

# Role of Transformational Leadership on Readiness for Change in Academic Staff University in Facing Higher Educational Governance Changes

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Abstract: *Purpose:* The development of technology in various aspects of life nowadays especially education forces organizations to adapt. Higher educational governance change is a policy that exists as a step to make universities more autonomous. This program will make many changes to the main tasks of academic staff, and it requires readiness for change. One of the aspects that influence individuals' readiness for change is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership will encourage employees to make change initiatives. This study aims to determine the role of transformational leadership on readiness for change in academic staff universities facing higher educational governance change. *Method:* Quantitative research involving 254 academic staff participants using simple random sampling to collect the data. The data were analyzed using simple regression. *Result:* The results finding transformational leadership has a positive and significant correlation to readiness of academic staff to change. *Conclusion:* Transformational leadership takes a role in readiness for change, so it needs to be considered to prepare academic staff in facing changes.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Technological developments in various aspects of life are currently running very rapidly, forcing an organization to adapt (Sugandi, 2013). In the world of education, higher education as a salient milestone in an establishment must be able to provide customer satisfaction and have high competitiveness (Purwandani & Sutarsih, 2016). Universities are prerequisites to change their governance so that they are more autonomous through an administrative system with a management model that is appropriate to their culture and capacity so that bureaucratic reform is easier to realize (Rahayu, 2019).

Changes in governance require basic and fundamental components related to the effectiveness of human resource performance (Byman et al., 2020; Setiawan, 2017). Universities have the responsibility to improve and evaluate human resources consisting of academic staffs and lecturers as one of the determinants of its success (Damrus et al., 2021). The

academic staff as academic workers also play an indispensable role in the education sector (Meeus et al., 2018). According to Amon et al. (2021), academic staffs are more oriented to their capabilities administratively in implementing changes to financial governance. Meanwhile, academic staff admits that they feel more significant changes from changes such as increased workload, financial management, and obstacles in providing the new regulations that apply to stakeholders (Syahromi & Cheisvian, 2020). Erlyani and Suhariadi (2021) in their study added that other human resources (lecturers) in the context of change are not a determining factor in readiness for change, as evidenced by lecturer perceptions which have a weak positive correlation with readiness for change.

Based on the demands of the changes that occur, the first step that must undertake by organizations planning or experiencing change is to increase the readiness of the leaders and change agents within them (Gelaidan, 2018). It is one of the main factors influencing the successful implementation of a

change (Holt et al., 2010). Readiness for change needs to be contemplated because individual reactions from superiors and fellow members of the organization have a huge role in any organizational change (Oreg & Berson, 2011). Readiness for change is ascendancy by general attitudes that have a simultaneous effect on something that is changed (content), the change implemented (process), the state of the change takes place (context), and individual characteristics asked to change (personal attributes) (Holt et al., 2007). The consequences of readiness to change are closely related to the success of an organizational change (Akhbar et al., 2020). Employees' expectations of change efforts are strongly affected by their commitment to change, which results from leadership behavior and effective communication with all participants in the change implementation (Portoghese et al., 2012).

Choi and Ruona (2011) mention aspects that can influence individuals in their readiness for change, one of which is from the internal organization, namely transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a leader who pays attention to the problems faced by his followers and the self-development of his followers by giving them encouragement and enthusiasm to achieve the goals set (Robbins, 2007; Ipmawan, 2015). Transformational leadership occurs when leaders try to pay attention to and increase the interests of their followers (Suryosukmono, 2020). According to Bass and Avolio (1995), transformational leadership consists of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

Transformational leadership that is communicative, participatory, and involves employees in each change process will encourage employees to initiate change and reduce employee reluctance to change (Nordin, 2012). Manz and Sims (2011) argue that transformational leaders can facilitate the establishment of the necessary culture and shape their staff's behavior. It also can create the vision of institutionalizing the change efforts (Tichy & Devanna, 1990). Santhidran et al. (2013) stated that a leader's communication skills and the value of leadership are the elements to enhance readiness for change among employees. A transformational leader gives the support that changes the principals' values, beliefs, and attitudes of employees. Consequently, employees are ready to change for any implementation (Eisenbach et al., 1999; Podsakoff et al., 1996).

Several studies have examined how transformational leadership influences readiness for

change (Al-Tahitah et al., 2018; Nordin, 2012; Novitasari et al., 2020; Yeap et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2020). However, the role of transformational leadership in the context of readiness to change universities in the face of governance changes is still limited. In addition, this study aims to examine the role of transformational leadership in the change readiness of academic staff in the face of changes in higher education governance.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Readiness for Change

Readiness for change in an organization has a similar meaning to Lewin's concept in Armenakis et al. (1993) regarding the extent to which change management (unfreezing) is required which is described in the form of beliefs, attitudes, and intentions of members for the achievement of these changes. Bernerth (2004) believes that readiness for change is a success factor in organizational change. Readiness to change is an individual's intention and belief in change, perspective on his abilities, and steps taken in making these changes (Bouckennooghe & Devos, 2008).

Readiness is the employee's belief that they are capable of carrying out changes, the proposed changes are appropriate to be carried out, the leader is committed to the proposed changes and the proposed changes will benefit organizational members (Agustine, 2016). Forms of readiness for changes in employees are supportive behavior, work performance, and attitudes. Therefore, in general, readiness to change increases the successful implementation of organizational change (Rafferty et al, 2013). Holt et al. (2007) stated that readiness for change is ascendancy by general attitudes that have a simultaneous effect on change content (something that is changed), change process (how the change implemented), organizational context (the state of the change takes place), and individual attributes (how those characteristics asked to change).

Individual and organizational variables can be classified as a result of these factors (Muafi et al., 2019). It means that readiness for change must be monitored and facilitated throughout the transformation process. Change can indeed be initiated by external demands, but the results will still be shaped by internal processes within the organization (Neves, 2009). If the external pressure is strong enough, then the organization is likely to

change in the direction specified, even if there is internal resistance (Oliver, 1991). According to Farahana et al. (2017), the internal context can be used by university leaders as a strategy to provide the support needed by university staff to deal with change. Organizations must ensure that when organizational changes occur, employee behavior also changes to achieve the desired results (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

## 2.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a combination of two words namely leadership and transformational. Transformational or transformation means a change in appearance (shape, nature, function). Some interpret transformational from the main word "to transform" which is to transform or change something into another, different form (Astuti, & Khoirunnisa, 2018). Transformational leadership refers to the leader moving the followers beyond immediate self-interest through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Transformational leadership increases the level of maturity and aspirations of followers as well as concern for achievement, self-actualization, and the welfare of others, organizations, and society (Bass, 1999). Robbins (2007) and Ipmawan (2015) describe transformational leadership as a leader who pays attention to the problems faced by his followers and the self-development of his followers by giving them encouragement and enthusiasm to achieve the goals set. It occurs when leaders try to pay attention to and increase the interest of their followers (Suryosukmono, 2020).

According to Bass and Avolio (1995), transformational leadership consists of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Idealized influence and inspiring leadership are displayed when leaders envision the desired future, articulate how it can be achieved, set an example to follow, set high standards of performance, and demonstrate determination and confidence. They want to identify with that kind of leadership. Intellectual Stimulation is shown when leaders help followers to become more innovative and creative. Individual consideration is displayed when leaders attend to the developmental needs of followers and support and coach follower development. Leaders delegate assignments as an opportunity for growth (Bass, 1999).

In other words, (Burn, 1978) states that transformative leaders are the people who push their

members to act for certain purposes and represent values and motivation – needs and desires, aspiration and hope – from every leader and member. They can change the member's awareness and build normative values, and ambition, to accomplish higher morality, such as equality, freedom, justice, humanitarianism, and peace.

## 2.3 Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Readiness for Change

Several studies have examined how transformational leadership influences readiness for change such as Yuwono et al. (2020) stated transformational leadership has a positive influence on readiness for change, along with other studies (Al-Tahitah et al., 2018; Nordin, 2012; Novitasari et al., 2020; Yeap et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2020).

Hechanova et al. (2013) explained that change is often associated with leadership. Transformational leadership can be a motivating and supporting factor for the creation of changes that pay attention to and direct the behavior of each employee (Sari, 2018). A transformational leader gives the support that changes the principals' values, beliefs, and attitudes of employees. Consequently, employees are ready to change for any implementation (Eisenbach et al., 1999; Podsakoff et al., 1996). Based on the study above, we have made the hypothesis below:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Transformational leadership has the effect toward readiness for change*

## 3 METHODS

### 3.1 Design

This study uses a quantitative research design by distributing readiness for change scales and transformational leadership scales to participants.

### 3.2 Participants

The population in this study amounted to 985 academic staff at one of the universities in South Kalimantan. Sampling uses a simple random sampling technique by shuffling the number of participants until the number reaches 277 people. However, the researcher only collected 254 participants to analyze the data.

### 3.3 Measurement

This study uses the readiness for change questionnaire (RFCQ) by Holt et al. (2007) and the multifactor leadership questionnaire form 5X-short (MLQ Form 5X) by Avolio and Bass (1995) (adapted version) for data collection. Those Likert scales use seven response options with a score range of 1 for strongly disagree, and 7 for strongly agree. The readiness to change scale consists of 25 items with a Cronbach alpha coefficient is 0.906. The transformational leadership scale consists of 20 items with Cronbach's alpha in the amount of 0.967.

### 3.4 Analysis Techniques

The study used simple linear regression to analyze the data using SPSS 26 version.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Results

The results in this study were normally distributed ( $0.200 > 0.05$ ), and between the two variables, there was a linear relationship ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). The descriptive data is represented below.

Table 1. Descriptive Data

Category	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	46.9%
	Female	53.1%
	254	100%
Age	18-29	20.5%
	30-39	30.3%
	40-49	34.6%
	50-59	14.6%
	254	100%
Long tenure	1-11 months	2%
	1-9 years	39.4%
	10-19 years	42.5%
	20-29 years	13.8%
	30-39 years	2.4%
	254	100%

Table 2. Normality Test

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig.
RFC	0.200
TL	0.200

Table 3. Linearity Test

Variables	Linearity ( $p < 0,05$ )	
	F	Sig.
TL and RFC	46.822	0.000

Table 4: Model Summary Readiness for Change

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	RMSE
H <sub>1</sub>	0.329	0.108	0.105	11.674

Table 5. Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.
H <sub>1</sub>	Regression	4171.737	1	4171.737	30.6	<
	Residual	34342.626	252	136.280	11	.001
	Total	38514.362	253			

Table 6. Hypothesis Test

		Unstand-ardized	SE	Standar-dized	t	p.
H <sub>1</sub>	Constant	106.095	5.556		19.096	<.001
	TL	0.308	0.056	0.329	5.533	<.001

The results of table 4, table 5, and table 6 found that transformational leadership (TL) positively predicts readiness for change (RFC) academic staff ( $\beta = 0.329$ ;  $t(252) = 5.533$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Transformational leadership also has a positive influence on readiness to change ( $R^2 = 0.108$ ;  $F(1;252) = 30.611$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), the higher the transformational leadership, the higher the readiness for change and vice versa.

### 4.2 Discussion

This study aims to determine the role of transformational leadership in the readiness of academic staffs to change in dealing with changes in governance. Leadership is pointed out as a critical and frequently discussed subject and research topic in the managerial realm, given its importance to the entire organization (McShane & Von Glinow, 2008). As traits, behaviors, and contingency leadership approaches combine, one of the leadership theories is invented as transformational leadership (Lussier & Achua, 2015; Silong, 2009; Waisy & Wei, 2020). In the context of change readiness, transformational leadership aims to empower employees to challenge the status quo and embrace new practices (Henrick et al., 2020). Bass and Avolio (1995) stated three characteristics of transformative leadership; improve the awareness of the followers about process and effort significantly, motivate the adherent to prioritize the group's interest more than individuals; and divert

the needs of support outside material things to the higher level (e.g. pride and actualization).

This study found that transformational leadership has a significant effect toward readiness for change in academic staff. This finding is in line with previous research (Nordin, 2012; Waisy & Wei, 2020; Yeap et al., 2020). Leadership behavior is one of the principal factors for an organization's change readiness (Al-Tahitah et al., 2018), and Saragih (2015) claimed that transformational leadership plays a strategic, important role in implementing change in the organization. They influence their followers' behaviors, so employees are more likely ready for change than against or resist it (Gilley et al., 2008). Transformational leadership can be a motivating and supporting factor for the creation of changes that pay attention to and direct the behavior of each employee (Sari, 2018). During the change process, it can influence positive affective reactions to change and shape the affective experience of employees, influence followers' self-efficacy and empowerment during change, develop a sense of trust and credibility, and also help employees overcome skepticism towards change (Holten & Brenner, 2013; Radian & Mangundjaya, 2019; Seo et al., 2012; Shin et al., 2015). In addition, Carter et al. (2012) found that transformational leaders can facilitate the change process by sharing related information and providing personal support to employees during changes.

The results indicate that transformational leadership plays a role in readiness for change as much as 10.8%, while 89.2% is another factor not examined in this study. The failure to detect a predictive relationship between transformational leadership and readiness suggests that an emphasis on the promotion of change by leaders at the commencement of a transition may not have a lasting impact. In contrast, the contemporaneous relationship between transformational leadership and readiness suggested that leaders who consistently promote the change throughout its implementation will sustain a positive attitude among employees (Henricks et al., 2020). It is what makes the degree of transformational leadership only around ten percent.

The limitation of this study was only cross-sectional, which is conducting research in a short time (one-time data collection), so the researchers suggested conducting an investigation using various methods and other analyses to answer research problems. Participants have also been limited to one only region. It also did not classify participants in more detail and wasn't include demography data to analyze further. Because, readiness to change is an attitude that is influenced by many factors, contexts,

processes, and other internal content simultaneously (Holt et al., 2007), and transformational leadership is only one of them. Therefore, leaders can pay more attention by increasing their employees' readiness for change. Future research can study readiness for change related to other factors to provide a broader perspective for effective change management in the context of changing university governance.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

There is a significant role between transformational leadership and readiness to change academic staff. This finding will be practical for university leaders facing challenges while managing the change process. It also can make them more prepared to accept changes in higher education governance.

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