THE IMPACT OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS ON INDIVIDUAL READINESS FOR CHANGE: CLOSING THE GAP ON ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Laguo Livingstone Gilbert
Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Science
Federal University Otuoke

Article history:		Abstract:
Received: **Accepted:** **Published:**	26th January 2021 7th February 2021 27st February 2021	Despite the extensive body of literature examining the need for readiness for change and commitment, there has been limited research linking factors that can increase the level of individual readiness for change in order to appreciate commitment. This study posits that adequate consideration of the dimensions of managerial skills will benefit organisations in order to increase the impact of individual readiness for change and bridge the gap between organisational commitments. The aim of this paper is to investigate the integrative influence of managerial skills and their impact on the level of individual readiness for change. Data were collected from 160 managers in Nigerian organisations. All respondents were organisational personnel responsible for impacting on commitment or involved with strategic decisions for performance improvement, and thereof filled out the structured questionnaire. Increasing individual readiness for change is based on a thoughtful consideration and implication of the dimensions of managerial skills rather than just focusing on one skill.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of individual readiness for change has attracted considerable attention in recent times (Eby *et al.*, 2000; Jones *et al.*, 2005; Haffar *et al.*, 2013 Tahoun *et al.,* 2019). These discussions have helped to increase the interest of organisational leaders and practitioners of what factors can help to deepen the level of individual readiness for change on organisational commitment. Studies associated with individual readiness for change noted its significance in line with achieving a strategic advantage especially when organisations are facing a turbulent business atmosphere. However, individual readiness for change is strongly related to organisational commitment and performance in the sense of aligning factors that can raise levels of individual readiness for change. Studies of this aspect are relatively limited. This paper explores the concepts of managerial skills as associate factors for increasing the level of organisational member's readiness for change. As such it concentrates on the concept of individual readiness for change and addresses the following research questions:

- To what extent can individual readiness for change benefit organisational commitment?, and
- What influence do the dimensions of managerial skills have on the level of individual readiness for change?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the study's main contribution lies in proposing and testing a conceptual framework for individual readiness for change. In this conceptualisation, individual readiness for change is viewed as a multidimensional construct that reflects organisational competencies in line with the three dimensions of managerial skills in response to increasing the impact for commitment, which are technical skills, conceptual skills and interpersonal skills. Managerial skills have been identified as an important factor that could either increase or decrease employee readiness to contribute perform well (Carmeli and Tishler, 2006; Leong, 2008; Ellonen *et al.*, 2008). So, there is a strong need for a better understanding of the dimensions of managerial skills with alignment to organisational commitment. Studies have paid attention to the importance of developing organisational members with skills so that they can better understand how to involve themselves when contributing to their organisation. For example, Parente *et al.* (2012) conceptualise the need for people to acquire traditional skills, soft skills and strategic skills as necessary capacity for understanding how to impact positively in their organisation, whereas, Yukl (2013) emphasises the need for a strong adherence to three dimensions of managerial skills to help equip organisational members with capacity necessary for performance improvement and organisational commitment. This study is proposed to empirically examine the influence of the dimensions of managerial skills identified by Yukl (2013) namely: technical skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills on individual readiness for change in order to give a holistic view on how each dimension affects employee readiness for change and increased commitment.

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The study propose that individual readiness for change is influenced by a set of managerial variables, including technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills as leverage or strategy for performance increase and organisational commitment. The study argue that a higher degree of individual readiness for change will lead to better performance in all levels of the organisation.

In theory, the proposed conceptual framework draws on the organisational technical based perspective, which finds organisations' competencies to be important in successfully dealing with commitment increase (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Buitendach and De Witte, 2005; Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2010, Tahoun *et al.,* 2019). In addition, the individual readiness for change concept draws on the industrial organisations viewing organisational strategy to be a core aspect of performance improvement (Meyer *et al.*, 1993; Yavuz, 2010 Riddell and Roisland (2017). Lastly, it largely considers how organisations handle their members, i.e. being proactive and acquiring the right skills (Jick, 1993; Sengupta *et al.*, 2006; Alas and Vadi, 2006; Lewis, 2011; Yukl, 2013), hence increase organisational members competencies towards increasing the level of commitment or performance.

The study takes the point of view of an independent organisation, or a strategic business unit within a business. It begins with the study reviewing the perception of individual readiness for change and how it has an influence on organisational commitment. More so, the study reviewed and discussed the dimensions of managerial skills and their influence on organisational commitment. The relationships between the dimensions of managerial and individual readiness for change were equally discussed. This is to explore the benefits of the dimensions of managerial skills on individual readiness for change and how such relationship influences organisational commitment. The set of hypotheses is based on the factors that are expected to affect the individual readiness for change facet of an organisation, and the expected correlations between individual readiness for change, managerial skills and commitment. A regression analysis is employed to explore the extent to which each dimension of managerial skills impacts on individual readiness for change.

The Impact of Individual Readiness for Change on Commitment

Individual readiness for change is defined as the extent to which organisational members are psychologically and behaviourally prepared to either increase commitment or improve performance (Rusly *et al.*, 2012 Haffar *et al.*, 2016). Individual readiness for change is viewed as a perception based construct, comprised of both leaders and subordinates and their perceived behavioural efficacy to increase commitment (Weiner *et al.*, 2008). Holt *et al.* (2007) believes that organisational readiness for change can be represented by aggregating individual attitudes and cognitive behaviour regarding the direction of the organisation.

Self and Schraeder (2009) noted that organisations' commitment is connected to the degree of readiness for change which is concerned with the implementation of new organisational structures, strategies, cultures, and practices that must align with the performance of the project. The nature of organisational commitment has continued to force businesses to adopt initiatives that will increase their readiness and effectiveness in order to survive the trend and remain competitive (Susanto, 2008; By, 2007; Shah, 2011). Yukl, (2013) noted that successful organisations are those that adopt various skills when confronted with challenges. To this end, such organisations make huge attempts to adopt strategies capable of improving their performance structure and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Lawson and Price, 2003). Goksoy's (2012) study suggests that failed organisations are those that ignored the need to increase the requirement for skills necessary to enhance commitment and improve performance. If organisational members are not equipped with requisite skills their level of readiness may retrogress and hence lead to resistance or rejection of commitment (Gangestad and Snyder, 2000). Other researchers believe that such skill desertion may lead to sabotage, absenteeism and output restriction (Madsen *et al.*, 2005; Smith, 2005). This is why Senior and Swailes (2010) add that organisation readiness for change must involve the right skill, attitude and belief as well as an effective strategy for proper task accomplishment.

In recent times, attention has been focussed on individual readiness for change as this is seen as the best preparation for organisational commitment. Also, the literature has consistently stressed the need for increasing the level of individual readiness for change because of its criticality towards organisational success via commitment (Mueller *et al.*, 2012; Goksoy, 2012; Haffar *et al.*, 2013; Riddell and Roisland (2017). In line with organisational commitment, authors have emphasised the importance of human factors as a consideration for increasing the level of individual readiness for change (Jones *et al.*, 2005; Holt *et al.*, 2007). Hence, ignoring the role of the individuals within the organisation or the change implementation framework may be an impediment to the entire commitment process (Jones *et al.*, 2005). Rather, individuals should be equipped with the change strategy to increase their ability in order to understand the change process as well as the level of commitment.

In their study Jones *et al.* (2005) came up with a concept of change readiness and described readiness for change as the extent to which organisational members hold positive views about the need to increase participation of organisational success as well as the extent to which they believe that such participation is likely to have positive implications for themselves and the wider organisation. Rusly *et al.* (2012) conceptualised a model for understanding the influence of change readiness. The model posits the potential implications of change readiness from both psychological and structural dimensions. Knowledge acquisition, creation and sharing processes are put forward, as well as offered as possible fruitful areas for continuous research into knowledge management effectiveness from a change perspective. Similarly, Mueller *et al.* (2012) posit that the key prerequisite for successful change in organisations is to understand and develop readiness for change among organisational members. In their work, Mueller *et al.* (2012) affirmed that the readiness for change is a valid instrument for assessing current behaviour and

change commitment both for the individual employee and the organisation. Similarly, Weiner *at al.'s* (2008) research into readiness for change shows the deliberate efforts leaders and subordinates must do in order to increase the effectiveness that lead to change implementation.

In this study individual readiness for change is perceived as a strategic instrument for increasing organisational commitment, we believe that the dimensions of managerial skills are major recipes for increasing the level of individual readiness for change. Therefore, individual readiness for change is expected to be measured in line with the perception of skills attainment.

MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Managerial skills have been linked to the knowledge about methods, processes, procedures and techniques for conducting specialized activity, and the ability to use tools and equipment relating to a particular activity to influence performance (Yukl, 2013). More so, it is concerned with knowledge about human behaviour and interpersonal processes, the ability to understand the feelings, attitudes and motives of other people from what they say or do (empathy, social sensitivity), the ability to communicate clearly and effectively (speech fluency, persuasiveness), and the ability to establish an effective and cooperative relationship (tact, diplomacy, listening skill, knowledge about acceptable social behaviour) to strengthen readiness for change and commitment (Yukl, 2013).

Yukl (2013) argued that technical skills are primarily concerned with technical skills required by those responsible for organisational performance. Technical skills include knowledge about methods, processes and equipment for conducting specialized activities necessary for change implementation. More so, technical skills are associated with factual knowledge about the organisation i.e. the structure, rules, management systems and the character of the employee (Haro and Turgut, 2012). This provides organisational members with the capability and opportunities that will enhance their change readiness capability (Leong, 2008). Leong (2008) believes that in order to cope with performance increase, it is necessary to rebuild confidence and competence of organisational members through the introduction of a participatory management style and investment in the necessary technical skills that will enhance the functions that are related to the technical aspect of organisational change.

Conceptual skills are involved with good judgment, foresight, intuition, creativity, and the ability to find creative solutions to organisational problems (Yukl, 2013). Specifically, conceptual skills are measured with aptitude tests include analytical ability, logical thinking, concept formation, inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning used to reinforce readiness for change in order to impact more on organisational commitment (Barhem *et al.*, 2011). Yukl (2013) equally believe that conceptual skills are essential for effective organisational planning, organising and coordinating administrative responsibilities, to understand how various parts of the organisation relate to each other and how change in one unit can affect other units.

Managers that are associated with conceptual skills are those who can understand increased commitment and how commitment can affect organisation as a system (Gentry *et al.*, 2008). Managers with high conceptual skills are able to develop a better mental model of their organisation to help understand the most critical factors and the relationships among them (Yukl, 2006). Such models are designed with the capacity of leading the organisation through measures of increasing commitment and how commitment can be translated into organisational success.

Shah, (2011) viewed that the role of organisational leaders/managers is to demonstrate that an organisational commitment is the right solution for eliminating the existing gaps in organisations that are either responding to change or want to improve performance. Therefore, association with conceptual skills will increase their sense of good judgment, foresight and creativity which are critical for increasing the level of commitment. Also, this will ensure that the organisation has the right structure, policies, procedures, technology, and management talent in place as well increasing the degree for employee's commitment (Self, 2007). This is in line with Wagner and Hollenbeck's (2010) argument that organisational commitment is the degree to which people identify with the organisation that employs them. It implies a readiness on the employee to put forth a substantial effort on organisation survival and the intention of the employee to stay with the organisation for a longer period of time. Hence help to shape an individual relationship with the organisation which caused them to decide and become a permanent member of the organisation's commitment strategy (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Interpersonal skills are necessary for influencing people by understanding their feelings and motivation in a work environment (Yukl, 2006; Haro and Turgut, 2012). These skills include empathy, social insight, charm, tact and diplomacy, persuasiveness and the ability to communicate effectively to develop and maintain a cooperative relationship between managers and subordinates during a period of emphasizing on commitment increase (Robbins and Hunsaker, 2012). These skills can be used to strengthen the confidence of organisational members, reinforcing them to successfully make change feasible (Self, 2007). Self (2007) believes that effective interpersonal skills will build the confidence that will enable organisational leaders to persuade subordinates to actualise commitment as well as increasing their capacity, right knowledge and abilities to contribute towards the organisation's success.

The empathy dimension of interpersonal skill enables organisational leaders to understand other employees' motives, values and emotions as well being useful in resolving conflicts, whereas, social insight gives them the ability to understand the types of behaviour that are socially acceptable in a situation to avoid unnecessary hindrances (Parente *et al.*, 2012). Persuasiveness and oral communication which are elements of interpersonal skills influences those responsible for change by attracting more change results, this is because they enable leaders to listen in an attentive and non-judgmental way to co-workers' complaints or criticisms. Tactics, enable the leaders to be proactive

by getting the required people involved in the change (Yukl, 2006). Increasing organisational commitment comes with new ideas and new procedures in achieving tasks therefore the tactic can be employed to provide assistance to increasing member's readiness for change (Gentry et al., 2008).

The Impact of Managerial Skills on Individual Readiness for Change

Yukl (2013) argued that technical skills are primarily concerned with technical skills required by those responsible to drive and implement change. This is capable of enhancing knowledge about methods as well as increasing the expertise necessary to increase the impact of individual readiness for change in order to move the organisations forward. More so, technical skills are associated with factual knowledge about the organisation i.e. the structure, rules, management systems and the character of the employee. This provides organisational members with the competence and opportunities that will enhance readiness for change and increase the space of more commitment (Leong, 2008). Leong (2008) believes that in order to cope in a changing environment, it is necessary to rebuild confidence and competence of organisational members through the introduction of a participatory management style and investment in the necessary technical skills that will enhance the functions that are related to the technical aspect required for commitment increase.

Conceptual skills are involved with good judgment, foresight, intuition, creativity, and the ability to find creative solutions to organisational problems (Yukl, 2013). Specifically, conceptual skills are measured with aptitude tests and include analytical ability, logical thinking, concept formation, inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning used to reinforce readiness for change in order to impact more on employees who engage on commitment (Barhem et al., 2011). Yukl (2013) believes that conceptual skills are essential for effective organisational planning, organising and coordinating administrative responsibilities, understanding how various parts of the organisation relate to each other and how change in one unit can affect other units.

Managers who associate with conceptual skills are those who have a high level of readiness for change and can comprehend how commitment can affect the organisation as a system (Gentry et al., 2008). Managers with high conceptual skills are able to develop a better mental model of their organisation to help understand the most critical factors and the relationships among them (Yukl, 2006). Such models are designed with the capacity of leading the organisation through a process of accomplishing the task effectively.

Self's (2007) study suggests that the role of organisational leaders/managers is to demonstrate that an increasing level of individual readiness for change is to eliminate the existing gaps in the organisation. Therefore where conceptual skills are emphasised, which give the manager a sense of good judgment, foresight and creativity, will be appropriate to provide the relevant information, thus showing that the organisation is no longer meeting its expectations, but needs to close the gaps by meeting the requirement of organisational accomplishment (Yukl, 2006). This will demonstrate the need to replace old services with new and improved services with the level of readiness for change. Also, this will ensure that the organisation has the right organisational structure, policies, procedures, technology, and management talent in place to successfully implement the change (Self, 2007).

Interpersonal skills are necessary for influencing people by understanding their feelings and motivation in a work environment (Yukl, 2013; Haro and Turgut, 2012). These skills include empathy, social insight, charm, tact and diplomacy, persuasiveness and the ability to communicate effectively to develop and maintain a cooperative relationship between managers and subordinates (Robbins and Hunsaker, 2012). These skills can be used to strengthen the confidence of organisational members, reinforcing them to successfully make change feasible (Self, 2007). Yukl, (2013) believes that effective communication from skilled organisational managers and leaders will build the confidence that will enable them to persuade subordinates to actualise the change programme as well as increasing their capacity, with the right knowledge and abilities to increase the level of commitment.

The conclusion made by Gentry et al. (2008) and Yukl (2013) that managerial skills psychologically, administratively and technically prepare organisational members on the criticalities to increase commitment shows that managerial skills have a positive influence on individual readiness for change. More so, the evidence from the literature further revealed that the dimensions of managerial skills can be used as an associate concept to form a conceptual model for organisational change. Therefore, it is appropriate to relate the dimensions of managerial skills to individual readiness for change with the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a relationship between technical skills and individual readiness for change.
- H2: There is a relationship between conceptual skills and individual readiness for change.
- H3: There is a relationship between interpersonal skills and individual readiness for change.
- H4: Individual readiness for change has a positive impact on commitment.
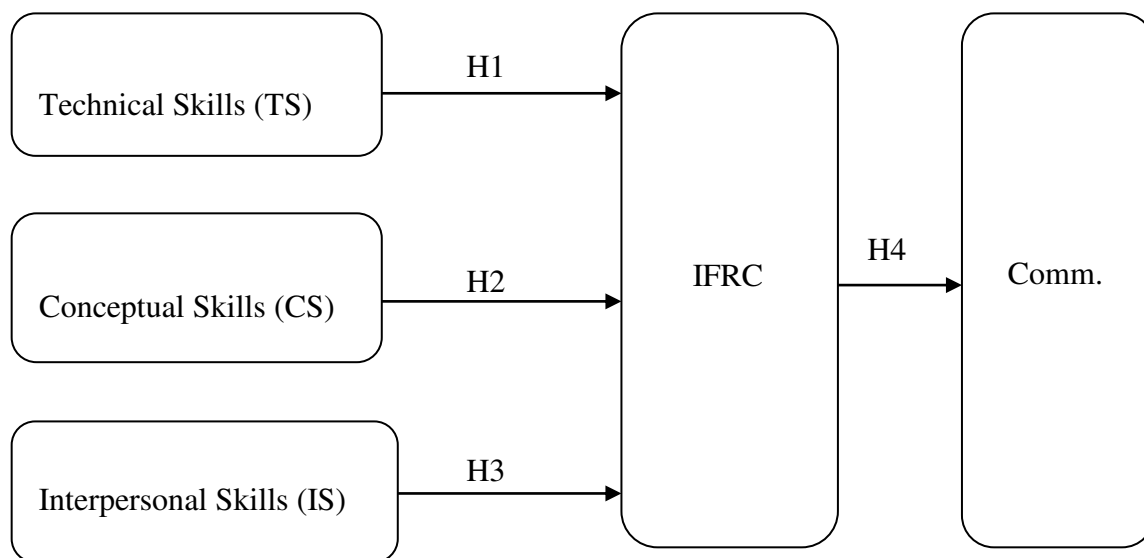
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

In order to assess the impact of individual readiness for change, Holt *et al.* (2009) Weiner (2009) believe that an assessment of individual readiness for change will create the right attitudes and beliefs thereby enhancing a collective practice and activities to implement proposed or perceived change. Erwin and German (2010) argued that in as much as readiness for change remains an individual level construct, it does require the thoughtfulness of the organisational context. This implies that where individuals have been encouraged by their organisational leaders, it shapes their feelings with the spirit of having the sense of preparedness for the change. This equally increases their perception of both individual and organisational benefits as well as the capability of their organisations' readiness for the perceived change.

In their study, Holt *et al.* (2007) quantitatively reviewed 32 instruments that measure individual readiness for change. The instruments had collectively suggested a comprehensive measurement model which comprised of four factors grounded in the measurement perspectives observed in the existing instruments, namely the change content, change process, internal context and the individual characteristics. This was further used to define a comprehensive attitude that influences all the factors. The first perspective, which is the change content, refers to the particular initiative that is being introduced (characteristics). Content is characteristically directed towards the administrative, procedural, technological, or structural characteristics of the organisation. Holt *et al.* (2007) come to a conclusion that individual readiness for change is the extent to which organisational members believe that they qualify and are capable of implementing perceived organisational change projects successfully if the right attitude and behaviour is established alongside other strategies of implementing the change. Holt *et al.*'s (2007) readiness for change instruments which measure the intervening role of employee's readiness for change can be adopted for the measurement of the increasing level of individual readiness for change. This quantitative readiness for change instrument also covers various aspects such as change process, change-specific content, change context and individual employee attributes (Holt *et al.*, 2007). The current study proposes a readiness for change instrument and respondents were asked about their perception as well as the general perception of the organisation. Also asked were: the evaluation of the likely gains from their organisation if increasing commitment eventually leads to organisational success, the required capacity for performance increase that will bring a successful change and the need for commitment enhancement. In the same vein, instruments for assessing the impact of managerial skills were adopted from relevant studies which explored the impact of managerial on organisational effectiveness (Yukl *et al.*, 1990; Gil *et al.*, 2005). The Management Skills Profile (MSP) developed by Personnel Decisions International, (Sevy *et al.*, 1985) has been used to measure management competency and administrative activities as well as motivating organisational members, delegating and controlling, and coaching and development, personal motivation, technical knowledge, cognitive skills, problem analysis and decision making. The critique of these scales which results from the need to improve behavioural implication for organisational change success, Yukl, (2004) designed the managerial practices survey (TRCQ-15G) on the basis of assessing behaviour associated with change-orientation and commitment. This is also to measure managers' innovative thinking, need for change and envisioning change (Gil *et al.*, 2005). Due to the aim of this current study, both instruments are necessary to assess the impact of managerial skills on individual readiness for change and how such can lead to increased organisational commitment (Kim and Yukl, 1996).

METHODOLOGY

In order to explore the factors capable of increasing the level of individual readiness for change, a comparison of realism, interpretivism and positivism was examined. This is to ensure that a robust research philosophy is carefully considered. Interpretivism suggests that the social world of business and management research is complex and

theory formation which is based on methods used in the social sciences (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Also, complexities should not be reduced entirely to a series of law-like generalisations as this precludes the possibility of gaining richer insight into the profound realities of occurrence (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Positivism is related to natural sciences and observable social reality (Densin and Lincoln, 2008). Gill and Johnson (2010) describe positivism as characterised by well-structured methodology. Collis and Hussey (2003) posit that most researchers who assume a positivistic paradigm do so because it enables them to collect experimental observable data for statistical analysis. But, the interpretivism paradigm is more of a qualitative approach which enables researchers to discover the hidden details of the phenomenon (Saunders *et al.,* 2009). But, Galliers (1990) argued that a realist approach is characterized with formal hypothesis testing, quantifiable variables and inference, which can be drawn from population samples. The realist perspective is also linked with a quantitative and qualitative research design which enables researchers to use a questionnaire to collect large amounts of data (Saunders *et al.,* 2009; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). This comparison shows that the philosophy of realism, interpretivism and positivism are critical to understand research principles and data collection however a consideration of the realist position will better benefit studies which tend to explore the impact of managerial skills on the level of individual readiness for change. Therefore, an application of realism helps us to recognise the importance of understanding socially constructed interpretations and meanings, or subjective reality, within the context of seeking to understand the broader social factors, structures or processes that influence or constrain the nature of people's views (Johnson and Duberley, 2000), as well as the realities that influence people's social interpretations and behaviour. Hence, 160 questionnaires were collected from organisational leaders/managers across organisations in Nigeria.

THE STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

We considered personal questionnaire distribution in this study, even though some problems were encountered, but it was relatively cheap and can increase enhanced respondents' interest in the research (Saunders *et al*, 2009). Another advantage of this method is that it allows the researcher to provide a background of the study, introduction of problem and expected outcome from the study to encourage participants to be straightforward and honest as they answer the questions. Also, it enabled us to explain what the questionnaire intended to achieve and the reason why the data is most important. It was equally explained to the respondents about the guarantee of their confidentiality as well as asking them to read carefully the instructions contained in the cover letter attached to the questionnaire before completing the questionnaire. The telephone numbers of the researchers were provided in the cover letter for necessary contact should the respondent experience any form of difficulty filling the questionnaire. Also contained in the covering letter was a plea to the respondents asking them to participate objectively by freely, frankly and impartially response to the questionnaire. A time frame of after about one month was given to allow the researcher collection of the questionnaire.

Reliability And Construct Validity

Based on the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1, the measure covers each aspect on a six-point Likert scale: This study has used Cronbach's coefficient alpha to measure and estimate the degree of the internal consistency of all constructs. All the scales have a high reliability and values of Cronbach's alpha derived for the constructs ranging from 0.737 to 0.949. We assessed the construct validity of each construct by using principal components factor analysis (Pallant, 2010; Field, 2013). Field (2013) posits that Cronbach's Alpha (α) is the most common measure of scale reliability. Numerous authors have considered that Cronbach's Alpha should not drop below 0.7, and that an alpha value of 0.7 or more signifies reliable measures (de Vaus, 2002; Shah, 2011; Mueller *et al.*, 2012). As illustrated in Table 1 our result shows that all factors loaded and Cronbach's Alpha were acceptable.

	Numbers of Items	Factor Loading	% of Variance explained	Value of Cronbach's Alpha
Organisational Commitment	10	0.783 − 0.890	69.373	0.889
Individual Readiness for Change (IRFC)	10	0.793 − 0.865	69.096	0.949
Technical Skills (TS)	7	0.770 − 0.908	70.495	0.855
Conceptual Skills (CS)	7	0.712 − 0.849	64.733	0.737
Interpersonal Skills (IS)	7	0.759 − 0.845	65.887	0.766

FINDINGS

We applied correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship among variables and to establish the extent to which the dimensions of managerial skills impact individual readiness for change. As presented in Table 1 the correlation analysis for the dimensions of managerial skills and individual readiness for change is positive. It shows that the correlation coefficients for the relationship between technical skills and individual readiness for change is 0.720, indicating support for H1. The correlation coefficient for the relationship between conceptual skills and individual readiness for change is 0.731 showing that H2 is supported, and the correction

coefficient for the relationship between interpersonal skills and individual readiness for change is 0.723, indicating support for H3.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis Result

	Technical Skills	Conceptual Skills	Interpersonal Skills	IFRC	Comm.
Technical Skills	1				
Conceptual Skills	.823	1			
Interpersonal Skills	.802	.806	1		
IRFC	.720	.731	.723	1	
Comm.	.702	.968	.676	.807	1

Table 3 shows the result of the regression analysis for the dimensions of managerial skills and individual readiness for change. This measure was to ascertain the level of impact the dimensions of managerial skills have on individual readiness for change. As indicated, technical skills were found to have the highest positive significant contribution to the level of individual readiness for change with (β = 0.234, p = 0.015). This is consistent with the correlation coefficient result found in Table 1 above, hence indicates support for H1. The regression analysis further shows that conceptual skills are positively impacting on the level of individual readiness for change (β = 0.260, p < 0.001) which also shows consistency with the correlation coefficient result and supports H2. Finally, the regression analysis indicates that interpersonal skills impact positively on the level of individual readiness for change (β = 0.350, p < 0.001) which clearly shows that it supports H3. These results indicate that the dimensions of interpersonal skills have a significant and positive relationship with readiness for change and impact positively on the level of individual readiness for change. This result means that, individual readiness for change is a significant variable capable of enabling organisations to either increase commitment or achieve organisational objectives.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Result

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	T- test	Sig
		β	S.E	β		
Model 1 Dependent Variable: Comm.	TS	.245	.101	.245	2.422	.017
	CS	.263	.102	.263	2.591	.010
	IS	.288	.095	.287	3.025	.003
Model 2 Dependent Variable: IRFC	TS	.230	.093	.234	2.471	.015
	CS	.254	.093	.260	2.722	.007
	IS	.350	.08	.357	.3995	.000
Model 3 Dependent Variable: Comm.	TS	.088	.086	.088	1.034	.303
	CS	.090	.086	.090	1.042	.299
	IS	.050	.083	.049	.1597	.051
	IRFC	.682	.074	.667	9.206	.000

DISCUSSION

This study follows Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure to examine the role of individual readiness for change and view that an increasing level of individual readiness for change will lead to an increasing organisational commitment. We test the impact of the dimensions of managerial skills on the level of individual readiness for change to establish increasing organisational commitment. The preceding analysis indicates that the three dimensions of managerial skills are impacting positively on individual readiness for change and are enhancing commitment (see Table 3). Readiness for change has been identified with a "significant variable to behaviours of either resistance or support for organisational success" and has been highly associated with the individual's attitude and beliefs with

regard to the organisation's readiness performance (Chonko *et al.*, 2002; Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2005; Alas, 2007). This paper follows recent studies that emphasise the need to increase the level of individual readiness for change (Walinga, 2008; Cinite *et al.*, 2009; Haffar *et al.*, 2013) and proposes that a consideration of the dimensions of managerial skills will lead to an increasing level of individual readiness for change. The following tasks were attempted:

- To what extent would individual readiness for change benefit organisational members?
- What influence do managerial skills have on increasing the level of individual readiness for change?

In order to explore the relationship and impact of managerial skills on individual readiness for change, we formulated three hypotheses to investigate the impact of each dimension of managerial skills on the level of individual readiness for change. Individual readiness for change as a measurable concept is supported by the findings of the study, and is viewed as a considerable variable for increasing organisational commitment. Supporting the research hypothesis, individual readiness for change was found to associate strongly with technical, conceptual and interpersonal skills and further increasing the level of commitment. This means, we measured individual readiness for change in line with the dimensions of managerial skills and commitment constructs. The technical skills construct will increase the technical ability of organisational members. The conceptual skills construct will increase the administrative competency of organisational members, while interpersonal skills construct will increase the social interaction of organisational members. All these are expected to increase the participation level of organisational members towards achieving organisational goals.

The regression shows that the dimensions of managerial skills are significantly important for increasing the level individual readiness for change. The results indicated that managerial skills are critical when organisations are increasing commitment or trying to improve on performance. This further indicates that managerial skills will help facilitate people's knowledge and understanding when engaged with organisational commitment. This study offers support for the argument that managerial skills help organisations with general management capability when engaged with performance and commitment (Barhem *et al.*, 2011; Tonidandel *et al.*, 2012; Yukl 2013). This means that if organisations thoughtfully emphasize the importance of managerial skills it will help them to sustain the managerial knowledge and skills needed to either support effective commitment. Since members of the organisation play a critical role towards organisational success, this study has supported the argument that it is important organisational members are provided with the opportunities of acquiring the necessary skills needed to contribute significantly towards change implementation. This is because, organisational leaders need to prepare their subordinates in order to undertake organisational work responsibilities, with the ability to translate knowledge into practice and increase the capacity for change implementation. Therefore, this study concludes that organisational failure to implement change effectively could result from a lack of managerial skills that could influence change implementation competency and readiness to contribute to organisational success.

Hypothesis H1 proposes that an increasing level of technical skills (TS) will increase the level of individual readiness for change and hence increase the capacity for organisational members to participate towards organisational commitment. In other words, the hypothesis predicts that technical skills have a significant influence on the level of individual readiness for change. As indicated in Table 3, Model 1, the three dimensions of managerial skills show a positive relationship with commitment, indicating that the dimensions of managerial skills have a strong and positive influence to increasing levels of organisational commitment. The findings as indicated in Model 2 show that technical skills (β = 0.234, p = 0.015) have a significant positive impact on employee's readiness, and thus support H1. The result indicated in Model 3 further shows a high level of individual readiness for change (β = 0.682, p < .001) and organisational commitment. This means that the impact of technical skills on individual readiness for change is impacting positively on organisational commitment. This result is consistent with the findings obtained in previous studies that technical skills offers the technical ability for an organisation to respond to effective change (Scullen *et al.*, 2003; Barhem *et al.*, 2011; Tonidandel *et al.*, 2012), suggesting that technical skills offer a conducive setting to increase the level of organisational success. Hence, by emphasising and developing the aspect of technical ability of employees, organisations are more likely to equip employees with skills required for the accomplishment of specific tasks for specific goals. More so, where organisational members are consistently equipped with technical skills, the organisation will be improving and sustaining knowledge and capabilities needed to effectively coordinate concerted efforts that will lead to organisational change implementation. Therefore, the findings provide support for the opinion that organisations that value training for technical support, analysis for problem solving, quality assurance, system modification, and database management are better able to have a detailed capacity towards organisational commitment and performance than those that do not focus on such values (Carmeli and Tishler, 2006; Erturk, 2008; Barhem *et al.*, 2011; Haro and Turgut, 2012).

Hypothesis 2 proposes that an emphasis on conceptual skills (CS) will impact on individual readiness for change. This result in Model 2 shows dhat conceptual skills (β = 0.260 p < .001) have a positive and significant impact on individual readiness for change, therefore supports H2. This positive impact of individual readiness for change and commitment as indicated in Model 3 further affirmed that an increasing level of individual readiness for change will increase the level of participation of organisational members towards organisational commitment. This shows that organisations that emphasize more on conceptual skills are more likely to develop a situation where organisational change can be attained, because conceptual skills increases human resources development, creativity and trigger the spirit of innovation that is able to increase the capacity for efficient participation towards

organisational success. In other words, by emphasising on conceptual skills, the organisation will improve employee's readiness in the aspect of improving services and processes that will lead to improved performance. This indicates that the provision for required services that are needed to effect organisational performance are galvanised on the emphasis of conceptual skills. More so, conceptual skills offer that ability to think creatively, analyse and understand complicated ideas required for performance improvement. Therefore, the finding views that organisations that want to improve their services in order to increase commitment must equip their employees with the necessary skills associated with conceptual ability in order to increase knowledge and understand which are necessary for achieving organisational change. This is consistent with studies such as Erturk (2008) and Gentry *et al*. (2008) who believe that conceptual skills help to activate employees' administrative ability when managing change.

Hypothesis 3 proposes that an emphasis on interpersonal skills will increase the impact of individual readiness for change. This result in Model 2 shows that interpersonal skills (β = 0.357 p < .001) are positively impacting on individual readiness for change. Based on this, H3 is supported. The positive impact of individual readiness for change and commitment as shown in Model 3 indicates that an increasing level of individual readiness for change will consistently increase the level of commitment. This finding is consistent with the findings attained in other studies such as Tonidandel *et al*. (2012) Haro and Turgut (2012) and Yukl (2013) who suggest that interpersonal skills have a significant influence on organisational effectiveness and success. The studies view that interpersonal skills help organisational members to assess relevant information within them which are critical for organisational effectiveness. Yukl (2013) believes that interpersonal skills include knowledge about human behaviour and group processes, as well as enabling managers with the ability to understand feeling, attitudes, and motives of subordinates. This means, an organisational adherence to interpersonal skills could help to develop leaders' capacity to influence subordinates with the ability to understand organisational motives and improve performance, values and emotions as well as developing the necessary behaviour that are acceptable when change programmes are introduced. These results indicate that the three dimensions of managerial skills are impacting on individual readiness for change and further increase the level of commitment and support H1, H2, H3 and H4, and hence answer the two research questions. This shows that individual readiness for change is reliant on managerial skills, thus organisations need to consistently emphasise and maintain the characteristics of the dimension of managerial skills considered in this study in order to offer all round employee skills as well as influencing their capacity to adequately increase commitment.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study suggests that individual readiness for change should be examined based on three related elements: technical skills, conceptual skills and interpersonal skills. Our empirical research revealed that organisational members who ranked their organisations high for the dimensions of the managerial construct reported significantly better performance than those who ranked their organisations low. We found that individual readiness for change is contingent on the dimension of managerial skills. We propose that individual readiness for change should be consistently increased in line with the dimensions of managerial skills. Therefore, organisational members are more likely to have a higher level of readiness for change when they are satisfied that they are better equipped with skills and specialised techniques as well as the general analytical ability and logical thinking that will enable them contribute in organisational success. These structures will enable organisational leaders to enhance employees' values for effective participation by increased motivation and adequately encourage them either by strengthening their feelings and belief for driving change. This is in line with the findings of other studies that viewed that an increased capacity for employees for readiness for change will trigger them psychologically to fully drive success via adequate commitment (Yukongdi, 2004; Holt *et al*., 2007).

So, organisational leaders must ensure that the characteristics of managerial skills are emphasized in order to ensure an increase in knowledge of the job. The assurances of all these will lead to a reinforcement of employee's feelings about their self-effectiveness and courage for readiness for change with the capacity to effectively participate in change. Again, this will lead to the employees' sense of feeling valued in a time of decision making that leads to increased performance. More so, organisational leaders/managers need to involve all those participating in the change programmes to enable them to understand the critical requirement necessary for commitment to increase. This will, to a large extent reduce the likelihood for resistance.

Therefore, by emphasising the dimensions of managerial skills, organisational members in Nigerian organisations are more likely to be ready mentally and willing for increased commitment that will lead to organisational success. Thus, creating this supportive skills enhancement would foster individuals' readiness for organisational commitment. This will in turn increase the possibility of successful organisational commitment.

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