

ARTICLE

EXPRESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND JOB ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEES' READINESS FOR CHANGE (CASE STUDY: EMPLOYEES OF TEHRAN CUSTOMS)

Masoud Pourkiani¹, Maryam Tanabandeh^{2*}

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

²PhD student, Department of Management, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

ABSTRACT

Background: The present research aims to investigate the relationship between organizational learning and job engagement with the mediating role of employees' readiness for change.. Methods: The statistical population in the present research includes 230 of the employees of Tehran's Customs organization. The sampling method of the present research is a simple random method and by using Cochran's formula, the sample volume is equal to 144 persons. The data necessary for the present research has been collected by using a questionnaire, the validity of which was tested. In order to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaires, content validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were used and the reliability coefficient for the organizational learning questionnaire was calculated to be 0.88, 0.86 for the job engagement questionnaire and 0.87 for the readiness for change questionnaire. In this study, the structural relationship model was used to analyze the data. In order to analyze the data and to test the hypotheses and other analyses of this study, the statistical software LISREL was used. Results: In general, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning, job engagement and employees readiness for change.

INTRODUCTION

KEY WORDS
Organizational Learning,
Job Engagement,
Readiness for Change

In the 21st century, organizations face change constantly. In order for us to reinforce them to effectively compete in the competitive markets, the key point is for them to know how to learn and produce new knowledge. Organizational learning is a determining factor in the long term performance and survival of the organization [1]. and it is an effective factor for organizational success and a source for achieving competitive advantage [2]. A successful organization in the evolving and complex world of this century is an organization that can direct the process of learning and acquiring knowledge by using data technology mechanisms towards group and collective knowledge and create a substrate and a space in which the employees share their subjective knowledge which is the result of their own personal experience and savings and those that can try to create a new competitive advantage and ultimately wealth by developing and integrating them. The need of the organizations for compatibility with environmental changes has made the concept of organizational learning very important and its importance is increasing daily [3]. Studies show that the more it is added to people's organizational learning ability, the more an organization can adapt to the changing environment. Therefore, survival and growth of the organizations in the current world which is full of change require the ability for an on time and proper reaction to the successive environmental changes and only the organizations that focus and put emphasis on organizational learning can predict environmental changes and necessities on time and continue their survival in the changing environment. Therefore, one of the undeniable necessities for being successful in making these changes is the presence of readiness for change in the organization. The concept of readiness for change comply with the thoughts of Levine about exiting the state of being frozen and it is indicative of the individual approaches which occur during a process of change[4]. Individuals are important factors in guiding the process of organizational change and are essential for each effective change. Beliefs, ideas, assumptions and approaches of the individuals are challenged and clarified. Creation of a continuous change inside the organizations requires a change in the individuals of an organization which forms the basic axis of each job system. On the other hand, organizations, in order for the survival of the knowledge-oriented, valuable and talented employees, shall pay a special attention to another important and positive component that is job engagement. Job engagement is considered as an important and positive component in the health of the employees. The important issue of the progression of the organizations is how they increase the levels of engagement of their employees. By creating job engagement, a kind of unity and cohesion is created between the employees of the organization which means reaching results that are desirable for the person and the organization. These results for the employees are: positive approaches associated with job, probability of lower burnout, desirable performance, acquiring job resources and individual resources especially self-sufficiency and all of these results are directly or indirectly of advantage for their organization as well [5]. Therefore, the purpose of the present research is to express the relationship between organizational learning and job engagement with the mediating role of employees' readiness for change.

*Corresponding Author
Email: tm_s56@yahoo.com

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RESEARCH'S LITRATURE

Organizational learning

It seems that the word "organizational learning" has been used in 1963 for the first time by March in their preliminary study on behavioral aspects of organizational decision making [6]. But some believe that the attention university assemblies pay to how the organizations learn is traced back to 1950 [7]. Regardless of the exact date of the beginning of the organizational learning discussion, this issue was not focused on much until late 1970s. that was when a number of theorists focused their activities on organizational learning [8]. Although research activities on this issue continued in the 1980s, in 1990s the issue of organizational learning was only one of the prominent issues in various areas of management studies such as production management and strategy and from that date forward, the discussion of organizational learning was overshadowed by new management issues including the issue of learning organizations. Given the definitions above, it can be said that organizational learning is not a fixed condition or a limited goal but it is a continuous process of adaptation with the environmental condition and evolution during which the groups inside an organization are encouraged so that the skills, knowledge and work regarding the target would be developed [7]. Argyris and Schon (1978) have divided the learning process into three categories single-loop learning, double-loop learning and deuterio-learning. In the opinion of Figueiredo (2002), learning in the organizations has four secondary processes of acquiring knowledge outside of the organization, inside of the organization, knowledge generalization and encryption and development of knowledge. Choe (2004) refers that the main facilitators of organizational learning are interaction and communication between group members, job rotation and experience, interaction and communication including state, direction and frequency of the current of the information between the group members and job group and experience refers to the capacity of real exchange of the work between the members [9]. Some of the researchers put emphasis on the point that organizational learning is the main component of the learning organization and in order to do it, the factors associated with organizational culture such as entrepreneurship, innovation and awareness of the market and factors associated with organizational atmosphere such as dynamic structure, facilitator leadership, unfocused strategic planning and presence of knowledge-oriented human force seem necessary [10]. Also the results of previous studies have shown that presence of knowledge and information has a positive effect on organizational learning [9]. The term organizational learning apparently refers to individual learning in the organization but organizational learning mostly refers to group learning or learning at a level of the organization. Individual learning is done through studying, interview, recognition, experiencing, exercising and developing the effective mental models in mind; but organizational learning occurs when a group learns to interact, share knowledge and act as a group in such a way that the combined capacity of the group will grow and they will achieve the ability of perception and doing effective work [11]. In today's varying and competitive world, the organizations can continue surviving or claim to be superior so that they would be able to exploit the capabilities, commitment and capacity of learning of the individuals at all organizational levels and in other words, be a learning organization [12].

Job engagement

In most studies job engagement is introduced as an instance of positive aspects of work and today the owners of organizations expect their employees to be very active and show creativity in their work and be responsible for their responsible improvement and try to do their tasks with high quality. Therefore, they need employees who feel loyal and energetic and are attracted to their work which means that they are engaged with their works [13]. Job engagement, as one of the dimensions of well-being in the work environment, is indicative of a active and positive feelings which is known as a high level of work with interest and pride and in other words, it is associated with a progressive and humanistic psychological purpose [14]. Engaged employees become one completely and consider the organization their identity and consider the failure or success of the organization as their own. They are not angered when it comes to doing their work but they take a step towards doing impossible things and reinforce each other at times of difficulty and crisis to use their power one more time [15]. In the recent years, job engagement has attracted special kind of attention. Job engagement is important because job is considered as an inclusive and effective component of welfare which not only affects people's quality of life but their mental and physical health as well. Most people have to work to make a living which makes working an obligation rather than a choice. Nonetheless, despite the lack of this apparent choice, people's experiences regarding the work are very different and work has been considered as a repeated and homogenous process and even a manifestation of individual identity [16]. Today's organizations need energetic and engaged employees who are very interested in their jobs. Generally, engaged employees are completely drawn to their jobs and do their tasks desirably [17].

Readiness for change

The purpose of organizational change is to become compatible with the environment and to improve the performance [18]. Madison, et al. (2006) observed that change at the level of organization cannot be completed without people and people don't change unless they are ready for it. Robert (2008) and Fredrick Nicoles define change as: a thing which is moved from one place to another (movement from a problematic situation to a problem solving situation). As Romanly and Tashman (1994) have stated, change happens in 5 domains of the activity of the organization: organizational culture, strategy, strategy

through main competitive, technological and social changes in the environment [19]. Numerous factors can play a role in the success or lack of success in the implementation of the planned changes. One of the most important of these factors plays a critical role in executing the change process is the employees' approach to change [20]. Thus, this factor is seen as basic factor in the literature of readiness for change. Approaches are the value judgements of people which are obtained from various types of information which vary in terms of quality (emotional and cognitive). In the opinion of Armenakis, et al. (1993) approach to change refers to belief and tendency of the employees to change [21]. Employees must believe that the organization needs to change and that they can take the responsibility of making these changes positively. Readiness for change has been studied as the most common positive approach to change. In other words, employees' readiness can be considered as the best manifestation of their positive approach to change. Approximately 90% of the literature of approach to change ends with readiness for change by resisting it [22]. The term readiness is used both against behaviors resisting change and behaviors supporting it [21]. It is obvious that people's responses to change are different; some consider it a useful factor and consider it valuable and support it; whereas some others consider it a threat and resist it with negative reactions ([23]. Paige, et al. (2005) have believed readiness for change as the extent to which employees have a positive approach to and view of change and also the extent to which the employees believe that such change probably has positive consequences for them and for the organization [24]. Huy (1999) defines readiness for change as the extent to which a person is ready to do organizational activities [25]. Readiness occurs when the environment, structure and approach of the members of the organization are in such a way that they accept the change happening soon [26]. Dunham, et al. (1989) have defined their views about readiness for change as follows: their view generally includes person's recognition regarding change, emotional reactions to change and behavioral tendencies to change. Cognitive reaction to change shows the extent to which that person perceives the occurrence of change and its goal in making profits for the organization and its members. Emotional reaction to change shows the extent to which the person enjoys change in the organization. Behavioral tendency to change is the extent to which the person makes efforts to support change or start it [27].

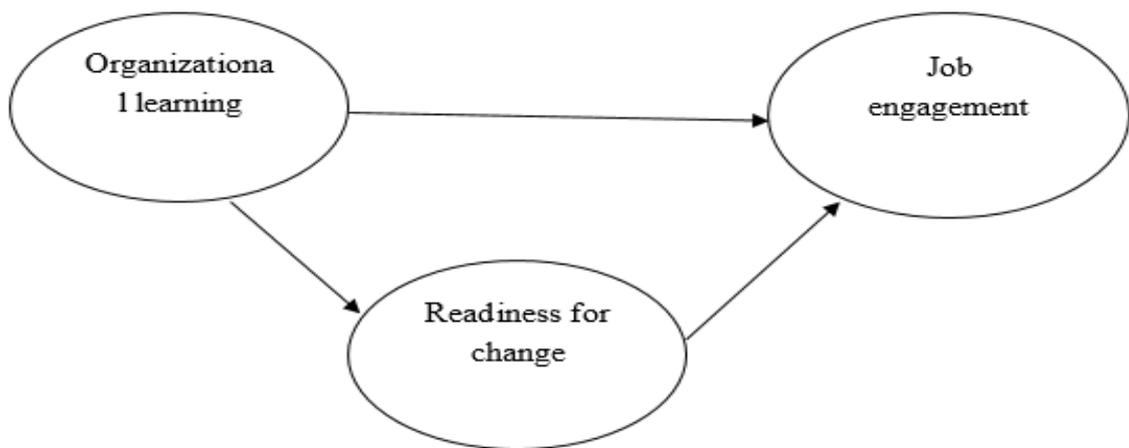


Fig. 1: conceptual model

Research's hypotheses

- 1-There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and readiness for change.
- 2-There is a significant relationship between readiness for change and job engagement.
- 3-There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement.
- 4-There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement with the mediation of readiness for change.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data required for the present research has been collected through using a questionnaire the validity of which was tested. The researcher has used a questionnaire with 32 questions all of which are questions with a 5-option Likert spectrum to collect data. This data has been analyzed by the LISREL software. The statistical population in the present research includes 230 of the employees of Tehran's Customs. The sampling method of the present research is a simple random method and the sample volume was calculated to be equal to 140 persons by using the Cochran's formula. The data required for the present research has been collected through using a questionnaire the validity of which was tested. In order to determine the validity of the questionnaires the content validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were used and the reliability coefficient for the Gomez, et al. (2005) organizational learning questionnaire was calculated to be 0.88, it was 0.86 for Shofley, et al. (2006) job engagement questionnaire and 0.87 for the readiness for Dunham, et al. (1989) change questionnaire. In the present study, after drawing the analytical model of the research based on the data, through Path diagram program the measurement model was obtained by running the Perlis program of the LISREL software. In this model, by using B coefficients and by using a t-test the hypotheses were tested. In addition, the fitting indexes of the model were calculated by running the Perlis program for the required model.

Data analysis

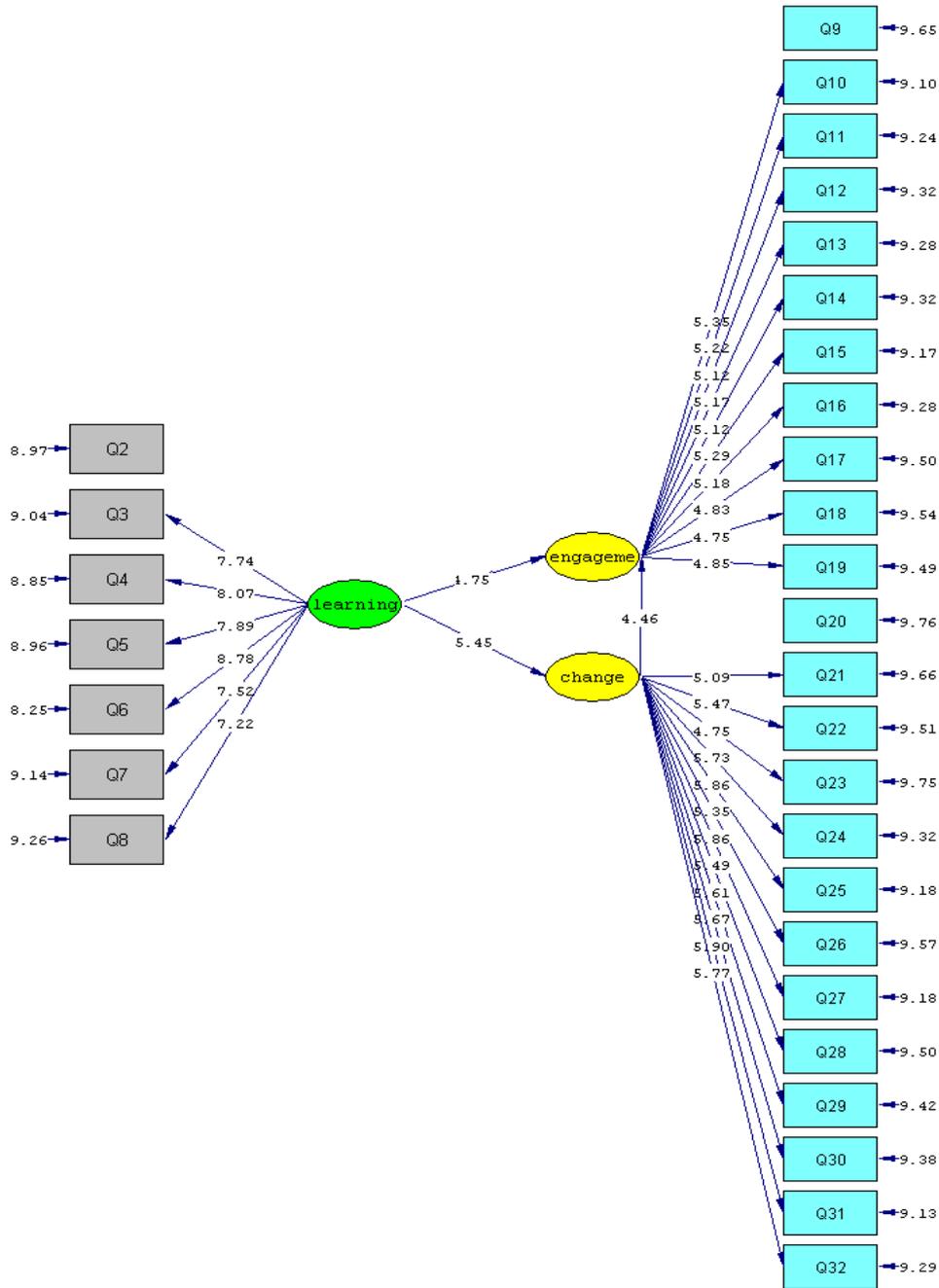
Table 1: Fitness indicators of research's model

Fitting index	Standard values	Estimated values
Degrees of freedom	----	432
Chi-Square	Due to the dependency on the sample volume, this is not a suitable criterion	1142.70
RMSEA	0.05	0.091
NFI	0.90	0.90
NNFI	0.90	0.95
CFI	0.90	0.96
RMR	0.05	0.057
GFI	0.90	0.75
AGFI	0.90	0.71

As it is seen in [table 1], the indexes of the rate of compliance of the goodness of the fitting are relatively acceptable.

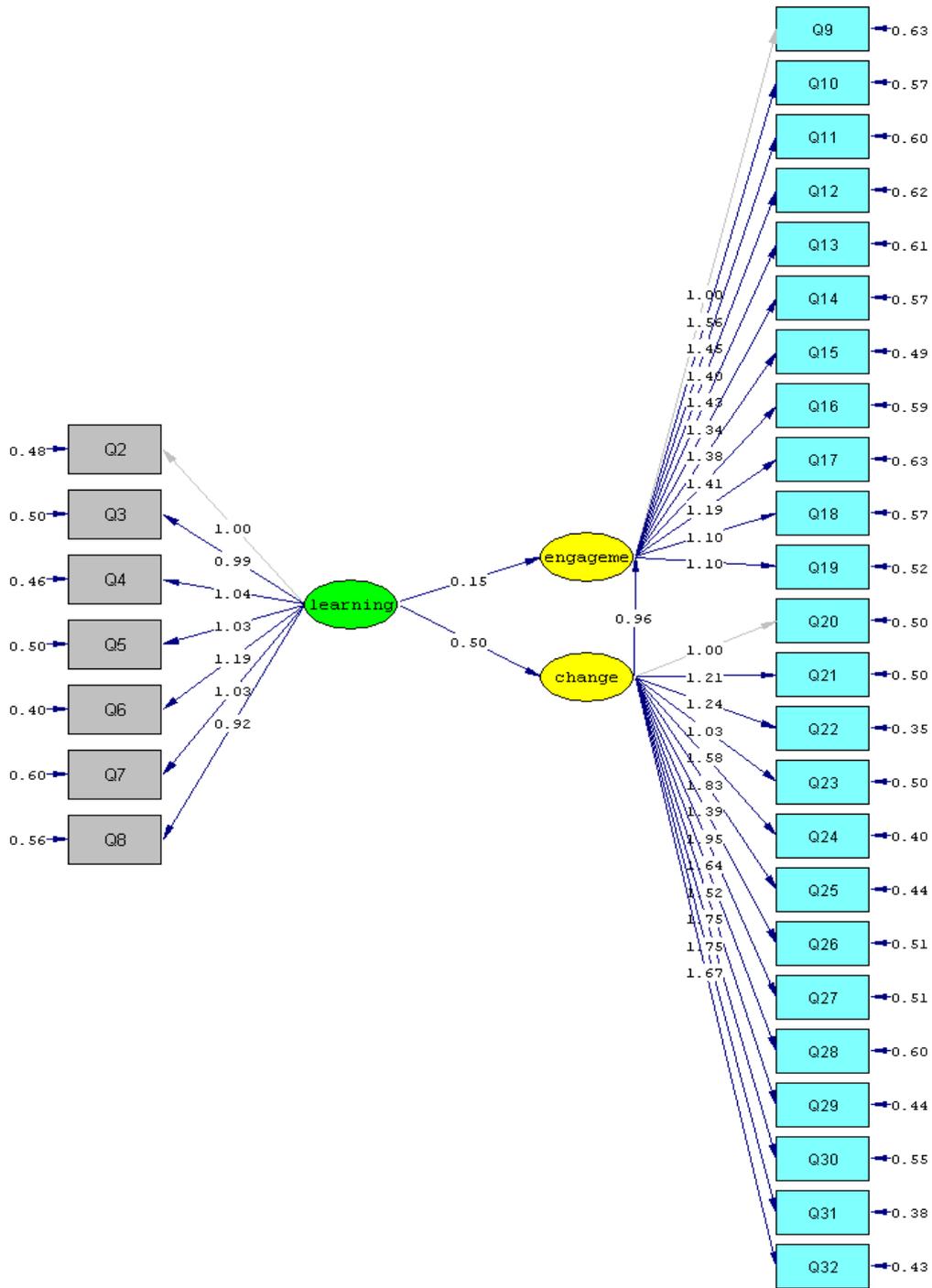
Testing the structural model

In this study, the confirmatory factor analysis method was used for testing the measurement model and path analysis for drawing the structural model of research. The two following graphs show the overall models which are the output of the LISREL software which simultaneously includes the structural model and the measurement model and as the study goes on, we will separate them in details and we will review them.



Chi-Square=1142.70, df=432, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.091

Fig. 2: Base model with T value



Chi-Square=1142.70, df=432, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.091

Fig. 3: Base model with rout coefficient

RESULTS

The first hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and readiness for change.

Table 2: the results of first hypothesis's test

Hypothesis	Coefficient	t-value	Result
1- There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and readiness for change	0.50	5.45	Accepted

According to the results shown in [table 2], the effect of the independent variable on the dependent one has been supported by the data and the path that related these two variables together is a positive and significant one (it is significant at the error level of 5 percent) (t=5.45, $\beta_{22}=0.50$); therefore, with the confidence level of 95%, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and readiness for change.

The second hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between readiness for change and job engagement.

Table 3: the results of second hypothesis's test

Hypothesis	Coefficient	t-value	Result
2- There is a significant relationship between readiness for change and job engagement.	0.96	4.46	Accepted

According to the results shown in table (3), the effect of the independent variable on the dependent one has been supported by the data and the path that related these two variables together is a positive and significant one (it is significant at the error level of 5 percent) (t=4.46, $\beta_{22}=0.96$); therefore, with the confidence level of 95%, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between readiness for change and job engagement.

The third hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement.

Table 4: the results of third hypothesis's test

Hypothesis	Coefficient	t-value	Result
3- There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement.	0.15	1.75	Accepted

According to the results shown in [table 4], the effect of the independent variable on the dependent one has been supported by the data and the path that related these two variables together is a positive and significant one (it is significant at the error level of 5 percent) (t=1.75, $\beta_{22}=0.15$); therefore, with the confidence level of 95%, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement.

The fourth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement with the mediation of readiness for change.

Table 5: the results of fourth hypothesis's test

Hypothesis	Coefficient	Statistic t	Results
4-There is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement with the mediation of readiness for change.	$0.50 \times 0.96 = 0.48$		accepted

The result of testing the hypothesis 4 is reviewed by considering the information presented in [table 5]. Reviewing the mediating role of readiness for change between organizational learning and job engagement is done in such a way that if the direct effect of organizational learning on readiness for change is confirmed as well as the direct effect of readiness for change on job engagement, the mediating effect of readiness for change between organizational learning and job engagement is also confirmed. The path coefficient of the endogenous latent variable readiness for change is 0.50 and with the t-value being equal to 5.45 at the error level of 0.05 with the confidence of 0.95%, the required statistic is significant

and the path coefficient of the endogenous latent variable job engagement is 0.96 with the t-value being equal to 4.46 at the error level of 0.05 with the confidence of 0.95%, the required statistic is significant. Therefore, the effect of the mediating role of readiness for change between organizational learning and job engagement is equal to $0.50 \times 0.96 = 0.48$ and what the researcher claims is confirmed.

CONCLUSION

The results of the first hypothesis showed that the rate of the path coefficient between organizational learning and readiness for change is 0.50 and the t-value associated with it is $5.45 > 1.96$ and according to the t-test, with the critical value of 0.05 at the confidence level of 95%, the H_0 can be rejected and therefore the first claim of the researcher has been confirmed and with the confidence of 95%, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and readiness for change.

The results of the second hypothesis showed that the rate of the path coefficient between readiness for change and job engagement is 0.96 and the t-value associated with it is $4.46 > 1.96$ and according to the t-test, with the critical value of 0.05 at the confidence level of 95%, the H_0 can be rejected and therefore the second claim of the researcher has been confirmed and with the confidence of 95%, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between readiness for change and job engagement.

The results of the third hypothesis showed that the rate of the path coefficient between organizational learning and job engagement is 0.50 and the t-value associated with it is $1.75 > 1.96$ and according to the t-test, with the critical value of 0.05 at the confidence level of 95%, the H_0 can be rejected and therefore the third claim of the researcher has been confirmed and with the confidence of 95%, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and job engagement.

The results of the fourth hypothesis showed that the rate of the path coefficient between organizational learning and readiness for change is 0.50 and the t-value associated with it is $5.45 > 1.96$ and the rate of the path coefficient between readiness for change and job engagement is equal to 0.96 and the t-value associated with it is $4.46 > 1.96$ and according to the t-test, with the critical value of 0.05 at the confidence level of 95%, the H_0 can be rejected and therefore the effect of the mediating role of readiness for change between organizational learning and job engagement is equal to $0.50 \times 0.96 = 0.48$ and the fourth claim of the researcher is confirmed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest

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FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None

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