

Communication climate and organisational trust to readiness for change in higher education



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Orientation: Institutions Higher education institutions (HEIs) Indonesia face challenges from the Society 5.0 era, requiring governance changes to enhance autonomy and improve services. The initial step in implementing this change is to prepare the front-line staff, especially those who are not involved in academic roles. It is crucial to effectively communicate the change message and build trust within the organisation. These actions will greatly contribute to making them more open and receptive towards the forthcoming changes.

Research purpose: This study examines how organisational trust and communication climate affect non-academic staff readiness for change in higher education governance.

Motivation for the study: This study was motivated by a recent government policy in Indonesia that mandates organisational change in HEIs.

Research approach/design and method: Conducted at a university in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, the study used multiple linear regression to analyse the influence of organisational trust and communication climate on staff readiness for change.

Main findings: Both variables significantly influence readiness for change. Key factors for achieving success in readiness for change are establishing trust, effectively communicating the message and ensuring their active participation in the process.

Practical/managerial implications: This study enhances understanding of readiness for change in higher education governance by incorporating communication climate and organisational trust, thus building upon the findings of a previous study.

Contribution/value-add: This study suggests that HEIs undergoing governance change can benefit from promoting two-way communication and cultivating trust among non-academic staff to ensure widespread acceptance and support for the change process.

Keywords: readiness for change; organisational change; communication climate; organisational trust; higher education.

Introduction

The transition from a traditional society to an industrialised society is necessary for Society 5.0, which is a technology-driven, people-centric and highly intelligent society that has come about as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Deguchi et al., 2020). With the establishment of the ASEAN Free Market in 2015 and the Asia Pacific Free Market in 2016, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Indonesia need to be prepared for the ongoing education system reforms in order to adapt and thrive in an increasingly competitive environment (Herlina, 2021). According to a statistical report in Indonesia in 2022, there are a total of 3107 HEIs with 2982 private universities (95.97% of the total), and the remaining 125 being State Universities (Annur, 2023). Given this data, State Universities in Indonesia must compete with private universities, and the most effective way to do so is by making significant investments in infrastructure and embracing innovative approaches to learning, service management and teaching (Hendrarso, 2020). Additionally, Stattock (2002) emphasises the importance of effectively managing resources, both academic (such as curriculum development, accreditation and programme development) and non-academic (such as higher education management, administration and funding), in order to produce high-quality and competitive graduates from universities.

Government policy, as stated in Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning higher education, mandates that governance within an HEI must lead to effective internal management and quality assurance (Republik Indonesia, 2012). In Indonesia, there are three types of governance for State Universities: (1) university under general state financial management (*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Satuan Kerja*

abbreviated as Perguruan Tinggi Negeri [PTN] Satker) with limited campus autonomy, similar to a department within a ministry; (2) state university with public service agencies (*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Badan Layanan Umum* abbreviated as PTN-BLU), which has partial campus autonomy but is still part of the government and (3) state university with legal entity (*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Badan Hukum* abbreviated as PTN-BH), which has the most autonomy (Bramastia, 2020). Currently, there are 21 State Universities with legal entities, 47 State Universities with public service agencies and 31 that still have the status of universities under general state financial management (Caesaria, 2022). The government has made it easier for universities to transform from public service agencies to legal entities, encouraging them to restructure their governance and become more autonomous. This includes implementing administrative reform in the management of higher education (Astridina et al., 2017). For effective implementation of bureaucratic reforms, universities need to have sovereignty and an administrative structure that aligns with their competencies and culture (Rahayu, 2019). Quality universities must prioritise customer satisfaction and demonstrate a strong competitive edge (Purwandani & Sutarsih, 2016).

The effectiveness of human resources in higher education has a significant impact on an organisation's success in achieving its objectives and goals (Inandriyana et al., 2021). Recently, there has been a focus on a category known as support staff. Unlike those involved in teaching and research, these professionals work at the intersection of academia and administration or between the university and its surrounding community. They are often referred to as higher education professionals, third space professionals, administrative professionals or non-academic staff. Their roles typically include managerial support, community and business liaison, institutional research, internationalisation, human resource development and quality assurance (Karlsson & Rytberg, 2016). The demands of administrative duties, which affect non-academic staff, are closely linked to changes in financial management. Non-academic staff must be proficient in administrative and operational technicalities when carrying out their work (Amon et al., 2020). They need to quickly adapt to changes in administrative services (Anardani et al., 2021).

On the other hand, other human resources in HEIs, such as lecturers, are less involved in administrative tasks. Lecturers primarily use education, research and social work to transform, improve and disseminate science, technology and artistry (Republik Indonesia, 2003). Syahromi and Cheisviyanny (2020), in their interviews with lecturers and non-academic staff at a university that had recently become a public service agency, found that lecturers did not directly feel the changes in the university's transition to a public service agency in the learning process. They were more exposed to clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) in this change to carry out their existing activities. On the other hand, non-academic staff experienced more significant changes, such as an increased workload in financial management and challenges in understanding new regulations that apply to stakeholders

(Syahromi & Cheisviyanny, 2020). Additionally, research by Erlyani and Suhariadi (2021b) found that the perception of lecturers at one university regarding readiness for change (RFC) has a weak positive correlation.

Enhancing the capacity of change agents and leaders is the first step in the change process (Gelaidan et al., 2018). Mangundjaya (2016) also highlights the importance of organisational RFC before initiating any change initiatives. In State Universities' administration, a higher level of autonomy in financial management requires a strong sense of trust among the organisation's workforce for support (Slamet, 2014). Additionally, change drivers should recognise that the effectiveness of their message depends on the information environment for employees, emphasising the need for an open and transparent communication climate (CC). This ensures that employees are well-informed about forthcoming changes (Miller et al., 2014).

Several variables that affect have been studied in relation to RFC, including leadership style (Du et al., 2023; Gebretsadik, 2022; Gelaidan et al., 2018), job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 2014; Vakola, 2014), organisational support (Cullen et al., 2014; Farahana et al., 2017; Purwaningrum et al., 2020), organisational commitment (Qureshi et al., 2018; Suwaryo et al., 2015), CC (Farahana et al., 2017; Neill et al., 2019; Vakola, 2014; Win & Chotiyaputta, 2018) and organisational trust (OT) (Ertürk, 2008; Marouf & Agarwal, 2016; Yue et al., 2019; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015). However, there has been limited empirical research on the relationship between CC, OT and RFC in higher education.

Conducting such research is valuable for developing an RFC theory that incorporates CC and OT, enabling individuals to navigate changes more effectively, especially in the context of higher education governance. Furthermore, this study aims to empirically assess the significance of CC and OT in RFC among non-academic staff as they face changes in higher education governance or similar policy adjustments.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Higher education governance context in Indonesia

Universities in Indonesia, often referred to as PTN, have undergone significant changes over time because of technological advancements and the pressure to excel and remain competitive (Godonoga & Sporn, 2023). In order to continue developing education and embrace unknown competencies, it is necessary for these universities to carry out autonomous financial and managerial reforms and overhaul the current education system (Risanty & Kesuma, 2019). This agenda involves transforming the governance of higher education in Indonesia to become more autonomous, encompassing academic aspects such as curriculum development, accreditation and the development of study programmes, as well as non-academic aspects like the

management and administration of higher education, and funding and financing. These reforms aim to serve the interests of society, the market and the country (Andriana et al., 2020).

Governance in higher education refers to a series of mechanisms (structures, systems and processes) used by HEIs to guide and control their operations, ensuring that they provide added value and achieve sustainability in line with stakeholder expectations (Risanty & Kesuma, 2019). According to *Government Regulation No. 4 of 2014 on the Implementation of Higher Education and Higher Education Management*, the pattern of HEI management consists of three types: (1) Universities with general state financial management (PTN Satker), (2) State universities with public service agencies (PTN-BLU) and (3) State universities as legal entities (PTN-BH). The determination and change in the pattern of financial management of HEIs is based on performance evaluation conducted by the Minister of Education. Triatmoko and Kurniasih (2018) highlighted several distinctions between different types of universities. The differences lie in various aspects such as the use of budget implementation statements or issuance of spending authority, financial reporting patterns, asset recognition and tariff determination. While universities with general state financial management must wait for budget amendments to be approved before making any changes, State Universities with public service agencies have the freedom to spend without delay. State university legal entities, on the other hand, are the most flexible when compared to both of these categories.

In the current reporting framework of State Universities, adherence is made to *Government Regulation No. 71 of 2010*, which outlines the Government Accounting Standards. This regulatory framework includes seven components of financial statements, each serving a specific purpose: (1) Budget Realisation Report, (2) Reports of Changes in Excessive Budget Balance, (3) Balance Sheet, (4) Statement of Cash Flows, (5) Operational Report, (6) Statements of Changes in Equity and (7) Notes to the financial statements. Together, these components provide a comprehensive overview of the financial status, budget utilisation, cash flow dynamics, equity changes and other relevant financial information for State Universities (Triatmoko & Kurniasih, 2018).

Various factors, such as funding, decentralised decision-making, and multidimensional planning and reporting, can pose challenges in financial management for universities. Kasradze et al. (2019) emphasised that a strong financial management system is a vital element in ensuring the growth and stability of universities, especially in the context of transforming the education system. Universities operating under a general state financial management structure lack the flexibility required for institutional development and competitiveness. Therefore, changes in governance that align with national higher education standards are necessary.

Readiness for change

According to Armenakis et al. (1993), among the many factors that contribute to the success of organisational transformation, RFC is one of them. Readiness for change refers to the organisation's ability to implement changes and includes the content, process, context and people involved, such as the beliefs, behaviours and intentions of organisational members regarding the need for change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Holt et al., 2007). Weiner (2009) further explains that RFC is formed when members of the organisation decide to implement change and have mutual trust in their ability to make that change.

Readiness for change has been extensively studied in both individual and organisational contexts. Holt et al. (2007) introduced four elements of RFC: appropriateness, management support, change efficacy and personal valence. Several organisational development theories (Mento et al., 2002) suggest that both the individual and the individual's environment are potential sources of RFC. The concept of 'individual RFC' refers to the internal and external factors that support the modification of behaviour (Peterson & Baker, 2015).

There are various factors that can determine a person's RFC. Individual attitudes, beliefs and intentions are elements of individual differences. The transtheoretical paradigm proposes five cognitive stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1983). Individuals who are ready for change are typically in the preparation phase, where they have a positive attitude towards change and are willing to take immediate action. According to organisational sciences, individual differences in RFC are often reflected in specific attitudes and beliefs about the necessity, appropriateness, management support and value of change, both at the individual and organisational levels (Holt & Vardaman, 2013).

Readiness for change is an important factor because it plays a critical role in every organisational transition and is a key determinant of successful change (Vakola, 2014). If not properly prepared, individuals may feel unprepared, react negatively, reject the change and not fully commit to it, which can pose challenges or even obstacles to achieving successful organisational change (Mangundjaya, 2016). Holt et al. (2007) support Armenakis' view by stating that readiness is a cognitive precursor to either resistance or support for change initiatives.

The concept of RFC has been extensively explored in various literatures and perspectives (Holt & Vardaman, 2013). Recent research on RFC has shown that it can vary and change during the implementation of organisational change (Hemme et al., 2018).

Readiness for change and communication climate

Readiness for change is influenced by support from the organisational environment, such as organisational structure,

culture and climate (Holt et al., 2007; Rusly et al., 2011). A supportive organisational atmosphere can be developed through internal and external communication to reduce uncertainty. This includes providing employees with all relevant information about the change, including the problem's vision, strategy, policies, plans and organisational procedures (Gaertner et al., 2001). The extent to which employees perceive receiving all necessary information about the change is referred to as the CC (Chiang, 2010). Previous studies have shown that people are more open to change when they have enough information (Miller et al., 1994; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). The CC also influences employees' cognitive and emotional responses to the change, as ineffective communication can hinder their readiness to embrace it (Vakola, 2014). Open and successful communication about the change has been found to lessen resistance to change (Paterson & Cary, 2002).

To ensure that every member of the organisation is ready for change, it is important to communicate the message of change and involve them in the process (Smith, 2005). Employees who are provided with high-quality information about changes and have a strong desire for accomplishment tend to view change positively (Miller et al., 1994). Open, honest and responsive communication encourages employee engagement and enthusiasm for change. Employees who support change take on additional responsibilities and advocate for transparent and participative communication (Neill et al., 2019). This shows that an open climate in communication legitimises change and promotes positive attitudes among employees.

The RFC is linked to the perceived CC (Holt et al., 2007). The CC has an impact on productivity as it influences employees' efforts (Pace & Faules, 2015). Improved communication and a positive communication atmosphere affect individual readiness and positive reactions to change (Vakola, 2014; Neill et al., 2019). In the context of higher education, where there may be limited socialisation regarding changes in governance, the CC serves as a variable that captures this challenge. Non-academic staff may lack comprehension about these changes because of limited communication. Based on this, the hypothesis (H₁) of this study is:

H₁: Communication climate has a significant impact on readiness for change.

Readiness for change and organisational trust

The concept of trust has been extensively studied in various contexts, such as interpersonal, organisational and social scales. This has been highlighted in studies within fields such as communication, economics, information systems, law, management, marketing, political science and psychology (Yue et al., 2019). Previous research has established trust as a quality and has investigated individual factors that can predict a person's belief disposition (Shockley-Zalabak & Ellis, 2006). However, the emphasis lies on building trust as an aspect of organisational interactions (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996; Shockley-Zalabak & Ellis, 2006). According to

Cummings and Bromiley (1996), OT can be understood as the trust held by individuals or shared among groups. It involves individuals or groups genuinely striving to honour explicit or implicit commitments, engaging in honest negotiations before commitments and avoiding excessive exploitation of others.

Trust is one of the factors in the internal or individual context (Farahana et al., 2017). Mutual trust facilitates a learning culture where people are not afraid to take risks that could benefit the organisation (Alston, 2014). Employee trust in their organisation is a feeling of confidence and a form of support that they will be honest and continue to be committed to the organisation (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Organisations must also develop employee trust by promoting open communication, emphasising feedback, providing accurate information, offering adequate decision explanations and encouraging the free interchange of thoughts and ideas (Vakola, 2013). The principles of human relations and organisational support can help build employee change readiness (Myklebust et al., 2020). The organisational context is related to the situation in its environment and is connected to the extrinsic level of the individual (Farahana et al., 2017).

Research by Ertürk (2008) showed a notable positive correlation between OT and employees' readiness to change in Turkey. Zayim and Kondakci (2015) also found it to be a significant predictor of change readiness among employees in Turkey. Trust in co-workers and management is also significantly and positively correlated with employee RFC (Samaranayake & Takemura, 2017). Yue et al. (2019) found similar results regarding a positive relationship between employee OT and organisational change events. Trust is crucial during periods of change as it facilitates employees' ability to respond constructively (Oreg et al., 2011). When employees have high trust in the organisation where they work, they will be willing to change attitudes, values and assumptions, and they will increase their commitment, leading to unquestioning acceptance of organisational goals (McShane & Glinow, 2008). In examining issues faced by non-academic staff in universities with lower governance, OT emerges as a factor. It includes concerns and uncertainties among staff regarding the university's capacity to implement more independent governance. Building on this, the hypothesis (H₂) of this study is:

H₂: Organisational trust has a significant impact on readiness for change.

Methods

Participants

This study is a quantitative research with a cross-sectional design, meaning that data is collected at a single point in time. The population of this study consists of 985 non-academic staff members from one of the State Universities in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The sample size for this study

was determined using the formula proposed by Isaac and Michael (1995), which resulted in a sample size of approximately 277 individuals. The calculation is as follows:

$$n = \frac{\lambda^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + \lambda^2 P(1-P)} \quad [\text{Eqn 1}]$$

In this calculation, n represents the required sample size, λ^2 represents the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841), N represents the population size, P represents the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50) and d represents the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

The calculation is based on the following formula:

$$n = \frac{3.841 \times 985 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2 (984) + 3.841 \times 0.5 \times 0.5} \quad [\text{Eqn 2}]$$

$$n = \frac{945.85}{3.42} = 276.54 \quad [\text{Eqn 3}]$$

The research process begins with the selection of the research subject. After that, the researcher adapts the measurement instruments and proceeds to collect data. Offline data collection was carried out from 28 June to 05 July 2022, during which researchers distributed scale measurements through face-to-face interactions. A randomisation process was used to select 277 participants, but only 263 participants returned the measuring instruments. Therefore, the analysis was done with data from 254 participants after eliminating nine outlier data points.

Measurement

This study uses the Readiness for Change Questionnaire (RFCQ) developed by Holt et al. (2007), the Organisational Trust Inventory-Short Form (OTI-SF) proposed by Cummings and Bromiley (1996) and the CC scale developed by Neill et al. (2019). The RFCQ consists of 25 items, the OTI-SF consists of 12 items and the CC scale consists of 7 items. These scales were structured as a six-point Likert scale, with the values assigned as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Somewhat Disagree = 3, Somewhat Agree = 4, Agree = 5 and Strongly Agree = 6. In order to adapt the scales for the Indonesian context, the study followed the International Test Commission (ITC) Guidelines for the Translation and Adaptation of Tests (2017). The adaptation process involved several stages, including pre-condition, test development, confirmation, administration, score scale and interpretation and documentation. The researchers contacted the scale developers to inquire about adapting the measurement tools. After reviewing the empirical evidence related to the use of similar instruments in Indonesia, where validated versions of the CC and OT scales did not yet exist, they found inconsistencies in the number of items in Holt's RFCQ statement. As a result, the researchers decided to adapt all three measurement tools. The test development

process included forward and backward translation to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. An independent third translator and an expert panel conducted forward and backward synthesis. The experts then reviewed the content and language of the items by comparing the original and back-translated versions. The readability of the scales was also tested on non-academic staff from another university to validate the sample. Construct validity was established using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). For the second-order RFCQ CFA, the fit indices were as follows: CFI = 0.893, TLI = 0.882, NFI = 0.865 and RMSEA = 0.114. The factor loadings ranged from 0.437 to 0.935, indicating that the RFCQ is a valid measure. The CC unidimensional CFA yielded fit indices of CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.007, NFI = 0.993 and RMSEA = 0.000, with loadings ranging from 0.694 to 0.944, confirming its validity. The unidimensional OTI-SF CFA resulted in fit indices of CFI = 0.824, TLI = 0.785, NFI = 0.800 and RMSEA = 0.150, with loadings ranging from 0.394 to 0.758. According to Aktürk et al. (2021), these fit indices fall within acceptable ranges: $0.80 \leq \text{CFI} \leq 0.90$, $0.80 \leq \text{TLI} \leq 0.90$, $0.80 \leq \text{NFI} \leq 0.95$ and $\text{RMSEA} \leq 0.08$, validating the OTI-SF measure. The composite reliability analysis also indicated good reliability of the measures, with the RFCQ = 0.965, CC = 0.942 and OTI-SF = 0.855.

Data analysis

This quantitative study utilises JASP (Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program) 0.16.2 to analyse the data (JASP Team, 2022). The purpose of this study is to determine whether the two predictor variables such as CC and OT have an impact on the RFC among non-academic staff in the face of higher education governance change at a university in Indonesia. Multiple linear regression is employed to test the hypothesis. Descriptive statistics (M , $s.d.$, Pearson correlation) are also included. Before conducting the analysis, several assumption tests, such as normality, linearity and multicollinearity, were performed (with a significance level of 0.05) to ensure that the data met the necessary assumptions.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Committee of Medical Research Ethics of the Medical Faculty, under the university in South Kalimantan. The ethics approval number is: 371/KEPK-FK ULM/EC/IX/2022. All activities involving human subjects in this research adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the institution. Each participant in the study provided written informed consent.

Results and discussion

Results

The study was conducted at a university in South Kalimantan, Indonesia and involved non-academic staff. A demographic analysis was performed to examine the gender, age, and job tenure distribution among the participants. The results showed that there was a slightly higher number of females ($n = 135$) compared to males ($n = 119$), but the difference was

not statistically significant (male = 46.9% and female = 53.1%). This indicates a fair representation of both genders among the non-academic staff. In terms of age, the participants ranged from 18 to 58 years old, with an average age of 39.12 years (s.d. = 9.08). The job tenure varied from 1 to 36 years, with an average of 12.35 years (s.d. = 7.20).

After collecting the data, several statistical tests were conducted to ensure the validity of the analysis. This included a normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, a linearity test using analysis of variance and a test for multicollinearity. These tests were performed to examine the impact of two variables, CC and OT, on RFC in the non-academic staff. The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test showed a significance value of 0.001 for RFC and CC before removing outliers, and a significance value of 0.009 for RFC and OT before removing outliers. Because these values were less than 0.05, it was necessary to remove the outliers. After removing the outliers, the significance value for RFC and CC, as well as RFC and OT, was 0.200. This indicates that all variables met the normality assumption, as their significance values were greater than 0.05 (Table 1).

The assumption of linearity test assumption also reveals a linear relationship between RFC and CC ($F = 156.140$; $p < 0.001$), as well as between RFC and OT ($F = 318.139$; $p < 0.001$).

The results of the multicollinearity test, as shown in the variance inflation factor (VIF) column, indicate VIF values below 5. Therefore, it can be inferred that the regression model does not have any issues related to multicollinearity (Table 2).

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation analysis in Table 3, it was found that CC ($r = 0.175$; $p < 0.05$) and OT ($r = 0.747$; $p < 0.05$) are significantly correlated with RFC.

The results of the multiple regression test show that both OT and CC have a simultaneous impact on RFC ($F[2, 251] = 158.961$; $p < 0.001$). Specifically, CC ($\beta = 0.130$; $t = 2.680$; $p = 0.007$) and OT ($\beta = 0.755$; $t = 17.344$; $p < 0.001$) have t -values greater than the critical t -value ($2.680 > 1.969$;

TABLE 1: Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test.

Variables	Before eliminating outliers (N = 263)	After eliminating outliers (N = 254)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Communication climate and readiness for change	0.001	0.200
Organisational trust and readiness for change	0.009	0.200

Sig., significance.

TABLE 2: Multicollinearity test.

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients beta			Collinearity statistics	
	B	SE	β	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	38.314	4.435	-	8.640	0.000	-	-
CC	0.082	0.121	0.130	0.680	0.014	0.926	1.079
OT	1.566	0.090	0.755	17.334	0.000	0.926	1.079

Sig., significance; SE, standard error; CC, communication climate; OT, organisational trust; VIF, variance inflation factor.

$17.344 > 1.969$), indicating support for H1 and H2. Furthermore, it was found that the variables 'CC' and 'OT' account for 55.9% of the variability in 'RFC' (Table 4 to Table 6).

Discussion

This research aims to investigate the impact of OT and CC on the RFC of non-academic staff in response to changes in higher education governance. The study found that both CC and OT have a significant impact on the RFC of non-academic staff, which is consistent with previous studies (Ertürk, 2008; Miller et al., 1994; Neill et al., 2019; Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Yue et al., 2019; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015) that have shown a positive relationship between CC, OT and RFC. Providing change recipients with sufficient knowledge enhances their willingness to embrace change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), and a positive CC and widespread value of effective communication during organisational transformation indicate change readiness (Armenakis et al., 1993; Oreg et al., 2011). Open and participatory communication also plays a crucial role in fostering positive employee reactions to change (Neill et al., 2019). The concept of OT encompasses various relationships and environmental influences, contributing to RFC (Shockley-Zalabak & Ellis, 2006). Furthermore, RFC is positively correlated with OT (Ertürk, 2008; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015), and prior studies have emphasised the importance of OT in successful change implementation and reducing resistance to change (Jones et al., 2005; Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). As such, it is recommended that higher education management consider OT and CC before implementing new policies or changes (Workeneh & Abebe, 2019).

Embracing change and readiness for transformation are crucial for organisations, especially HEIs, to adapt to dynamic environmental changes and ensure survival (Erlyani & Suhariadi, 2021a; Holt et al., 2007). A transitional approach,

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Readiness for change	95.280	12.237	-	-	-
Communication climate	31.717	4.402	0.175*	-	-
Organisational trust	38.051	5.901	0.747*	0.271*	-

SD, standard deviation.

*, $p < 0.05$.

TABLE 4: Model summary readiness for change.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	12.237
H ₁	0.748	0.559	0.555	8.160

RMSE, root mean squared error.

TABLE 5: Regression.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
H ₁	Regression	21170.772	2	10585.386	158.961	< 0.001
-	Residual	16714.381	251	66.591	-	-
-	Total	37885.154	253	-	-	-

df, degrees of freedom.

TABLE 6: Coefficients.

Model		Unstandardised	SE	Standardised	t	p
H ₀	(Intercept)	95.280	0.768	-	124.092	< 0.001
H ₁	(Intercept)	38.314	4.435	-	8.640	< 0.001
-	CC	0.882	0.121	0.130	2.680	0.007
-	OT	1.566	0.090	0.755	17.344	< 0.001

SE, standard error; CC, communication climate; OT, organisational trust.

whether at an individual, team, or organisational level, is necessary for future changes to have a widespread positive impact and enable the institution to reach its full potential (Chapa et al., 2014). Readiness for change encompasses an individual's overall attitude towards change, including their confidence in their ability to succeed and their belief in the benefits of the change for both themselves and the institution (Holt et al., 2007). Therefore, this process occurs within the entire organisational system rather than in isolation (Ahmad et al., 2017).

During the process of change in HEIs, effective management is crucial. Higher education institution management must address new challenges and actively involve staff, especially non-academic staff, in decision-making and discussions about the change. They should communicate openly and transparently, conveying the message of change and its benefits. This will help to ensure that the desired changes are successfully implemented (Qureshi et al., 2018; Workeneh & Abebe, 2019). It is also important for HEIs to understand the factors that influence employees' willingness to accept change (Farahana et al., 2017).

Communication is one of the key factors that influences the management and implementation of change (Men & Bowen, 2017). Farahana et al. (2017) found that communication climate positively predicts RFC. Members' participation in decision-making, both before and during a period of change, is empirically linked to greater readiness (Eby et al., 2000). Readiness for change is also influenced by the decision of fellow members to implement change and a sense of trust in the ability to make changes together (Weiner, 2009). When employees trust the organisation they work for, they are more likely to accept the organisational goals (McShane & Glinow, 2008).

Effective CC and OT are critical for discovering the benefits and drawbacks of change. Ineffective communication and a lack of trust in the organisation can negatively affect employees' cognitive and emotional responses to change, leading to unpreparedness (Oreg et al., 2011; Vakola, 2014). Implementing change too quickly without proper socialisation or communication about its benefits can make organisational members uneasy and resistant to change

(Mangudjaya, 2016). Fear and uncertainty about change can also make employees reluctant to embrace it (Difonzo & Bordia, 1998). Therefore, both effective communication and trust need to be prioritised during the change process. This will encourage each member to contribute positively, be more receptive to change, manage risk and help solve complex problems (Miller et al., 1994; Thakur & Srivastava, 2018; Vakola, 2014; Wanberg & Banas, 2000).

Scholars have discovered several benefits of involving members in decision-making during times of change. These include increased commitment to change, improved clarity on change goals and reduced resistance to change (Neill et al., 2019; Paterson & Cary, 2002). Furthermore, employees' OT can reduce psychological stress and uncertainty, making them more accepting of change (Yue et al., 2019). When employees perceive alignment between the organisation's top priorities and change objectives, trust in the organisation's ability to successfully implement changes and effective communication on these matters, their adaptability to change is enhanced. Ultimately, this improves the overall capacity of the organisation to embrace change.

Theoretical and practical implications of the study

On a theoretical level, this study enhances our understanding of RFC in the education sector, particularly higher education, as discussed by Allaoui and Benmoussa (2020) and Zayim and Kondakci (2015). It builds upon the findings of Du et al. (2023) and Gebretsadik (2022), who examined RFC among leaders in HEIs, by delving deeper into how State Universities can adapt their governance, including administrators and faculty.

On a practical level, readiness is influenced by three factors: employees' confidence in the organisation's ability to change, trust in leadership as an example and the adequacy of information provided about the change (Vakola, 2014). Those leading the change must recognise that the impact of their messages depends on the information environment of the employees. Effective communication from management to employees relies on employees feeling included, having access to social information, and understanding their roles and expectations. To promote openness and inclusivity, leaders can establish policies that ensure employees are well-informed about upcoming changes (Miller et al., 1994). All staff are encouraged to discuss organisational policy-related issues with their superiors and have a say in the process and goal-setting. Additionally, leaders can involve non-academic staff in decision-making by listening to their suggestions and ideas, fostering two-way communication between the smallest unit and its leadership.

When employees perceive their leaders as capable of navigating organisational change successfully, they tend to view change positively (Win & Chotiyaputta, 2018). Trust plays a crucial role in alleviating employees' concerns and enabling them to effectively manage risks and address

complex problems (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). In the context of RFC among non-academic staff in universities operating under general state financial management, leaders must nurture positive beliefs among these staff members. This can be achieved by providing training opportunities that align with effective change strategies, thus enhancing staff competence. Building trust in higher education management and gaining support for the change process are essential for widespread acceptance of change plans among non-academic staff. Furthermore, addressing transparency in areas such as benefits, work distribution and guarantees for non-academic staff performance fosters trust in the workplace.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

The study has limitations. It only surveyed one university in Indonesia and did not categorise participants in detail, which may have affected the representation of data. Additionally, the study did not include the perspectives of organisational change managers, communication experts and organisational leaders. Readiness for change is influenced by various factors, such as context, internal processes and content, of which the CC and OT are only a part. Moreover, the research did not investigate the role of demographic factors in RFC. Future researchers should consider exploring factors, processes and other internal content that can contribute to RFC, in order to provide a broader and more comprehensive perspective on changes in higher education governance.

Conclusion

In summary, the study found that both CC and OT play a significant role in determining RFC. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritise and sustain CC and OT for non-academic staff in HEIs. By doing so, they will be better equipped to cope with and adapt to change.

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Authors' contributions

N.E. contributed to the conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing of the original draft and visualisation, writing, review and editing, project administration, validation, resources and funding acquisition.

Y.S., V.L.H. and A.J. contributed towards the data curation. R.V.Z. contributed to the project administration of the study. F.S. supervised the study. R.A. contributed to the writing, review and editing of the manuscript and supervised the study.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study can be made available by the corresponding author, N.E., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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