* are part of a systems constellation having a high density, operationalized by cluster analysis on the relative distances between stand-ins. This analysis differentiates the findings regarding these three concepts between stand-in 'employees ready for change (V)' and stand-in 'employees not ready for change (N)'. Display 2 illustrates the differences in three example photos. The first two photos illustrate the degrees of connection, the third photo illustrates the centrality and the clusters for stand-ins 'V' and 'N'.

Display 2 Stand-in 'employees ready for change (V)' and stand-in 'employees not ready for change (N)' in the systems constellation

The degree of connection for stand-in 'employees ready for change (V)' does not significantly deviate from the group mean, whereas the degree of connection for stand-in 'employees not ready for change (N)' significantly deviates from the group mean in a negative way'. The findings also show that centrality for stand-in 'employees ready for change (V)' does not significantly deviate from the group mean, whereas centrality for stand-in 'employees not ready for change (N)' significantly deviates from the group mean in a negative way. The clusters analysis shows that stand-in 'employees ready for change (V)' is part of a cluster with a high density, whereas stand-in 'employees not ready for change (N)' is part of a cluster with a low density.

Therefore, this social network analysis on degree of connection, centrality, and clusters points out that employees ready for change are more involved in the change process than employees not ready for change. Thus, the retained key claim of the OCQ is supported by a systems constellation in this case study.

Regarding the third sub question, two LIWC analyses were conducted on the open answers on an added OCQ question, differentiated between 'employees most ready for change' and 'employees least ready for change'. The first LIWC analysis demonstrates that 'employees most ready for change' use less negative emotion words and less negations than 'employees least ready for change'. As Arntz, et al. (2012) argue that a decrease in the use of negative emotion words and negations during the change process discloses successful change, the OCQ findings on readiness for change for 'employees most ready for change' and 'employees least ready for change' are supported by this LIWC analysis. A second LIWC analysis demonstrates that 'employees most ready for change' use less 1st person singular pronouns and employ more 1st person plural pronouns than 'employees least ready for change. As North, et al. (2012) argue that a decrease of 1st person singular pronouns and an increase of 1st person plural pronouns during the change process discloses successful change, the OCQ findings on involvement in the change process for 'employees most ready for change' and 'employees least ready for change' are also supported by this second LIWC analysis. Thus, the retained key claim of the OCQ is also supported by the two LIWC analyses in this case study.

To conclude, the claim by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009) on the positive relationship between involvement in the change process and readiness for change, can be retained in a critical single-case study from a multidimensional perspective: a traditional quantitative OCQ replication and the non-traditional qualitative systems constellation and LIWC methodologies.

Theoretically, the findings of this critical single-case study imply that involvement in the change process positively affects employees cognitive, emotional, and intentional readiness for change in change projects. The factor analyses and the different enablers of cognitive, emotional, and intentional readiness for change, support the claim that readiness for change should be considered a multifaceted rather than an unilateral concept, as considered in other key literature on readiness for change. However, the findings also show that the validity of most OCQ claims on readiness for change by Bouckenooghe, et al. (2009) is limited, as only three of the eight investigated OCQ claims are retained in this case study. The findings also provide new insights into non-traditional methodologies to measure readiness for change and involvement in the change process. Application of social network analysis concepts on systems constellations is not only innovative in readiness for change literature, but also in systems constellation literature. Furthermore, the LIWC analyses based on Arntz, et al. (2012) and North, et al. (2012) are innovative in the research area of readiness for change. The innovative value of these two non-traditional methodologies is that they check for the socially desirable behavior creating the bias issue of questionnaires.

Practically, it is recommended for organizations planning change projects to monitor readiness for change from a multidimensional perspective. In addition to the OCQ, organizations preparing for planned change might consider to conduct systems constellations in an early stage to disclose the tacit knowledge of the supervisors of a change project on employees' readiness for change. Furthermore, LIWC analyses might be applied on written texts of the employees involved to assess their readiness for change. Multidimensional assessment of readiness for change in organizations leads to multidimensional insights into the circumstances under which change occurs and the processes of how change is dealt with successfully. These insights can make a fundamental difference to the design of change and the likelihood of success. The multidimensional core insight obtained from this investigation is that involvement is the key to successful change.