




Employee readiness for organisational change in the post-pandemic context: A comprehensive bibliometric analysis



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Orientation: The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges, such as rapid organisational change. Employee readiness for change has emerged as a key determinant of the success of change initiatives.

Research purpose: This study aims to provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly research on employee readiness for organisational change in the post-pandemic context from 2021 to 2025.

Motivation for the study: While organisational change has been extensively studied, the post-pandemic era has heightened the urgency of understanding the human dimensions of change, particularly employee readiness. Given the acceleration of workplace transformation, there is a need to map scientific documentation and identify under-explored areas for future research.

Research approach/design and method: This study employed bibliometric analysis using the Scopus database as the primary data source. A total of 147 publications were analysed using VOSviewer.

Main findings: The analysis of keyword co-occurrence found five major clusters: (1) organisational change management and digital transformation; (2) psychological and relational constructs; (3) leadership and employee experiences; (4) job satisfaction, performance and self-efficacy and (5) sustainability and innovative behaviours. The results show growing interest in research on readiness for change, with a significant increase in citations from 2021 to 2025, indicating expanding academic influence.

Practical/managerial implications: Organisational leaders should prioritise strategies that foster employee readiness for change, such as developing digital readiness, enhancing psychological and relational support systems within the organisation, implementing adaptive and empathetic leadership, promoting performance-enhancing practices that build employee self-efficacy and engagement and integrating sustainability and innovation into organisational culture.

Contribution/value-add: This study synthesises readiness for change as an emergent capability encompassing psychological, relational, technological and strategic dimensions. By identifying key authors, institutions and collaborative clusters, the study maps research directions on this topic. It also identifies digital transformation and sustainability as emerging focal points related to readiness for change in the post-pandemic context and the future of workplace.

Keywords: readiness for change; employee; organisational change; bibliometric analysis; post-pandemic; human resource management; adaptability; leadership.

Introduction

During the pandemic in 2020, the global economy was severely impacted, including organisations (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022). This phenomenon highlighted the critical importance of organisations proactively preparing for change (Mladenova, 2022). The event demonstrated that organisations can face significant, unexpected phenomena that demand a rapid response, even in the form of substantial change. The fast and relentless pace of change necessitated organisations' continuous preparation and a lack of stability (Haffar et al., 2023; Stouten et al., 2018). This reality also demonstrated that many organisations were unprepared for change, while organisations should constantly adapt to new situations to survive and remain competitive (Hameed et al., 2019).

In an increasingly competitive and dynamic business environment, organisations are required to continuously adapt their internal structures and processes to remain adaptive to external changes. However, the successful implementation of change initiatives is often hampered by employee resistance, particularly when individual readiness for change is low (Metwally et al., 2019). Individuals who demonstrate resistance to the change process are often categorised as change resistant (Vakola, 2014). The change resistance often arises because employees are not psychologically ready to support and sustain the change (Kamarova et al., 2024). Traditional change models tend to prescribe sequential steps or managerial actions but rarely explain how these practices actually influence employees' willingness to adopt new behaviours.

Readiness for change is not simply a cognitive belief about the need for change but rather a deeper psychological process of internalisation (Mladenova, 2022; Samara & Al Serhan, 2022). Employees are ready when they simultaneously feel capable of managing the change, believe the change is meaningful and beneficial and experience social support and alignment with others. Therefore, readiness for change should be viewed as the result of deliberate practice in an organisation that activates those core psychological mechanisms. Understanding readiness for change as a dynamic and multidimensional construct is crucial for designing change interventions that lead to initial adoption and long-term maintenance of expected behaviour.

Effectively managing organisational change requires a focus on the human dimension, as employees constitute the foundation of the organisation and serve as both drivers and agents of change (Weiner et al., 2008; Zona et al., 2020). Employees are the ones who will embrace or resist change. Therefore, employee engagement with organisational change efforts determines the success or failure of change (Kebede & Wang, 2022). The demand for continuous performance improvement, coupled with the need to create new opportunities, is a strategic factor driving change within an organisation. In this context, implementing an effective change process is a critical determinant of an organisation's sustainability, adaptability and competitive advantage amidst increasingly complex and uncertain environmental dynamics.

When change occurs, employees attempt to understand the new environment and draw conclusions about potential outcomes by actively seeking information. This action leads to assumptions, impressions and expectations about the change. Readiness for change comes from the beliefs, feelings and intentions of organisational members regarding the extent to which change is necessary and the organisation's capacity to successfully implement it (Abdel-Ghany, 2014; Caliskan & Isik, 2016; Samara & Al Serhan, 2022; Wang et al., 2020). Readiness for change also indicates the extent to which employees positively perceive the need for organisational change and the extent to which they believe these changes will positively impact themselves and the organisation (Alqudah et al., 2022). Consequently, this process gives rise to

assumptions, perceptions and expectations regarding the proposed changes, which in turn influence employees' readiness to engage with organisational change.

Employee readiness for change is a crucial component in the success of organisational change initiatives. This readiness reflects the extent to which employees are psychologically and behaviourally prepared to accept and support change efforts (Armenakis et al., 1993; Holt et al., 2007). When employees demonstrate high readiness, they are more likely to interact with external actors, anticipate risks, navigate disruptions, alter routines and sustain operations under pressure (Joussen et al., 2024). This buildup of capabilities, supported by social capital, reflects a systemic readiness for change, positioning it as an ongoing strategic competency rather than a pre-change state.

This research used bibliometrics to analyse employee readiness to implement organisational change after the 2020 pandemic. The research aims to (1) map the intellectual structure of the topic, (2) identify dominant topics, influential researchers and key factors related to readiness for change and (3) highlight emerging research trends that reflect the evolving demands of organisational transformation. Therefore, this analysis is guided by the following research questions: (1) What are the key research themes and conceptual clusters that characterise readiness for change in the post-pandemic context? (2) Who are the most influential authors and collaborative networks driving this topic? (3) What factors are most frequently associated with readiness for change? (4) What conceptual gaps and future opportunities can be identified to advance theory and practice related to readiness for change?

Literature review

Post-pandemic context

The global pandemic, COVID-19, has not only changed the way organisations operate but also influenced how individuals within them interact and adapt to an uncertain external environment (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2022; Mladenova, 2022). This environment demands that organisations transform across all aspects. Two aspects have experienced the most significant change: technology and operational continuity. Following COVID-19, most employees are required to work in dynamic and flexible work arrangements. Readiness for change, an individual's ability to perceive and respond to new changes positively, has been identified as a key success factor.

Readiness for change

The most widely accepted definition of change readiness today is that proposed by Armenakis et al. (1993), who defined this construct as an individual's beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which change is necessary and the organisation's capacity to undertake it successfully. The research further stated that when change readiness exists, an organisation is ready to accept change, and

resistance to change is reduced. In this definition, the emphasis is placed on beliefs, even though beliefs do not address the affective aspect of change readiness. Furthermore, their definition also includes behavioural intentions. However, behavioural intentions are more related to motivational factors that influence action. Therefore, Rafferty and Minbashian (2019) proposed that it is inappropriate to include intentions as a component of change readiness. Instead, the research identified cognitive and affective factors that shape the overall evaluation of change readiness.

Readiness to change is a broad construct encompassing various factors that influence the extent to which an individual is willing to initiate and maintain engagement in behaviours that support change, including the presence of support and participation. The term readiness refers to three distinct concepts. Firstly, an individual's readiness to change is demonstrated through self-efficacy. Secondly, perceived organisational readiness refers to the individual's belief that the organisation can manage change. Thirdly, actual organisational readiness, namely the organisation's actual capacity to implement change (Vakola, 2013). This perspective welcomes pre-change cognitive and motivational states, fostered through persuasive communication and leadership influence. However, more recent literature shifts the concept from attitudes to capabilities, describing readiness not as beliefs but as actionable capacities (Joussen et al., 2024). In its dynamic view, readiness emerges through a set of organisational capabilities, including engaging with stakeholders to gather intelligence, anticipating risks, coping through resource orchestration, adapting routines and sustaining performance.

Readiness for change in an organisation is considered a construct with many levels and aspects. Vakola (2013) explains that readiness for change can occur at multiple levels, namely at the micro (individual), meso (group) and macro (organisational) levels. Weiner's (2009) research focused more on viewing readiness for change at two levels: the individual and collective levels. At the individual levels, key factors influencing employee readiness are confidence to face change, perceived control, personal valence, perceived personal expertise or competence and job satisfaction (Cunningham et al., 2002; Holt et al., 2007; Weiner, 2009). For example, employees with higher confidence in facing change will be better prepared and make a greater contribution to change. At the collective level, aspects such as culture, climate, job design and formal procedures are believed to contribute to increasing employee readiness for change (Gärtner, 2013).

Antecedents of employee readiness to change

Theoretically, Armenakis et al. (1993) proposed that a crucial factor influencing readiness to change is the change message communicated to employees. Several empirical studies have demonstrated that several variables are determinants of readiness to change. Leadership support and employee proactivity play a crucial role in employee and organisational

success (Waisy & Wei, 2020). Research findings also indicate that the human relations climate, such as transformational leadership, positively influences readiness to change. In addition to the direct influence, there is also a significant indirect influence through employee participation and leadership excellence on readiness to change (Mumtaz et al., 2024).

Furthermore, research by Rafferty and Simons (2006) identified various individual, work group and organisational factors that contribute to readiness for change. Trust in co-workers and logistical and system support showed a strong positive relationship with readiness for fine-tuning changes. In contrast, trust in senior leaders and self-efficacy showed a strong positive relationship with readiness for corporate transformational change. Ethical leadership, according to Metwally et al. (2019), has been shown to increase employee readiness for change, and an effectiveness-oriented organisational culture partially mediates this impact. Gärtner (2013) suggests that mindfulness influences cognitive, affective and behavioural factors at the individual level, thereby increasing readiness for change, including attitude, valence (personal), perceived experience, perceived control and change self-efficacy. Mindful individuals are more likely to see opportunities rather than threats in change, can overcome cognitive distortions and are better prepared to face contradictions and manage negative stimuli that often arise in organisational change.

Research design

This study used a bibliometric analysis to explore the development of academic research on readiness for change during the post-pandemic period (2021–2025). As a quantitative research method, bibliometric analysis enables the systematic examination of scholarly publications, focusing on patterns such as publication output, citation trends and thematic evolution (Donthu et al., 2021).

To fulfil the objectives of this study, data were extracted from the Scopus database, selected for its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals across multiple social science disciplines, including organisational change (Budhiraja et al., 2024). The data search used keywords relevant to readiness for change and the post-pandemic period. The Scopus search string is 'readiness for change', 'readiness to change' and 'change readiness'. The search was limited according to the following criteria: (1) articles published in 2021–2025, (2) publications in English and (3) published in peer-reviewed journals. The data were then exported in Comma-separated values (CSV) format. Then, the data were cleaned and processed using Microsoft Excel (Kucher et al., 2023). This process began with the removal of duplicate data, followed by the standardisation of author names and institutions to ensure consistency in the analysis. The cleaned data were then processed using VOSviewer, which will later produce descriptive statistics, publication mapping and grouping (Marita et al., 2022). VOSviewer was used to analyse co-authorship, co-occurrence and citation analysis.

Co-authorship uses authors as the unit of analysis, using a complete-counting method with no threshold (all authors with at least one document are included). Co-occurrence uses author keywords with full counting, with a minimum of five occurrences. Finally, the citation analysis uses documents as the unit of analysis with a minimum of 10 citations.

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) was used to identify, screen and analyse relevant literature in a transparent and systematic method (Page et al., 2021). The literature search was conducted in the Scopus database using the keywords 'readiness for change', 'readiness to change' and 'change readiness'. The article that met the three criteria proceeded to the eligibility assessment stage, which involved reviewing the abstract to ensure it met the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Finally, 147 articles that met all criteria were included in the final analysis. The full selection and screening process are shown in Figure 1, which shows the number of articles at each stage. The analysis results were utilised to quantify annual publication output and to identify the most prolific authors, journals and institutions contributing to research on readiness for change (Farooq, 2018). The analysis encompassed collaborative networks among authors, institutions and countries, alongside citation metrics. Thematic analysis was performed through keyword co-occurrence to identify terms frequently associated with the concept of readiness for

change (Budhiraja et al., 2024). This approach aimed to determine the most frequently occurring keywords and their conceptual relationships. The analysis also sought to uncover emerging research trends within the field of readiness for change. Additionally, results mapping was performed to examine the temporal development of key topics frequently associated with readiness for change. Visualisations facilitated the comparison of research themes from the early post-pandemic period until 15 August 2025.

The keyword phrase readiness for change was applied to article titles, abstracts and author-assigned keywords to ensure the retrieval of relevant publications. This search strategy yielded 147 articles; further details are provided in Figure 2.

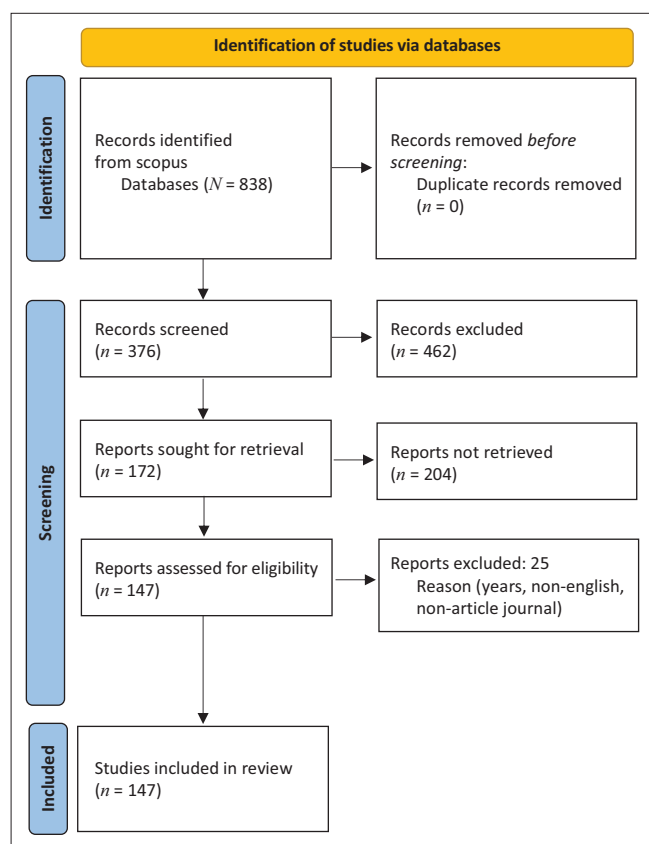
Ethical considerations

This article does not contain any studies involving animals performed by any of the authors.

Results

The bibliometric approach investigates trends and patterns in scholarly collaboration related to change readiness. Using the VOSviewer software (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010), co-authorship networks and frequently occurring keywords in the literature on change readiness were analysed. Data were extracted from the Scopus database, which is known for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed scholarly publications.

Publications from 2021 to 15 August 2025 were searched, totalling 147 documents. To ensure significant contributions by authors, a minimum citation threshold of 10 citations per author was applied. This criterion helps focus the analysis on influential authors. The trends throughout 2021–2025 show fluctuations in research interest in change readiness. The peak number of publications for readiness for change was recorded in 2024 (37 publications). However, the number of publications was slightly lower in 2021, 2022 and 2023, with 34, 25 and 28 papers published, respectively. In 2025, until 15 August, 23 research papers had been published, reflecting the growing interest in organisational change.



Source: Adapted from Page, M.J., McKenzie, J.E., Bossuyt, P.M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T.C., Mulrow, C.D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J.M., Akl, E.A., Brennan, S.E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J.M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M.M., Li, T., Loder, E.W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., McGuinness, L.A., Moher, D. et al. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *British Medical Journal*, 372, 71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>

FIGURE 1: Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis flow.

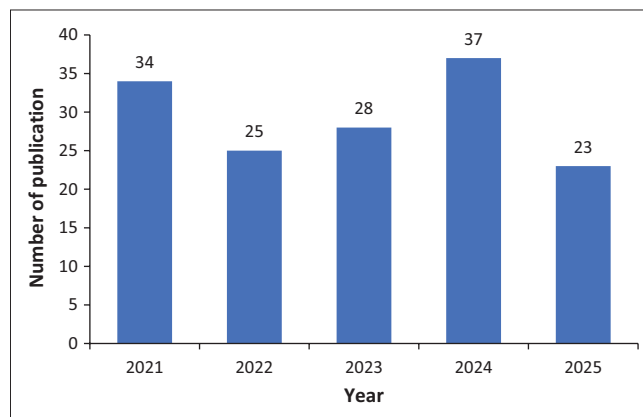


FIGURE 2: Total documents from 2021 to 2025.

Cluster analysis

The VOSviewer analysis reveals a complex and interconnected research landscape centred on the topic of readiness for change. The co-occurrence network map identified several prominent keyword clusters, each representing distinct research areas within the broader literature. The term *readiness for change* emerged as the central and most frequently occurring node, underscoring its foundational role throughout the dataset. Associated terms such as *organisational change* and *individual behaviour* were also prominent, reflecting their significant influence on the construct of readiness for change (Luo et al., 2022; Zulkarnain et al., 2024).

The VOSviewer results in Figure 3 reveal five primary clusters. The green cluster centres on organisational change management and digital transformation, highlighting the significance of strategic management planning and technology adoption (Alolabi et al., 2021; Hussain & Papastathopoulos, 2022; Kim, 2023). The blue cluster identifies psychological and relational constructs such as leader-member exchange, psychological capital and organisational support, demonstrating the importance of interpersonal dynamics and individual mindsets in research related to readiness for change (Grønvad et al., 2024; Palitsky et al., 2024; Sethi et al., 2023). The red cluster is represented by leadership, employee

experience and the research context in healthcare institutions, indicating a growing interest in research on readiness for change among employees in high-risk work environments (Gabutti et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2022). The yellow cluster connects topics, such as job satisfaction, employee performance and self-efficacy, which frequently co-occur in research on readiness for change (Katsaros et al., 2020; Najm & Ali, 2024). The purple cluster reflects emerging research trends, encompassing sustainability and innovative work behaviours, which signify a shift towards long-term adaptability and organisational resilience (Kurniasari et al., 2023).

These clusters reinforce the conceptualisation of readiness for change after the pandemic era as a construct that connects diverse research topics, such as digital transformation, psychological well-being, leadership and sustainability.

Network analysis

VOSviewer additionally facilitates the visualisation of co-authorship networks related to readiness for change, illustrating patterns of collaboration among authors based on their joint publications.

Network analysis and documents per author have different but complementary goals in assessing scholarly activity.

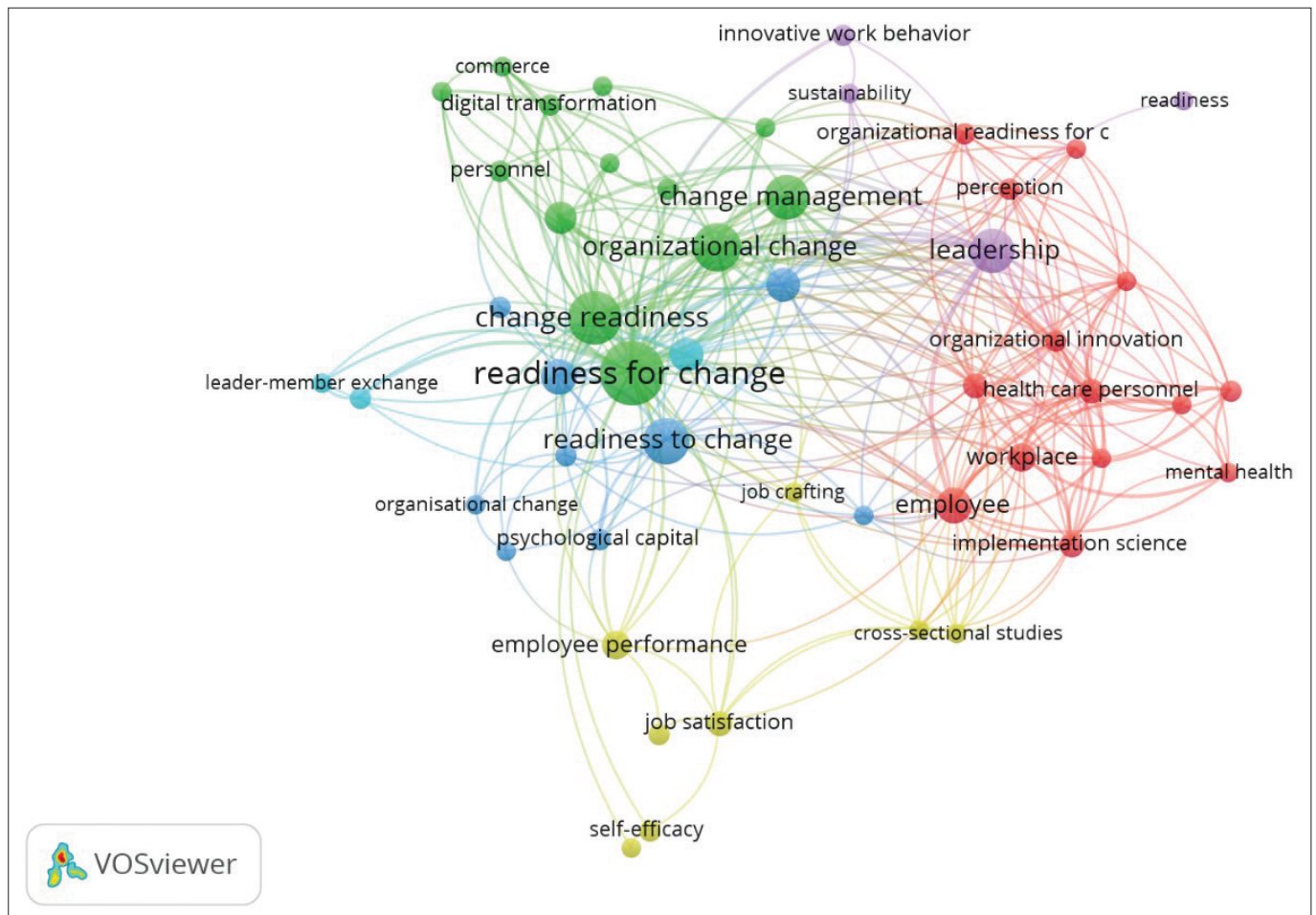


FIGURE 3: Research based on cluster.

Author productivity measures the quantity of an individual's research output, typically by counting the number of publications within a given time period, thereby identifying the most productive contributors and trends in research activity (Donthu et al., 2021). This research used network analysis to provide a holistic view of scholarly productivity, balancing quantitative output with the qualitative dynamics of research collaboration.

Network analysis conducted with VOSviewer provides an overview of the collaborative landscape of research on readiness for change. The visualisation in Figure 4 reveals two main clusters of authors, indicating a connected research community. The red cluster is characterised by intense internal collaboration, with key contributors being Lorraine R. Reitzel, Teresa Williams, Bryce Kyburz and Virmarie Correa-Fernández. This network indicates a group of researchers likely collaborating within a shared institutional or thematic context. The green cluster, comprising authors William T. Wilson, Cho Lam, Tim Stacey and Vijay Nitturi, serves as a bridge between the two groups and is influential in fostering cross-group collaboration. This research team collaborated to produce two publications related to readiness for change in the healthcare sector in 2021 (Le et al., 2021; Nitturi et al., 2021). This research examined how organisational readiness for change is measured through organisational readiness to implement change, which measures change efficacy, change commitment, task knowledge, resource availability and change valence. Change efficacy refers to employees' belief in their ability to implement change, while change commitment is the motivation to change. Task knowledge

refers to understanding what needs to be accomplished in a change context. Resource availability refers to the perceived ability of resources, including tools, staff and time. Change valence refers to the perceived value of change. The research's key finding revealed that change efficacy and resource availability influence readiness for change. The presence of these bridge authors indicates closer integration and also reflects the growing maturity of research that can transcend institutional and disciplinary boundaries. This collaborative structure enhances the potential for diverse perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches that are essential to addressing the challenges of change readiness, which is a complex construct in the context of human resources (Amis & Aïssaoui, 2013; Armenakis et al., 1993; Rafferty & Simons, 2006; Wang et al., 2020).

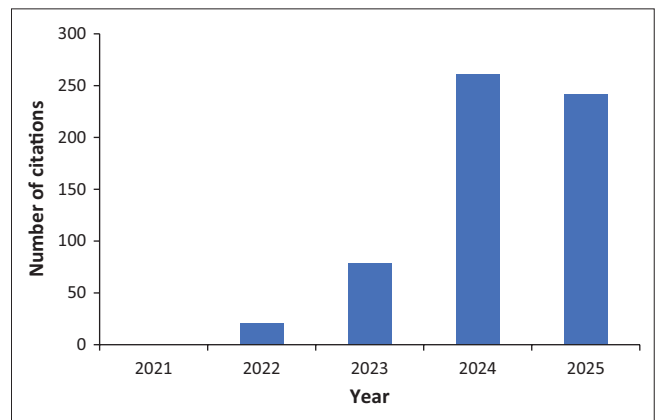


FIGURE 5: Number of citations from 2021 to 2025.

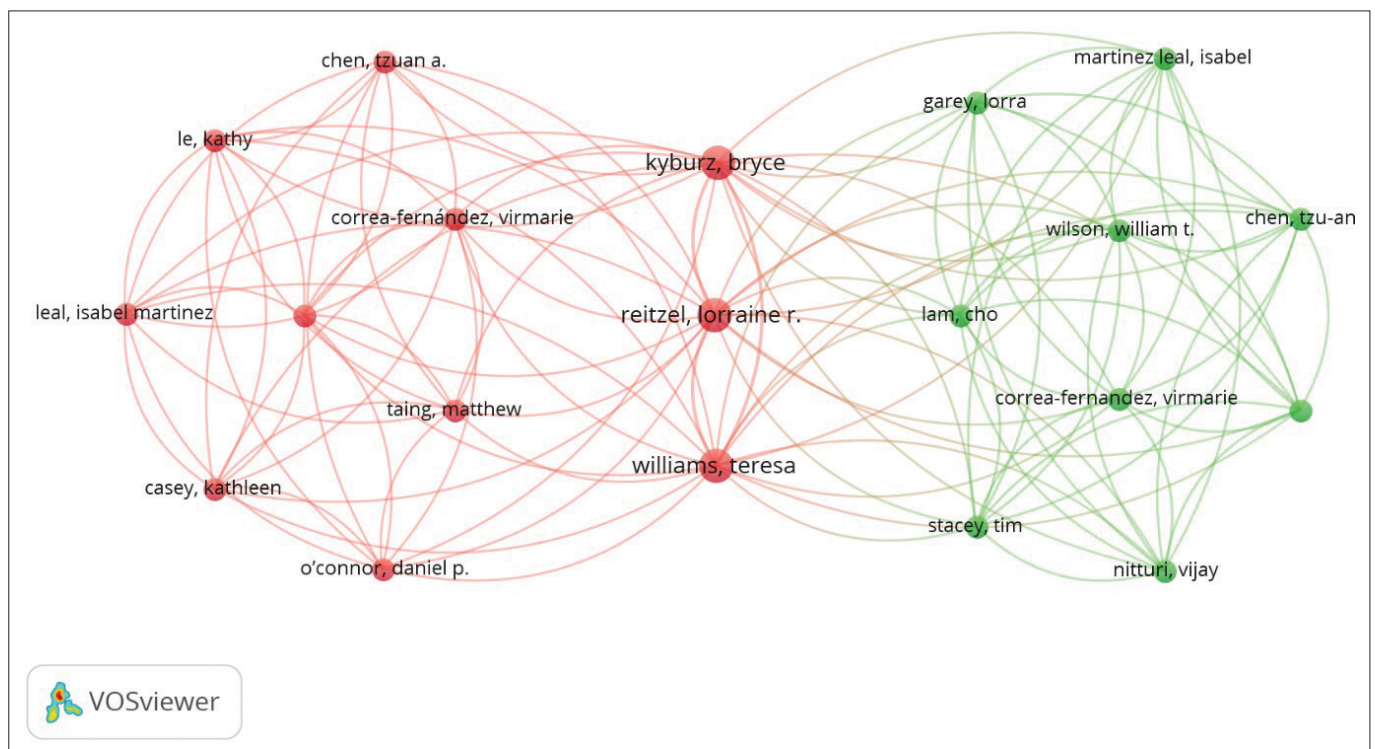


FIGURE 4: Network analysis matrix.

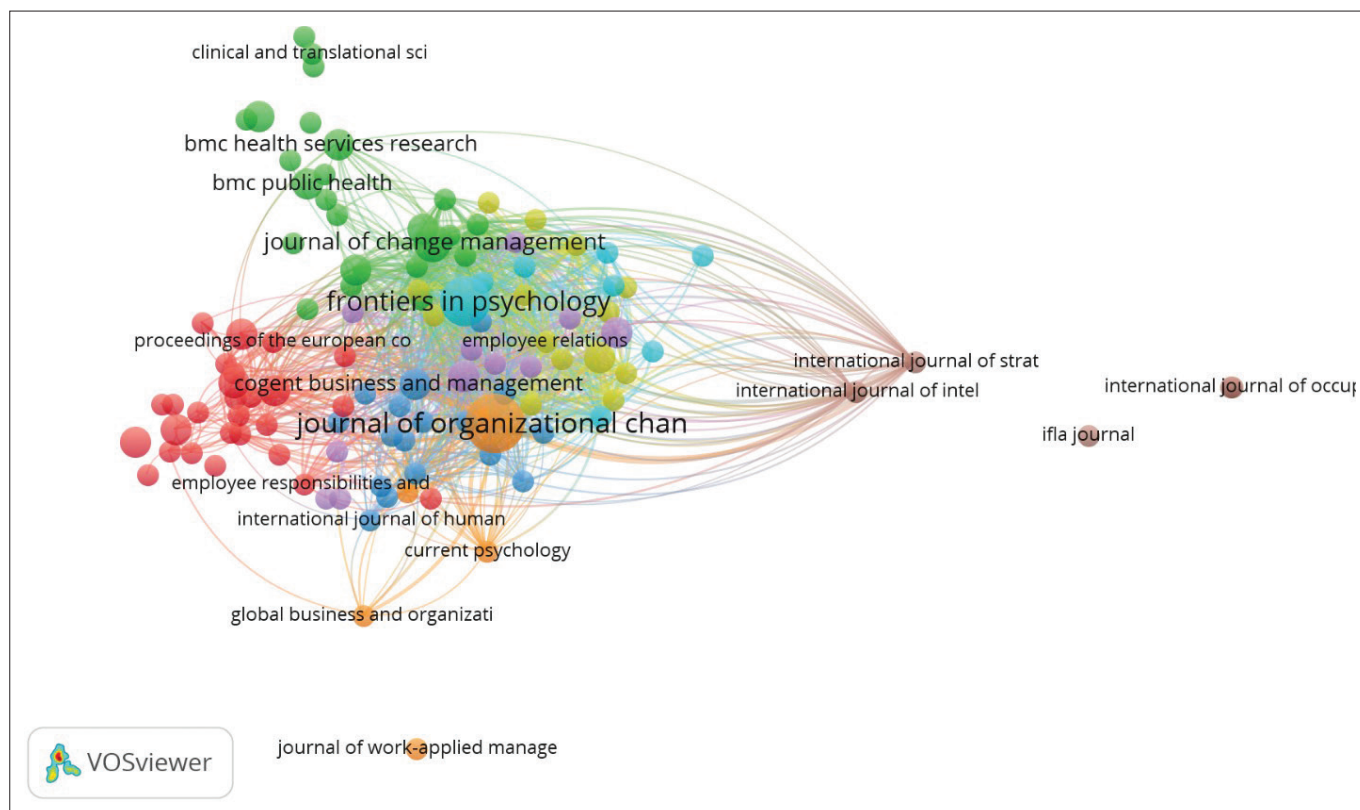


FIGURE 6: Influential journals analysis.

Citation analysis

Bibliometric analysis result in Figure 5 shows an increase in scholarly impact on the topic of readiness for change between 2021 and August 2025.

While the number of publications fluctuates annually, reaching a high of 37 publications in 2024, the number of citations shows a significant upward trend. Because the data begin in 2021, no citations were recorded in that year. Citations increase significantly in subsequent years, reaching 261 in 2024 and 242 by August 2025, for a total of 603 citations. This upward citation trend reflects the growing recognition and academic influence of readiness for change research within the broader field of human resource management.

Influential journals

Readiness for change is a topic that is frequently discussed in various publishing journals. An analysis using VOSviewer of journal sources on the topic of readiness for change reveals a diverse, multidisciplinary research background. The field draws robust contributions from organisational studies, psychology and healthcare. The results can be seen in Figure 6.

Among the various journals, the *Journal of Organisational Change Management* stands out as the most central and influential, underscoring its pivotal role in shaping foundational work on the topic. Other notable journals, such as *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Cogent Business and Management* and *Employee Relations*, highlight the growing emphasis on

psychological and behavioural dimensions in understanding how individuals and organisations adapt to change. The visual clusters in the analysis reveal distinct thematic groupings, including areas like organisational behaviour, public health and employee management. This result suggests that the concept of readiness for change is being explored in a variety of settings, from corporate environments to healthcare systems.

The dense web of citations between journals indicates strong interdisciplinary collaboration, with research frequently spanning business, psychological and health-related domains. Overall, the analysis highlights readiness for change as a well-established and evolving area of study, grounded in a diverse array of scholarly perspectives.

Discussion

Bibliometric analysis offers a comprehensive insight into the current research landscape on readiness for change within organisational and human resource management contexts. The co-authorship analysis reveals a well-established yet evolving collaborative network characterised by two prominent research clusters, reflecting distinct but interconnected scholarly communities. Key scholars, including Lorraine R. Reitzel, Virmarie Correa-Fernández and Bryce Kyburz, act as pivotal connectors between these groups, underscoring their influential role in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge integration. This network structure not only signifies the field's maturity

but also identifies potential avenues to enhance cross-institutional partnerships and broaden perspectives on readiness for change.

Publication trends from 2021 to 2025 demonstrate sustained scholarly interest, with citation metrics indicating increasing academic recognition and impact. This upward trajectory reflects the growing influence of the topic. It underscores readiness for change as a central theme in organisational change research, particularly in the context of dynamic and complex work environments.

Factors related to readiness for change post-pandemic

The bibliometric analysis identifies five major clusters that explain several key topics related to readiness for change. First cluster connected organisational change management and digital transformation. Digital transformation facilitates the adoption of new technologies and processes, making organisations more adaptable to change (Holmström, 2022). The integration of digital technologies and the development of a digital culture are critical to organisational performance and readiness for change (Yang et al., 2025). Post-pandemic readiness has shifted to digital readiness as core capabilities for organisational resilience. The second cluster highlights that the pandemic has significantly impacted psychological well-being and relationships, ultimately affecting readiness for change. Therefore, employee psychological well-being is crucial for readiness for organisational change, because higher levels of psychological and relational well-being create a greater willingness to accept and implement change (Kim et al., 2024). Personal readiness for change encompasses factors such as passion, creativity, optimism, entrepreneurial spirit, adaptability, self-confidence and tolerance for ambiguity. These traits are positively correlated with the propensity to take risks and seek novelty, thus impacting readiness for change (Terekhova & Trofimova, 2021). Perceived higher levels of social support from the organisation enhance employees' psychological well-being. Strengthening new social bonds is crucial for improving employees' quality of life. Adaptive social bonding interventions during change can enhance mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Adequate communication about change, opportunities for participation and affective commitment are crucial for fostering readiness and reducing resistance to change (Ramkissoon, 2022). The third cluster links leadership with interpersonal relationships and knowledge exchange within organisations. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of strong relationships and shared knowledge in fostering organisational readiness for change (Strielkowski et al., 2022). Emphasising human connection, empathy and psychological safety will be crucial for leaders in the post-pandemic era. It not only enhances personal well-being but also contributes to long-term organisational success. The post-pandemic context demands resilient, adaptive and emotionally intelligent leaders (Sharma et al., 2022). Supported by digital transformation and

sustainability, support will be key to managing future challenges and ensuring organisational readiness for change. The fourth cluster connected job satisfaction, employee performance and self-efficacy. These concepts co-occur with readiness for change, and bibliometric analysis indicates conceptual association. Readiness is studied alongside motivational and attitudinal constructs to reflect an integrated understanding of human factors that influence organisational adaptation. The fifth cluster shows that innovative work behaviours are crucial for maintaining economic performance during a crisis. Leadership that fosters innovative behaviour ultimately improves sustainable economic performance (Al Dereh & Fam, 2023). These results suggest that organisations that foster innovation are better prepared to adapt and thrive in a changing environment. Organisations that are ready to learn and adapt can better address challenges and maintain performance. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of sustainable innovation, highlighting the need for businesses to integrate sustainability into their strategies to remain competitive. Readiness for change at the individual, social and organisational levels is crucial for fostering sustainability. Organisations should focus on empowering leadership to foster innovative behaviours, which are essential for maintaining performance and adapting to change. The relationship between sustainability, innovative behaviour and readiness for change is interconnected and crucial for navigating the post-pandemic landscape (Contreras-Contreras et al., 2023). Organisations that foster innovation, integrate sustainability practices and promote readiness for change are better positioned to thrive amid ongoing and future challenges (Faulks et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research has shown that factors such as job satisfaction and organisational culture significantly influence employee readiness for change (Tsalits et al., 2022). Organisational justice and perceived support also play a significant role, as employees who feel fairly treated and supported are more likely to adopt new practices (Arnéguy et al., 2022; Kebede & Wang, 2022). Leadership further strengthens readiness, both directly and through the mediation of cultural values that support innovation and transformation (Waisy & Wei, 2020; Zainab et al., 2022). Without adequate readiness, even well-designed change efforts risk failure because of employee resistance, disengagement or loss of productivity (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Therefore, readiness for change is a critical factor in determining success in change (Talaja et al., 2023).

Collectively, these findings demonstrate how bibliometric analysis contributes to understanding the shift in readiness for change post-pandemic era. The results reveal a field transition from traditional individual-level analysis towards a multidimensional perspective encompassing psychological, technological and strategic readiness. This evolution highlights readiness for change as a holistic organisational capability essential for navigating future disruptions.

Practical implications

For practitioners and scholars in human resource management, these findings emphasise evidence-based insights to enhance readiness for change in the post-pandemic era. Firstly, the organisational change management and digital transformation cluster highlights the importance of fostering digital readiness. Organisations should invest in digital capability development and technology adoption training to ensure smoother and faster adaptation to technological change. Secondly, the psychological and relational constructs cluster emphasises the role of psychological safety and social support in fostering readiness. Well-being initiatives, open communication and a supportive work climate help employees cope with uncertainty and maintain motivation during transformation. Thirdly, findings from the leadership and employee experience cluster underscore the need for adaptive, inclusive and empathetic leadership. Leaders who show flexibility, compassion and emotional intelligence can enhance collective readiness and trust in change initiatives. Fourthly, the job satisfaction, performance and self-efficacy cluster indicates that increased employee empowerment and learning opportunities strengthen readiness. Recognition programmes, continuous learning and performance feedback systems can enhance confidence and the ability to embrace change. Fifthly, the sustainability and innovative behaviour clusters indicate that readiness is closely related to long-term adaptability and organisational resilience. Overall, these implications provide a direct reflection of this study's bibliometric findings, translating the empirical clusters into actionable strategies for managing human readiness in a dynamic organisational environment.

Limitations and recommendations

Despite employing a rigorous methodology, this study is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, data were sourced exclusively from the Scopus database, potentially excluding relevant publications indexed elsewhere. Secondly, the analysis was confined to articles published in English-language journals, thereby omitting pertinent research published in other languages. Thirdly, the inherent time lag between article submission, publication and subsequent citation accrual may affect the completeness of recent citation data (Donthu et al., 2021). All generated metrics were interpreted within their contextual framework and used to complement the qualitative analysis. This methodology offers a structured, replicable approach to evaluating the academic literature on readiness for change. By integrating bibliometric techniques and mapping, the study provides a comprehensive perspective on recent developments. It facilitates the identification of potential future research directions within the field of readiness for change.

Based on this research, several suggestions for future research directions are formulated: (1) Future studies should investigate how readiness for change develops across the

individual, team and organisational level simultaneously; (2) there is an urgent need to develop and validate models of digital readiness and sustainability related to readiness for change, which integrate technology adoption, green leadership and employee well-being; (3) researchers should utilise cross-disciplinary approaches, which integrate organisational psychology, data science, health science and environmental management to explore readiness in complex socio-technical system and (4) future research should use causal and longitudinal design to examine how leadership training, digital skills or social cohesion build readiness for change.

Conclusion

This bibliometric study offers a comprehensive overview of the scholarly landscape concerning readiness for change within organisational and human resource management contexts. Network analysis reveals a well-connected research community composed of distinct yet interrelated clusters of influential authors, highlighting the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of the field. The observed publication trends, alongside a marked increase in citation impact, demonstrate sustained and expanding academic engagement, affirming readiness for change as a vital and rapidly evolving research area. Thematic mapping further illuminates the multifaceted nature of readiness for change, emphasising its central role in key areas, such as organisational change, leadership, employee outcomes and innovation. Emerging themes, particularly digital transformation and sustainability, reflect an expanding research agenda that situates readiness for change within the context of contemporary organisational challenges. Overall, these findings highlight the critical role of readiness for change as a foundational construct in enabling effective organisational transformation.

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Competing interests

The authors, Mega A. Zona, Nia A. Erlin and Rini Sarianti, declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

CRedit authorship contribution

Mega A. Zona: Conceptualisation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Supervision, Visualisation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. Nia A. Erlin: Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Software. Rini Sarianti: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Resources, Writing – review & editing.

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Data availability

The data that supports the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Mega A. Zona, upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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