

Original Article

Teacher Characteristics and Readiness towards Organizational Change in Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change among public elementary school teachers in Mati Central District, Division of the City of Mati. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used with 125 full-time elementary teachers selected from a population of 210 through simple random sampling. Data were collected through adapted standardized survey questionnaires measuring teacher-student interaction characteristics, characteristics related to the teaching profession, humanistic and justice characteristics, and readiness towards organizational change across cynicism, fear and uncertainty, and acceptance of change. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used. Results showed that teacher characteristics were rated very high overall ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.61$), with humanistic and justice characteristics obtaining the highest domain mean ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.65$). Readiness towards organizational change was moderate overall ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.85$), although acceptance of change was very high ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.78$). Teacher characteristics had a strong positive correlation with readiness towards organizational change ($r = .71$, $R^2 = .50$, $p = .000$). Regression analysis showed that the three teacher-characteristic domains significantly predicted readiness, with humanistic and justice characteristics showing the strongest standardized effect. The results highlight the relevance of relational, professional, and ethical teacher qualities in school change contexts.

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1. Introduction

Organizational change has become a persistent feature of contemporary school life. Public elementary schools face curriculum revisions, accountability measures, digital shifts, resource adjustments, leadership transitions, and new expectations from communities and education systems. These changes do not succeed through policy issuance alone. They depend on the degree to which teachers understand the purpose of change, believe in its value, possess the confidence to act on it, and sustain effort despite uncertainty. In this sense, readiness towards organizational change is not only a managerial concern but also a professional and psychological condition that shapes the pace, depth, and quality of school reform.

Readiness for change is often described as a multidimensional state that includes beliefs about the appropriateness of change, the capacity to implement it, leadership support, and the personal or collective value attached to the change. Holt et al. (2007) framed readiness as a construct that reflects whether individuals believe that change is needed, feasible, supported, and beneficial. Alipio (2020) further argued that organizational readiness becomes stronger when members share commitment to change and perceive collective capability to carry it out. In schools, Wang et al. (2023) extended this view by emphasizing the interaction between individual readiness and organizational readiness, where teacher beliefs, leadership, efficacy, and institutional conditions combine to influence the acceptance of school improvement initiatives.

Teachers occupy a central position in this process because they translate formal reforms into classroom practice. Their readiness influences how new procedures, pedagogies, assessment practices, or school policies reach learners. When teachers approach change with confidence and openness, reforms have greater chance to move from written directives to everyday routines. When they approach change through cynicism, fear, or uncertainty, the same reforms may remain symbolic, partial, or short-lived. Oreg et al. (2011) showed that reactions to organizational change include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses shaped by both personal characteristics and change-process conditions. In education, this means that implementation should not treat teachers as neutral recipients of reform but as professionals whose values, relationships, identities, and perceived competence influence their response.

Teacher characteristics represent a broad set of attributes that include relational conduct, professional commitment, instructional responsibility, ethical orientation, fairness, empathy, and openness to growth. Yatan and Muezzin (2016) organized these characteristics into teacher-student interaction characteristics, characteristics related to the teaching profession, and humanistic and justice characteristics. This framework is useful for school-change research because it connects the interpersonal, professional, and ethical dimensions of teaching. It also recognizes that teacher quality

cannot be reduced to technical competence. Teachers who relate well with students, uphold professional standards, and act with fairness and empathy may also possess dispositions that support cooperation during institutional transition.

The teacher-student interaction dimension is especially relevant because reform is experienced in the classroom through relationships. Positive teacher-student relationships strengthen participation, trust, emotional safety, and academic engagement. Aldrup et al. (2022) found that teacher empathy is closely linked to the quality of teacher-student interactions and student outcomes, while Tao et al. (2022) reported that perceived teacher support relates to academic achievement partly through student engagement. Li and Xue (2023) likewise found that teacher-student relationships and positive teacher behavior are among the external factors associated with student engagement, and Vargas-Madriz et al. (2024) reported a positive association between teacher support and school engagement. These findings suggest that relationally responsive teachers may be better positioned to interpret change in ways that protect learning continuity and student support.

Characteristics related to the teaching profession also matter. Professionalism includes commitment to instructional quality, responsibility, organized practice, confidence, and willingness to improve. OECD (2022) emphasized that teacher professionalism in modern systems includes continuing professional learning, collaboration, autonomy, career growth, and engagement with evidence. Gordon et al. (2023) added that teacher self-efficacy plays an important role during curriculum and assessment reform, and that professional learning is necessary to sustain efficacy during periods of change. These insights point to a likely link between teachers' professional characteristics and their capacity to accept institutional reforms without losing confidence in their role.

Humanistic and justice characteristics are equally important in public education because change may be perceived as fair or threatening depending on how it affects people. Teachers who value fairness, empathy, equity, and respect may be more inclined to support reforms that appear to benefit learners and the school community. These characteristics also have implications for trust, because teachers are more likely to support reforms when they believe that change respects human dignity and distributes benefits and burdens fairly. The theory of planned behavior offers one explanation for this pattern: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control help shape intention and action (Ajzen, 1991). Social cognitive theory offers a complementary view by showing how personal factors, behavior, and environment interact to shape human agency (Bandura, 1986). From these perspectives, teacher characteristics may shape change readiness by influencing beliefs about ability, responsibility, and expected outcomes.

The present study addresses a context-specific gap in the literature. While research has discussed organizational readiness, teacher support, self-efficacy, and educational reform, fewer studies have examined how the three domains of teacher characteristics jointly relate to readiness towards organizational change among public elementary teachers in a local Philippine district. The issue is important because school

reform in local contexts often occurs under resource constraints, workload pressure, uneven communication, and varying levels of teacher participation. A district-level analysis can provide empirical evidence that school leaders may use to design change strategies that match the professional and relational profile of teachers.

This study therefore examined teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change among public elementary school teachers in Mati Central District, Division of the City of Mati. It assessed teacher characteristics in terms of teacher-student interaction characteristics, characteristics related to the teaching profession, and humanistic and justice characteristics. It also assessed readiness towards organizational change in terms of attitudes of opposition due to cynicism, attitudes of opposition due to fear and uncertainty, and attitude of acceptance of change. Finally, it tested the relationship between the main variables and identified which teacher-characteristic domains significantly influenced readiness towards organizational change.

2. Methodology

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change among public elementary school teachers. The design was appropriate because the study aimed to describe the level of each variable and determine the statistical relationship between naturally occurring teacher characteristics and change-readiness responses without manipulating any condition. The study was conducted in Mati Central District, Division of the City of Mati, during school year 2025-2026. The respondents were full-time public elementary school classroom teachers who had completed at least three consecutive years of teaching experience. Teachers assigned to non-teaching or administrative roles, including principals, department heads, and coordinators, were excluded, as were teachers with less than three years of teaching experience and those on extended leave during the period of data collection.

The population consisted of 210 public elementary school teachers. Using Slovin's formula at a 0.05 margin of error, the required sample was computed as 125 teachers. Simple random sampling was used to give each qualified teacher an equal chance of selection. Qualified teachers were assigned numerical codes, and a computer-generated randomization process was applied to identify the final respondents. This procedure reduced selection bias and supported the representativeness of the sample within the district context.

Data were collected through an adapted survey questionnaire composed of two main parts. The first part measured teacher characteristics using the Teacher Characteristics Scale adapted from Yatan and Muezzin (2016). In this study, the scale contained 36 items across three domains: teacher-student interaction characteristics, characteristics related to the teaching profession, and humanistic and justice characteristics. The second part measured readiness towards organizational change using a scale adapted from Jo and Hong (2023). In this study, the readiness

scale contained 41 items across three domains: attitudes of opposition due to cynicism, attitudes of opposition due to fear and uncertainty, and attitude of acceptance of change. Responses for both parts used a five-point Likert scale from 5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree. Mean scores were interpreted through the following ranges: 4.20 to 5.00 = very high, 3.40 to 4.19 = high, 2.60 to 3.39 = moderate, 1.80 to 2.59 = low, and 1.00 to 1.79 = very low.

Content validity was established through expert review by three specialists in academic leadership, organizational behavior, and educator development. The validators examined the clarity, relevance, and alignment of items with the constructs and research objectives. Their comments were used to refine wording, response structure, and item alignment before full administration. A pilot test was conducted with 30 teachers from Paterno Madanlo Matiao Elementary School to check face validity, clarity, sequencing, and ease of interpretation. Reliability analysis showed strong internal consistency for both instruments. The Teacher Characteristics Scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .954 for 36 items, while the readiness towards Organizational Change Scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .974 for 41 items.

The researcher secured the required institutional permissions before data collection. Coordination was made with the Schools Division Office and concerned school heads. Respondents received information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the expected time needed to answer the questionnaire, and the safeguards for privacy and confidentiality. Written informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration. No names, school identifiers linked to responses, or personal contact details were used in the analysis. Responses were coded and stored securely, and the data were used only for academic research. Respondents were informed that they could refuse to participate, skip items that caused discomfort, or withdraw without professional consequence.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were used to describe teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change across all domains and items. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the strength and direction of the relationship between overall teacher characteristics and overall readiness towards organizational change. Multiple linear regression was used to identify which domains of teacher characteristics significantly influenced readiness towards organizational change. The level of significance was set at .05. The null hypotheses tested were that no significant relationship existed between teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change, and that no domain of teacher characteristics significantly influenced readiness towards organizational change.

3. Results

The summary of teacher characteristics showed an overall mean of 4.27 (SD = 0.61), classified as very high (Table 1). Humanistic and justice characteristics had the highest domain mean (M = 4.37, SD = 0.65), followed by teacher-student interaction

characteristics ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.63$) and characteristics related to the teaching profession ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.56$).

Table 1. Summary of teacher characteristics in public elementary schools.

Domain	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Teacher-Student Interaction Characteristics	0.63	4.25	Very High
Characteristics Related to the Teaching Profession	0.56	4.20	Very High
Humanistic and Justice Characteristics	0.65	4.37	Very High
Overall	0.61	4.27	Very High

The summary of readiness towards organizational change showed an overall mean of 3.23 ($SD = 0.85$), classified as moderate (Table 2). Attitude of acceptance of change had the highest domain mean ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.78$), followed by attitudes of opposition due to fear and uncertainty ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.89$) and attitudes of opposition due to cynicism ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.88$).

Table 2. Level of research skills among student journalists.

Domain	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Attitudes of Opposition due to Cynicism	0.88	2.64	Moderate
Attitudes of Opposition due to Fear and Uncertainty	0.89	2.71	Moderate
Attitude of Acceptance of Change	0.78	4.33	Very High
Overall	0.85	3.23	Moderate

Pearson correlation analysis in Table 3 showed a strong positive relationship between teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change, $r = .71$, $R^2 = .50$, $p = .000$. Based on the stated decision rule, H_{01} was rejected.

Table 3. Correlation results.

Variables	r	p-value
Teacher characteristics	0.71	0.000
Readiness towards organizational change		

Multiple regression analysis in Table 3 showed that the model was statistically significant, $R = .79$, $R^2 = .62$, adjusted $R^2 = .615$, SE of estimate = .52683, $F(3, 121) = 74.25$, $p = .000$. Humanistic and justice characteristics had the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = .43$), followed by teacher-student interaction characteristics ($\beta = .41$) and characteristics related to the teaching profession ($\beta = .36$).

Table 4. Regression results.

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	P-value
Constant	1.36	0.41		3.32	0.001
Teacher-student interaction characteristics	0.44	0.39	0.41	4.18	0.000
Characteristics related to the teaching profession	0.38	0.35	0.36	3.66	0.000
Humanistic and justice characteristics	0.46	0.40	0.43	4.29	0.000

4. Discussion

The results show that public elementary school teachers in the study demonstrated very high teacher characteristics overall. This pattern means that the respondents rated themselves strongly on relational, professional, and ethical qualities that are central to the teaching role. The highest domain, humanistic and justice characteristics, points to the prominence of fairness, empathy, equal learning opportunity, and care in the respondents' professional self-perception. This aligns with Yaratan and Muezzin's (2016) view that teacher characteristics must include not only technical or instructional qualities but also humanistic and justice-oriented attributes. It also supports Aldrup et al. (2022), who emphasized empathy as a meaningful correlate of high-quality teacher-student interaction and learner outcomes.

The very high level of teacher-student interaction characteristics also deserves attention. The items with the highest means involved warm relationships, participation with students, calling students by name, and the expression of positive feelings. These results indicate that the respondents perceived their classroom interactions as supportive and personal. This is important because teacher support and teacher-student relationships have been associated with student engagement and achievement in meta-analytic evidence. Tao et al. (2022) found that perceived teacher support relates to achievement partly through engagement, while Li and Xue (2023) identified teacher-student relationships and positive teacher behavior as relevant external factors associated with learning participation. In the context of change, such relational competence may help teachers maintain student-centered practice while they adjust to new policies or school expectations.

Characteristics related to the teaching profession were also very high, although this was the lowest of the three teacher-characteristic domains. The domain included knowledge of the profession, professional insight, punctual and proper work, organized practice, interest in self-development, classroom-management flexibility, and use of effective teaching methods. Its high rating suggests that respondents perceived themselves as professionally committed and capable. OECD (2022) argued that modern teacher professionalism involves autonomy, status, collaboration, continuing professional learning, and engagement with research. The present results are consistent with that broader notion because the teachers did not only rate

themselves as caring, but also as knowledgeable, organized, and interested in professional growth.

The results on readiness towards organizational change were more mixed. The overall level was moderate, but acceptance of change was very high. This means that the respondents reported strong recognition of the value of change, particularly the idea that change provides personal growth, benefits employees, creates opportunities, and requires deeper knowledge of organizational processes. This finding is compatible with readiness theory, where perceived appropriateness, personal valence, and implementation capacity are key components of change support (Holt et al., 2007). It also reflects Jo and Hong's (2023) view that readiness is best treated as a multidimensional construct because individuals may simultaneously accept the value of change while still hold reservations about its process or effects.

The moderate level of cynicism-based opposition and fear-and-uncertainty-based opposition indicates that positive acceptance did not remove all forms of resistance. Oreg et al. (2011) noted that responses to change include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. The present results illustrate that point clearly: teachers can believe change has value while also report moderate concern about symbolic implementation, lack of information, job insecurity, conflict, and loss of control. Armenakis et al. (1993) argued that readiness needs deliberate creation, not simple announcement. Thus, the coexistence of very high acceptance and moderate opposition suggests that change managers in schools should not assume that favorable attitudes alone are enough. Teachers may support the purpose of change but still need clear communication, participation, reassurance, and procedural fairness.

The strong positive correlation between teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change provides empirical support for the assumption that teacher qualities relate to change response. With $r = .71$ and $R^2 = .50$, the results show that better-developed teacher characteristics were associated with higher readiness towards organizational change. This result is consistent with social cognitive theory because it reflects the reciprocal interaction of personal attributes, behavior, and environment (Bandura, 1986). Teachers who perceive themselves as capable, fair, relational, and professionally committed may interpret organizational change as manageable and meaningful. It also fits the theory of planned behavior, where attitudes, perceived control, and normative beliefs influence intention and action (Ajzen, 1991). Strong teacher characteristics may strengthen perceived control and positive attitudes toward school reform.

The regression results add precision to the correlational finding. Together, the three teacher-characteristic domains explained 62% of the variance in readiness towards organizational change. This is a substantial proportion for school-based survey research and shows that the domains had meaningful predictive value. Humanistic and justice characteristics had the strongest standardized effect, followed by teacher-student interaction characteristics and characteristics related to the teaching profession. This order suggests that in the local public elementary context, ethical and people-centered qualities may be especially important for change readiness. Change

initiatives often require trust, fairness, empathy, and a belief that reforms will not harm people. Teachers who strongly value these qualities may be more prepared to support reforms that they perceive as consistent with student welfare and institutional fairness.

The strongest role of humanistic and justice characteristics also has leadership implications. A change process that does not attend to fairness, voice, and dignity may weaken the very domain most closely linked with readiness. Weiner (2009) emphasized that organizational readiness involves shared commitment and collective capability. Wang et al. (2023) similarly argued that school-change readiness involves the dynamic interaction of individual and organizational conditions. The present study suggests that school leaders can strengthen this interaction by framing change around human benefit, equitable process, transparent rationale, and shared responsibility. When change is communicated as a human-centered educational improvement rather than a compliance exercise, teachers with strong humanistic and justice orientations may become active carriers of reform.

Teacher-student interaction characteristics also significantly predicted readiness. This finding is theoretically coherent because teachers who build warm, respectful, and responsive relationships with learners may already practice flexibility, perspective taking, and emotional regulation in daily classroom life. These same capacities can support adaptation during institutional change. Aldrup et al. (2022) and Tao et al. (2022) both show that relational teacher qualities are consequential for educational outcomes. The present study extends this relevance from student outcomes to organizational outcomes by showing that relational characteristics also matter for readiness towards change.

Characteristics related to the teaching profession had the lowest standardized coefficient but remained significant. This means that professional commitment, knowledge, organization, self-development, and instructional responsibility still contributed to readiness after the other domains were considered. Gordon et al. (2023) found that self-efficacy matters during reform and that professional learning helps sustain teachers during change. This study's results are consistent with that evidence: teachers who report strong professional characteristics may feel more able to understand new demands, adjust practice, and participate in reform. However, because this domain had a lower beta than humanistic and relational domains, professional capacity alone may not fully explain readiness. The emotional and ethical dimensions of teaching appear to be equally, and perhaps more, important in the local context.

Taken together, the results support the view that successful school change depends on the interaction of teacher dispositions and organizational conditions. Lewin's change model, as critically revisited by Cummings et al. (2016), reminds scholars that change involves more than movement from one structure to another. It requires preparation, transition, and stabilization. In this study, teacher characteristics appear to function as part of the preparation for change because they shape the way teachers receive, evaluate, and respond to reform. Strong teacher characteristics can support readiness, but school leaders must still create conditions that reduce cynicism, clarify uncertainty, and transform acceptance into sustained practice.

The study contributes to educational management by providing district-level evidence that teacher development and change management should be planned together. Professional development programs should not focus only on technical skills or policy orientation. They should also cultivate ethical judgment, empathy, fairness, student-centered interaction, reflective practice, and professional confidence. Such an approach can reduce the gap between teacher readiness and reform implementation. It also suggests that leaders should monitor resistance not as defiance but as information about fear, mistrust, communication gaps, or perceived unfairness. A change process that respects teacher characteristics is more likely to secure genuine readiness than one that relies only on directives.

5. Conclusion

This study concluded that public elementary school teachers in Mati Central District demonstrated very high teacher characteristics, with the strongest ratings in humanistic and justice characteristics, followed by teacher-student interaction characteristics and characteristics related to the teaching profession. Readiness towards organizational change was moderate overall because very high acceptance of change existed alongside moderate opposition due to cynicism and fear or uncertainty. The results also confirmed a strong positive relationship between teacher characteristics and readiness towards organizational change. Regression analysis showed that all three teacher-characteristic domains significantly influenced readiness, with humanistic and justice characteristics showing the strongest effect.

The findings indicate that teacher readiness for organizational change is not separate from the human, relational, and professional qualities of teachers. Schools that seek smoother reform implementation should strengthen these qualities through professional development, values-based leadership, transparent communication, teacher participation, and support structures that reduce uncertainty. Future research may test the model in other districts, include qualitative interviews to explain teachers' change experiences, and examine how school leadership, communication quality, and organizational trust mediate the relationship between teacher characteristics and change readiness.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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