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Relational Leadership and Lecturers' Readiness for Change: A Qualitative Study of Organizational Culture, Support, and Secure Attachment in Higher Education

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Abstract: This qualitative study examines how leadership and organizational dynamics cultivate lecturers' readiness for change in higher education. Drawing on transformational leadership theory, it explores the interconnected influence of leadership style, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support on 20 English-language lecturers in an Israeli college that has recently faced multiple overlapping changes: the national transition to CEFR-aligned instruction, the shift to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the institutional and emotional disruptions caused by wartime conditions. Interview transcripts were analyzed using a thematic content-analysis approach. Findings reveal that lecturers' openness to reform was strengthened by leadership characterized by competence, emotional intelligence, and accessibility; by a communicative and developmental organizational culture; and by perceived institutional care and support. Together, these dimensions fostered a sense of secure attachment to the organization—an underexplored relational mechanism linking leadership and readiness for change. The study contributes to leadership theory by proposing that Attachment Theory offers a valuable interpretive lens for understanding how relational trust and emotional security may support adaptive capacity in educational institutions. Implications are discussed for leaders seeking to sustain reform during crisis and instability through relational, emotionally attuned leadership practices.

Keywords: Higher education reform, lecturer readiness for change, organizational culture, perceived organizational support, transformational leadership.

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Introduction

Effective teaching requires that lecturers respond to ever-changing pedagogical circumstances. Not only do teaching methods change, but technological innovations emerge, environments are altered—precipitated by crises of various kinds—and students themselves change. Contemporary students may differ from earlier cohorts in their use of technology, expectations of learning environments, and preferred forms of educational engagement. Since lecturers may be seen as change agents who implement innovative practices in their classes in response to change, the successful adoption of educational reform is dependent on lecturers' readiness for change and their involvement in this process (Harris, 2003; Meria et al., 2023; Rosari et al., 2025).

Studies in educational and organizational settings have identified several individual and institutional factors associated with readiness for change (Gigliotti et al., 2019; Meria et al., 2023). These include openness to educational reform and ability to adapt to change. These factors are related to lecturers' favorable attitude towards change, which has been shown to be crucial for its effective implementation (Anghelachea & Bențea, 2012; Hamilton, 2018). Lecturers who regard the change positively will display personal responsibility and commitment as agents of change as well as demonstrate a high level of engagement and participation in the reform process (Matthysen & Harris, 2018; Raditya et al., 2021).

Attitudes and involvement may be restated as employees' identification with the transitional process and a proactive approach to executing the change. These are said to be influenced by three key constructs: (1) transformational

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leadership (Moolenaar et al., 2010), (2) communicative and participatory organizational climate (Griffioen & de Jong, 2017; Neill et al., 2020; Vakola, 2013), and (3) perceived organizational support (Gigliotti et al., 2019; Kebede & Wang, 2022; Lestari et al., 2022; Taufikin et al., 2021).

Educational leaders play a central role in cultivating these enabling conditions. Leadership in higher education extends beyond administrative oversight; it involves shaping the relational, cultural, and emotional environment in which faculty members experience and enact change (Shaked, 2024). Leadership may support faculty engagement by strengthening professional learning, teacher self-efficacy, and supportive organizational conditions. In contexts of reform, crisis, or uncertainty, leadership effectiveness depends not only on strategic planning but also on the relational trust, organizational culture, and perceived institutional care that sustain faculty engagement (Day et al., 2016; S. Liu & Hallinger, 2018).

Readiness for change refers to lecturers' willingness and preparedness to accept, support, and actively engage in organizational change. Although previous studies have examined transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support separately, limited research has explored how these factors interact to shape lecturers' readiness for change, particularly within higher education institutions experiencing multiple concurrent reforms and crises.

Similar to academic institutions around the world, Israeli tertiary EFL (English as a Foreign Language) education has undergone a number of changes in the past five years that enable examination of the factors influencing lecturers' readiness for change. Among these is the transition from exclusively teaching reading comprehension of academic articles to incorporating four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) aligned with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). Other changes were precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced English studies online, replacing in-person teaching (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Additionally, since October 2023, Israel has been undergoing adversities of war, which disrupted the routine course of learning and teaching and necessitated adaptations in teaching methods (Dopelt & Houminer-Klepar, 2024).

The Israeli tertiary EFL context provides a unique opportunity to examine lecturers' readiness for change because several major reforms and external disruptions—including curriculum reform, the transition to emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing consequences of the October 2023 war—occurred within a relatively short period. This qualitative study therefore investigates how transformational leadership, department culture, and perceived organizational support interact to influence lecturers' readiness for change in this context. By examining lecturers' lived experiences, the study extends existing research by demonstrating how these organizational and relational factors operate collectively during periods of sustained educational uncertainty.

Literature Review

In the dynamic landscape of educational institutions, the successful implementation of change depends largely on the readiness of educators to embrace reforms. Several key factors influence lecturers' attitudes toward organizational change, including transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support. Although these constructs are often discussed separately in the literature, they share important relational characteristics and may operate together in shaping readiness for change.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory offers a useful theoretical analogy for interpreting these findings. Rather than suggesting that lecturers possess particular attachment styles, it is used as a conceptual lens for understanding how organizational relationships may foster relational security during periods of change. Originally developed to explain how early caregiver-child relationships shape internal working models of the self and others (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969F), the theory was later expanded to include disorganized attachment (Main & Solomon, 1990) and has subsequently been applied to adult relationships and organizational settings, where leaders and social institutions may function as attachment figures and sources of psychological security (Mayseless & Popper, 2007). In organizations, leaders and work environments may function as sources of psychological security, influencing employees' trust, engagement, responses to uncertainty, and openness to change (Harms, 2011; Mayseless, 2010; Yip et al., 2018).

Viewed through this lens, the findings suggest that transformational leadership, a collaborative organizational culture, and perceived organizational support collectively fostered a sense of relational security that encouraged openness to change. Participants consistently described feeling trusted, listened to, appreciated, and professionally supported, experiencing these organizational conditions as interconnected rather than separate influences. Attachment Theory therefore provides a useful explanation for why the interaction among these factors may promote readiness for organizational change. This interpretation is consistent with more recent organizational applications of attachment theory, which view leadership relationships as important sources of psychological security within organizations (Mayseless & Popper, 2019). Because attachment orientations were not measured directly, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence that lecturers exhibit secure, anxious, avoidant, or disorganized attachment styles. Rather, the

theory is offered as a cautious conceptual analogy suggesting that leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support may jointly function as organizational sources of relational security.

Other contextual characteristics may also have contributed to the positive organizational relationships described by participants. Long-standing professional relationships, the department's relatively small size, and shared experiences during the CEFR reform, the COVID-19 transition to emergency remote teaching, and the security situation in Israel may all have strengthened trust, cohesion, and commitment. Although these contextual factors were not examined systematically, they may have interacted with transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support in shaping lecturers' readiness for change. Future research could examine their relative contribution alongside the relational processes proposed here.

The findings also suggest that resistance to organizational change may result not only from deficiencies in leadership, organizational culture, or organizational support individually, as suggested by previous research (Ford et al., 2008; Holt & Vardaman, 2013; Shimoni, 2017), but also from the absence of the integrated relational environment described by participants.

Many lecturers spontaneously compared their experiences in the English Department with those in other higher education institutions. Without prompting, they contrasted the supportive environment described in this study with workplaces characterized by weaker leadership, limited collaboration, or lower organizational support. As one participant explained:

I can tell for sure that, even though the changes were quite challenging, I was willing to go along and implement them because of the general department atmosphere and my loyalty to the department head. I wouldn't as readily do the same in the other colleges as I feel quite anonymous there (Respondent 6).

This comparison illustrates how participants experienced transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support as interconnected features of a relational environment that encouraged trust, commitment, and openness to change.

Although participants consistently emphasized the combined influence of these three organizational facilitators, many regarded transformational leadership as the initiating force that shaped both organizational culture and perceptions of organizational support. One possible explanation is that the department head's leadership philosophy emphasized relational leadership characterized by trust, accessibility, collaboration, and professional growth. Such values are consistent with transformational leadership and may explain why participants experienced these organizational conditions as interconnected rather than separate characteristics.

This explanation is supported by research showing that transformational leadership strengthens organizational resilience by promoting adaptability, proactive problem solving, and effective responses to uncertainty (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021; Oiku, 2024; Rahman & Mendy, 2019; Southwick et al., 2017; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). Organizational resilience has been identified as a mechanism linking transformational leadership with successful adaptation and innovation (Chi et al., 2023; B. N. Liu & Zhang, 2023), while Yu and Xiang (2025) demonstrated its contribution to team innovation. Although these relationships have mainly been examined in business settings, the present findings suggest that a comparable process may operate in higher education, whereby transformational leadership initiates a broader relational process that strengthens organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and lecturers' readiness for change.

Taken together, the findings extend current understanding of readiness for change by suggesting that transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support are experienced not simply as separate organizational predictors but as interdependent dimensions of a psychologically secure relational environment. Future research should examine this proposed relational model across different higher education contexts and explore whether their interaction explains readiness for change more effectively than each construct considered independently.

Transformational Leadership and Readiness for Change

Holt et al. (2007) assert that employee readiness for organizational change originates from a set of employee beliefs. Belief refers to a person's conception regarding a certain behavior or an object, while attitude is defined as an evaluation of a behavior or an object and an inclination to respond to those positively or negatively (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In the case of change, several beliefs are germane: a belief that they are capable of executing the change; a belief that the organization leader is committed to change; a belief that it is appropriate for the organization; and a belief that he/she may benefit from the change. According to literature, change beliefs, in turn, affect attitudes toward change (Caporarello & Viachka, 2010; El-Farra & Badawi, 2012; Rashid, 2008). Teacher attitudes toward change are considered a critical factor in their intention to accept or resist change (Anghelachea & Bențea, 2012; Hamilton, 2018).

Teachers are the mediators between the institution and the students, and thus, their favorable attitude to change and their readiness to implement the change are vital for its successful and smooth execution (Meria et al., 2023). Teacher beliefs regarding change and, subsequently, their associated attitudes are said to be influenced by institution leaders

(Giannakaki & Belikaidi, 2012; Kursunoglu & Tanriogen, 2009; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2016). At times of change, the leader is the axis of the process, and teachers seek certainty in their superiors as change agents. They rely on their leader's competencies to initiate and implement the change by determining the necessary strategies, careful planning, and managing practices to implement the change objectives (Bueno & Tubbs, 2005; Steiner & Hassel, 2011).

Transformational leadership—defined by Bass (1985), is a leadership style in which leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes by influencing their values, beliefs, and attitudes. Transformational leadership has been widely associated with organizational innovation, professional learning, and successful change implementation (Farahnak et al., 2019; Geijssel et al., 2009; Moolenaar et al., 2010). This leadership approach goes beyond managing tasks and focuses on fostering innovation, creativity, and commitment through a shared vision.

Research on transformational leadership in the educational context was initiated by Leithwood and his colleagues in the 1980s and the 1990s (Leithwood, 1994) and was followed by numerous studies since (Geijssel et al., 2009; Griffioen & de Jong, 2017; Litz & Blaik-Hourani, 2020; Rosari et al., 2025; Thoonen et al., 2011). Mulford (2003) identified several leadership practices relevant to teacher and school effectiveness, including developing a shared vision, setting expectations, and fostering caring, cooperative, and productive working environments. Recent evidence from the EFL context further supports the importance of educational leadership, demonstrating that leadership skills are positively associated with Vietnamese EFL teachers' well-being (Le et al., 2025).

Educational change necessitates personal change, which often involves managing emotional conflicts among stakeholders. Consequently, educational leaders are expected to possess emotional intelligence to manage themselves, support their staff, and foster an institutional climate conducive to change (Brinia et al., 2014; James et al., 2019; Moser, 2017). Research has shown that leaders with high emotional intelligence positively influence employees' attitudes toward change by creating a safe environment where risks can be taken and new ideas explored without fear of failure, criticism, or ridicule (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Tai & Abdull Kareem, 2019).

In addition to the mediating effect of transformational leaders' emotional intelligence, their central position within the organizational network may facilitate the successful implementation of change (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 2008; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Leaders who are accessible, well connected, and able to bridge otherwise disconnected teachers can facilitate the flow of information, advice, social support, and coordination, thereby creating conditions that support an innovative climate and organizational change (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Although transformational leadership is often examined as an individual predictor of readiness for change, many of the leadership behaviors identified in the literature—such as fostering trust, open communication, professional learning, and participation—extend beyond the leader as an individual and contribute to the broader organizational environment. This suggests that leadership may influence readiness not only directly, but also indirectly by shaping the organizational culture within which change is experienced. Nevertheless, previous studies have primarily examined transformational leadership as an independent predictor of readiness for change, providing limited insight into how its influence operates in conjunction with other organizational conditions.

Organizational Culture and Readiness for Change

A second factor influencing readiness for change is organizational culture, a key catalyst for shifts in employee attitudes. Open communication has frequently been proposed as a condition supporting readiness for change, although the strength of this relationship may depend on supervisory and organizational context (Farahana et al., 2017; Men & Bowen, 2017). Effective communication means that employees receive all the necessary information about the change and feel ready to accept it (Chiang, 2010; Vakola, 2013), enhancing their readiness for and positive response to change (Neill et al., 2020; Vakola, 2013). Additionally, evidence suggests that developmental culture shapes employee responses to change by emphasizing growth, innovation, and adaptability. It is characterized by a focus on continuous improvement, learning, and empowerment of individuals and teams to achieve their full potential. This type of culture encourages creativity, experimentation, and flexibility, allowing employees to adapt to changes initiated by the institution (Ahmad et al., 2020; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). In developmental organizational cultures, team members are encouraged to be part of the change and facilitate it.

Communication-oriented and developmental cultures promote discussion, involvement in decision-making, and collaboration among employees, all of which are associated with more favorable perceptions of organizational change (Griffioen & de Jong, 2017; Ralebese et al., 2025). Organizations that encourage discussion, participation in decision-making, and collaboration increase employees' acceptance of organizational goals, strengthen their sense of ownership, and enhance their readiness for change (Geijssel et al., 2009; Griffioen & de Jong, 2017; Qureshi et al., 2018; Thoonen et al., 2011; Vakola, 2013). As a result, employees tend to view change more positively, assume greater responsibility for its successful implementation, and work collaboratively toward shared organizational goals (Neill et al., 2020; Smith, 2005; Weiner, 2009; Workeneh & Abebe, 2019).

Such cultures also increase the teaching staff's identification with the educational organization and commitment (Geijssel et al., 2009; Moolenaar et al., 2010; Qureshi et al., 2018; Suwaryo et al., 2015), reflected in a belief in and acceptance of

institutional goals and values, readiness to dedicate one's energies to the organization, and willingness to remain a member (Khasawneh et al., 2012). Lecturers experiencing heightened work engagement tend to feel more committed to the organization. They are more energetic, feel more attached to their jobs, and exhibit a higher level of responsibility and adaptability (Matthysen & Harris, 2018; Raditya et al., 2021).

Commitment to the workplace is a major prerequisite for educational change (Handal & Herrington, 2003; Meria et al., 2022). Literature reveals that organizational commitment is associated with employee attitudes regarding institutional change and its successful implementation. Thus, highly committed employees who believe that the organizational change would benefit them are more willing to accept it and exert extra effort in its implementation (Nafei, 2014; Parish et al., 2008; Peccei et al., 2011).

Open and participatory communication cultures are also strongly associated with organizational trust and leadership, both of which play a significant role in alleviating concerns, addressing complex issues, and undertaking risks without fear of failure (Erlyani et al., 2024; Sarros et al., 2008; Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). Research shows a positive correlation between organizational trust and employees' readiness for change (Marouf & Agarwal, 2016; Yue et al., 2019; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015). Employees characterized by high trust in their organization will be prepared to change assumptions and attitudes to meet the new organizational goals (McShane & Von Glinow, 2011; Oreg et al., 2011).

The literature also suggests considerable conceptual overlap between organizational culture and perceived organizational support. Cultures characterized by collaboration, trust, participation, and open communication are also likely to foster employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Although these constructs are conceptually distinct, they may reinforce one another during organizational change. However, research has generally examined organizational culture in isolation, with relatively little attention to how it interacts with leadership and organizational support in shaping lecturers' readiness for change.

Perceived Organizational Support and Readiness for Change

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees' beliefs about how much their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. It is rooted in the idea that organizations, through policies, practices, and interactions, can communicate their commitment to employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 2020; Robbins & Judge, 2009). According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), perceived organizational support increases employees' sense of responsibility for supporting the organization in achieving its goals and enhances employee commitment toward the organization. It fosters employee vitality and dedication as well as a caring attitude for the organization (Lan et al., 2020).

Perceived organizational support also appears to exert a positive influence on employee readiness for change (Gigliotti et al., 2019; Kebede & Wang, 2022; Lestari et al., 2022; Prakoso et al., 2022; Ramdhani & Desiana, 2021; Taufikin et al., 2021). It fosters work engagement, which encompasses employees' ownership of their roles, commitment to their responsibilities, and involvement of their energy, thoughts, and emotions in carrying out their tasks (Adil et al., 2020; Imran et al., 2020; Oubibi et al., 2022; Rizky et al., 2022). Consequently, they adapt to organizational change more readily (Raditya et al., 2021; Rizky et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a threefold connection between employee-perceived organizational support, work engagement, and readiness for change (Meria et al., 2023; Rizky et al., 2022; Saks, 2019).

Although perceived organizational support has consistently been associated with positive employee outcomes, its combined role alongside transformational leadership and organizational culture remains underexplored, particularly in qualitative studies of higher education.

Overall, previous research consistently demonstrates positive relationships between transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support and employees' readiness for change. However, most previous studies have examined these organizational conditions independently, making it difficult to understand how they interact within the complex realities of organizational change. Comparatively little attention has been given to the ways in which these factors may reinforce one another in shaping lecturers' experiences of organizational change. The present study addresses this gap by examining these organizational conditions collectively rather than independently.

Viewed through the Attachment Theory lens introduced earlier, transformational leadership, a trust-based and participatory culture, and perceived organizational support can be understood as mutually reinforcing sources of relational security. Their combined operation may strengthen lecturers' sense of belonging, confidence, and willingness to engage with change, thereby offering a relational explanation for readiness during periods of reform and instability.

The purpose of this study is to examine the collective effect of leadership style, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support on lecturers' experience with institutional changes in a college English department and their willingness to accept and implement them. To this end, the current research will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. How do English lecturers perceive and experience organizational change within their institution?
2. How do lecturers perceive the contribution of transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support to their readiness for organizational change?

3. How do lecturers perceive the interaction among transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support in shaping their readiness for organizational change?

Methodology

This qualitative study employs 60- to 90-minute semi-structured interviews with 20 of the 27 lecturers teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the spring term of the 2024/2025 academic year at an academic college located in Israel's southern periphery. In this research, the English department will be viewed as a micro-organization.

Participants

Prior to the beginning of their course of studies, students at the college take an English placement test and enroll in English for Purposes of International Communication (EPIC) courses in accordance with their scores. Only a small minority of students are exempt from studying English. Most students in the college are required to take at least one English course. Approximately 3,000 students take the EPIC courses annually, taught by 27 EPIC lecturers in the English Department. Among the 27 lecturers, 20 have 7 to 25 years of tenure and have experienced the transition from EAP to EPIC, as well as teaching in turbulent times. All 20 agreed to participate in the research and understood that the purpose of the study was to explore their perception of these changes and the factors that affected their willingness to cooperate in executing the reforms described above.

Field

Since 2020, the English department has undergone several significant changes that require responses from lecturers. First, the official Israeli Council for Higher Education framework governing English-language instruction launched a reform, which required the transition from teaching reading comprehension to CEFR-aligned instruction that focuses on a composite of four English proficiency skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). The new program necessitated adaptations in the instructional methods and materials and the evaluation system. Second, the outbreak of COVID-19 introduced online teaching and further changes in teaching and assessment. Finally, for the past year and a half, Israeli academia has been affected by the regional war, and the English program had to accommodate new, turbulent circumstances. The shifting reality was addressed in the new program, which considered both the pedagogical aspects and the social-emotional needs of the learners.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their strength in examining experiences and perceptions (Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). The semi-structured interview guide was developed to address the study's research questions and was informed by the literature on transformational leadership, organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and readiness for change. Most interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Alongside audio-recording the interviews, the researcher simultaneously took notes to reference participants' responses during the course of the conversation. Transcriptions were produced promptly following each interview to support the accuracy of data documentation. Prior to commencing the interviews, a pilot interview was conducted with a lecturer who did not participate in the study. The pilot enabled the researcher to assess the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the interview questions in relation to the research questions and to make minor refinements before the main data collection. Moreover, since the interviews were carried out on different days, the researcher engaged in reflective practice after each session, adjusting interviewing techniques for subsequent encounters. For instance, when two participants demonstrated difficulty understanding a particular question, it was reformulated to enhance its clarity.

This research endeavored to understand the lecturers' attitudes towards and readiness for change. Importantly, it also aimed to understand the factors underlying both, enabling the interview to address both the individual and composite effect of the leadership style, the department culture, and the perceived organizational support on the readiness for change by the interviewees.

Throughout the interviews, participants were encouraged to describe both positive and challenging experiences associated with organizational change. Follow-up prompts invited them to discuss difficulties, concerns, and aspects they believed could have been improved. However, while participants described numerous implementation challenges, they rarely expressed criticism of the department's leadership, culture, or organizational support.

Data Analysis

Interview transcripts were analyzed using a thematic content-analysis approach (Charmaz, 2017; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Gay et al., 2012; Mason, 2017). The researcher first conducted repeated close readings of the transcripts to become thoroughly familiar with the dataset. Initial codes were then developed inductively through systematic analysis of each interview transcript. These codes were compared across participants, refined, and consolidated into broader themes that reflected recurring patterns in the data. Throughout the analytic process, the researcher repeatedly returned to the original transcripts to verify that the emerging themes accurately reflected participants' accounts. As the analysis

progressed, earlier transcripts were revisited and coding decisions were refined where necessary to ensure consistency and coherence across the dataset. Although the coding process was primarily data-driven, sensitizing concepts derived from the literature on transformational leadership, organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and Attachment Theory informed the interpretation of the findings rather than serving as predetermined coding categories. Coding was conducted by a single researcher; therefore, inter-coder agreement was not established. However, the trustworthiness and dependability of the analysis were enhanced through the iterative coding process, repeated comparison of the emerging themes with the original transcripts, and continuous refinement of coding decisions throughout the analysis. The resulting themes guided the organization and presentation of the findings, which were subsequently interpreted in relation to the existing literature to identify the study's unique contributions.

Ethics

Prospective participants were approached and provided a brief description of the research and the research questions. They were informed that their responses might be published, but their identities would remain confidential. Each lecturer granted permission to record the interviews which were conducted via Zoom, and signed a consent form. Additionally, they were told that they could quit at any stage of the interview. Approval for the study from the college ethics committee was received prior to the interviews.

Findings

The reforms in the English department of the college were successfully implemented despite some real challenges. The findings indicate that the obstacles were overcome due to the collective effect of the leadership style, the department culture, and perceived organizational support from colleagues and the department head. Part 1 of the findings will introduce the lecturers' general perception of their relationship with the English department and the challenges they faced with reforms. Part 2 will address the three dimensions outlined in literature (leadership style, department culture, and perceived organizational support) specifically and will conclude with the respondents' reflections on the collective importance of all three.

Part 1:

Lecturers' perception of the English department

All the lecturers described feeling at home in the college's English department, with "belonging" as the most common descriptor. They consistently referred to a welcoming, accepting, and cooperative atmosphere that made them feel safe, respected, and comfortable. Several participants emphasized that this supportive environment encouraged openness and authenticity, allowing them to express their opinions freely and seek help whenever needed.

Respondent 19 related, "I love the general atmosphere, the attitude, help. I feel like part of the department. I feel I belong. I feel I don't have to pretend. I can speak at the same level with the people there."

Lecturers further emphasized that they consistently received both professional and emotional support from colleagues, level coordinators, the department secretary, and the department head. Many explained that this atmosphere of mutual assistance was described as strengthening their commitment to the department and motivated them to contribute in return. Several also referred to the close social relationships among colleagues and departmental social events as reinforcing their sense of belonging.

Respondent 5 summarized the unique nature of the English unit:

It's not a secret that our department is considered one of the most united and unified. There are people who have been working together for many years. If one of us falls, there are many to catch him/her. It gives such a unique security blanket that very few workplaces project. We help each other, we share our materials, and we don't keep score.

Change-induced challenges

The lecturers' attitude to changes was generally positive. None of them mentioned resisting or rejecting the changes. They understood that the changes were a necessity and that there was no other solution but to accept them. Quite a few respondents said that the changes benefited their students, which they described as motivating their support.

Despite understanding the reasons for change, several lecturers mentioned various difficulties implementing the reforms. Some perceived the transition to teaching the four skills as the most challenging, particularly referring to the investment of time and effort needed to create new teaching and assessment materials and to conduct the lessons differently.

Others referred to the COVID accommodations, and especially the transition to teaching on Zoom, as the toughest experience, citing the difficulty of connecting with students who turned their cameras off, as well as ongoing Internet and connectivity issues. Furthermore, they reported having to learn how to conduct the lesson differently using breakout rooms for group work beyond the challenge of acquiring new technological tools.

Still, others shared that the war accommodations were the most taxing emotionally. They were exposed to multiple distressing conditions among their students—from soldiers who had PTSD to those who had lost members of their family or friends, internally displaced people, and students suffering from various emotional syndromes in the wake of war. They felt that in addition to teaching English, they had to serve as their students' psychologists and adjust their teaching and evaluation to meet the complex needs of their students. All the changes were perceived as challenging and requiring much effort and multiple skills on the part of the lecturers. One of the respondents used the metaphor of an "octopus" to refer to the complexity of the change processes.

Part 2:

Even before being prompted, the lecturers identified the leadership style, the collaborative departmental culture and perceived organizational support as change facilitators. Additionally, several respondents referred to the combination of these three factors as contributing to their readiness for change.

What helped me adjust to the changes rather smoothly was guidance of the head of the department, who was relentlessly learning new methods and passing them on to the staff. I also feel that the cooperation of staff members, peer learning and sharing knowledge and materials was of vital importance. Besides, the fact that everybody's input was welcome, made us want to be involved and contribute fully to make sure the change process will be successful [Respondent 10].

The findings below present the lecturers' responses to prompts regarding each change facilitator individually and their combined effect.

Leadership Style and Readiness for Change

Participants consistently associated the department head's professional competence, emotional intelligence, ability to foster a collaborative culture, and constant availability with their willingness to engage in the change process.

Professional competence: Many lecturers highlighted the leader's professionalism, organization, and careful planning as essential during the reforms. They emphasized her detailed preparation, clear communication, and continuous development of new materials and workshops to support lecturers throughout successive waves of institutional change.

She went out of her way to make sure that everybody would embrace the changes. She was unbelievably professional, unwilling to lower academic standards. The time and investment and, thoroughness, and willingness almost each semester to adapt to the changes (COVID-19, war, post-COVID-19, new populations, larger classes, AI) in producing new materials in addition to detailed meetings with presentations, workshops, suggestions, recommendations [Respondent 11].

Emotional intelligence: Lecturers consistently described the department head as patient, approachable, and genuinely interested in their views. Several participants explained that her openness to discussion and willingness to consider staff suggestions was described as creating a psychologically safe environment in which they felt comfortable expressing opinions, asking questions, experimenting with new practices, and participating actively in the reform process.

She made huge changes, but then opened it to us, even the newer members. We were never afraid to make a change within her changes. She wasn't defensive, but rather flexible. This is the reason that people are committed to her and the department [Respondent 18].

She created something that really helps me—an open, safe space to ask questions and to even make mistakes, and this allows a person to make the change and feel safe in the process. The fact that the leader understands that it's a process is not to be taken for granted. She allows for a buffer between getting there and the goal. She understands that teachers are on the learning curve [Respondent 9].

Availability: Many lecturers also viewed the leader's accessibility as essential during the implementation of the reforms. They repeatedly characterized her as 'available 24/7,' 'always there,' and willing to explain procedures as many times as necessary, providing both professional guidance and emotional reassurance throughout the change process.

In conclusion, the interviewees consistently associated the leader's competence, emotional intelligence, and availability with their readiness for change. The following quotation captures the integration of these qualities:

The head of the department is my hero. She is very professional and knows what she is doing and how to lead us, on the one hand, and gives us all a feeling that our suggestions and recommendations count, on the other. I think this is the key to our willingness to accept the changes that often seem very challenging [Respondent 19].

Departmental culture and readiness for change

Lecturers described their departmental culture as a crucial determinant of their openness to change. They consistently portrayed a communicative, participatory, and development-oriented culture that fostered collaboration, mutual respect, trust, and a shared sense of purpose. Together, these characteristics were described by participants as encouraging lecturers to accept and sustain organizational change.

Collaborative communication: Participants consistently described the department as welcoming, supportive, and highly communicative. They emphasized the continuous exchange of ideas through meetings, WhatsApp groups, informal conversations, and professional discussions, all of which participants associated with rapid problem-solving and mutual support during periods of change.

Respondent 14 reflected: "Working at this department is the greatest experiences I have had in my career. I have always considered it my second home because of the staff, the cooperation, and the way we treat each other with kindness and empathy."

Several lecturers similarly emphasized the openness and transparency of communication, explaining that both experienced and newly appointed staff members felt comfortable asking questions, offering suggestions, and receiving support whenever needed.

Continuous professional learning: Participants also described the department as one that continuously refined its pedagogical practices. Shared teaching materials, collective revision of courses and assessments, and regular professional workshops were described as promoting ongoing learning and encouraging lecturers to experiment with new technologies and instructional approaches.

Respondent 15 explained: "We are receiving so many opportunities to learn and acquire new teaching skills. We are exposed to many very practical workshops and we implement these new tools."

Shared decision-making: Lecturers repeatedly associated the department's collaborative culture with their willingness to implement change. They explained that changes were discussed before implementation, staff members were encouraged to express their views, and constructive dialogue, which participants believed created a stronger sense of ownership over the reform process.

Respondent 13 noted: "We always discuss before the changes are implemented. The members are encouraged to express their opinions [...] You are not going to be severely judged but rather get an explanation if your comments are incorrect."

Respondent 6 added: "I learned that you can still be an individual in a unified group. Open discussions and collaboration help us reach common destinations and deal with changes."

Respondent 7 commented: "Regarding the changes, there was flexibility, nothing was written in stone. In other institutions, the changes were a done deal, and it was more difficult to embrace the changes when I wasn't involved in the decisions."

Trust: The collaborative culture also was associated by participants with greater confidence in both the department and the change process. Participants repeatedly linked the department's professionalism, organization, and transparency with their willingness to accept and implement reforms. Respondent 11 observed: "The culture is friendly and very professional. You can count on it; there are lines of logic and organization that make you feel you are in good hands and not up in the air."

Commitment and reciprocity: Many lecturers explained that the supportive culture was perceived as generating a strong sense of commitment and reciprocity. Participants explained that feeling trusted, included, and supported motivated them to contribute actively, share resources, and invest in the department's continued success. Respondent 1 reflected: "I belong and feel comfortable. There is a sense of shared responsibility in the department, and because of that, you feel engaged and wanting to give your part to this shared responsibility." Respondent 18 concluded: "There are people who don't like changes, and if they feel that they are surrounded by family, it makes the process much easier."

Overall, participants portrayed departmental culture as an interconnected process. They associated open communication with continuous learning, continuous learning with shared decision-making, shared decision-making with trust, and trust with a stronger sense of commitment. Collectively, they perceived these elements as supporting their readiness for organizational change.

Perceived organizational support and readiness for change

Participants consistently perceived the English department as caring for their well-being and valuing their work, opinions, and contributions. This perception of organizational support was associated with stronger engagement and greater willingness to accept and implement organizational change.

Recognition: Nearly all lecturers described contributing to the department through developing teaching materials, mentoring colleagues, coordinating levels, providing technological support, or assisting peers during periods of change.

They emphasized that these contributions were encouraged in a culture where effort was acknowledged and appreciated. Respondent 3 explained: "If I created an activity, I sent it to the group. The responses were very positive. It is nice that people see what you have done and use it. It is a very good feeling to help people."

Several participants similarly described the positive feedback they received from colleagues as motivating them to continue sharing ideas and investing additional effort for the benefit of the department.

Professional and emotional support: Lecturers consistently reported that support was available at every organizational level—from colleagues and level coordinators to the department secretary and department head. They described receiving prompt professional guidance, practical assistance, and emotional support whenever challenges arose. Respondent 4 noted: "I can always turn to my colleagues in case of doubt, or I can contact the coordinator or the head of the department. When I don't know how to cope, I always consult. I can always go higher."

Participants also illustrated this caring culture through everyday acts of mutual assistance, including covering classes for colleagues, mentoring new lecturers, sharing expertise, and providing emotional support during personal or professional difficulties. These behaviors further reinforced participants' perception that the department genuinely cared about its members' well-being.

Reciprocity and commitment: Many lecturers explained that feeling appreciated strengthened their commitment to contribute further to departmental goals. Organizational support therefore was perceived as generating reciprocity, with lecturers responding to appreciation by increasing their engagement and investment in the department. Respondent 5 summarized this relationship:

I compare the work with other institutions, and here, my contribution is much higher, and the reason for that is the atmosphere and the leadership. It's really nicer to contribute and to get all the recognition and the appreciation from the staff.

Respondent 6 added:

I like to coordinate because it is important to do this. An organized department is very important to the success of the department. Lecturers know that the materials are there, and they are reliable, and they can ask coordinators questions. As lecturers, we have a peace of mind to teach and not be stressed over the materials. The department can run smoothly and effectively.

Overall, lecturers consistently associated organizational support with their readiness for change. Feeling cared for, appreciated, and trusted increased their willingness to invest effort, assume responsibility, and persevere throughout demanding periods of organizational reform. Respondent 18 concluded: "When you feel at home, it makes things much easier, and it is easier to accept changes. It makes the change process easier."

The collective impact of leadership style, culture, and perceived support

Participants consistently emphasized that transformational leadership, departmental culture, and perceived organizational support did not operate independently. Rather, they described these three organizational factors as mutually reinforcing elements that collectively shaped their readiness for organizational change.

Respondent 9 asserted:

You must have the right climate and facilitation by the right people and the leader. Everything has to be included. All the factors need to be there for the change to happen. It's not a piecemeal method. Our department is a great illustration of this combination.

Although participants unanimously regarded all three organizational factors as essential, several lecturers identified leadership as the primary catalyst because they believed it initiated the reforms, articulated their rationale, and helped establish a collaborative and supportive environment.

Respondent 19 explained:

The leadership is what dictated the changes in the first place but in a favorable, well-intentioned, and caring manner. She put the process in motion and made us understand the rationale lying behind it, and was willing to understand and answer all our questions in detail. And the climate and the support of our colleagues were also important because it allowed us to ask for what we needed, brainstorm ideas with other team members, and feel free to express our opinions.

Although several participants viewed leadership as the dominant catalyst for change, others described the relationship among the three organizational factors as dynamic rather than fixed, suggesting that their relative importance shifted across different stages of the change process.

Respondent 12 reflected:

The leadership sends you in the direction that manages to recruit everybody on the same path and says, 'This is what we have to do. I am in charge and leading you through this and this will be ok; I am holding your hand.' At the second phase, the support is what helped me. The fact that my teammates cared. In the third phase, the maintenance - it was the culture that allowed you to keep up the same enthusiasm and interest; it is what cultivates the interest to keep going. The positive feeling of 'You are doing a good job and you help.' It's like in a relationship-the subsequent stages matter, but you have a safe place to refer to. The hierarchy changes; the culture is what keeps you going.

Several other participants similarly viewed leadership, departmental culture, and organizational support as reinforcing one another rather than functioning as separate influences, emphasizing that each strengthened the effectiveness of the others throughout the change process.

Overall, the findings suggest that readiness for change emerged not from any single organizational factor but from the interaction among leadership, departmental culture, and perceived organizational support. Although all three were viewed as essential, approximately one-third of the lecturers regarded leadership as the primary catalyst because it initiated, coordinated, and sustained the conditions that enabled culture and support to facilitate successful organizational change.

Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that lecturers were willing to accept and implement organizational change. Consistent with previous research, participants associated transformational leadership, a communicative and developmental departmental culture, and perceived organizational support with greater readiness for change.

Participants described the department head's professional competence, emotional intelligence, and accessibility as key facilitators of successful change implementation. These perceptions are consistent with previous studies demonstrating the contribution of transformational leadership to educational reform, collaborative organizational cultures, psychologically safe work environments, and leader accessibility during organizational change (Bueno & Tubbs, 2005; Steiner & Hassel, 2011; Geijsel et al., 2009; Griffioen & de Jong, 2017; Mulford, 2003; Thoonen et al., 2011; James et al., 2019; Kilduff & Krackhardt, 2008; Moolenaar et al., 2010; Moser, 2017; Tai & Abdull Kareem, 2019).

Similarly, participants portrayed the departmental culture as one characterized by open communication, continuous professional learning, trust, and shared decision-making. These findings align with previous research emphasizing transparent communication, developmental organizational cultures, and employee involvement as important facilitators of organizational change (Ahmad et al., 2020; Farahana et al., 2017; Griffioen & de Jong, 2017; Men & Bowen, 2017; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Neill et al., 2020; Vakola, 2013; Qureshi et al., 2018; Workeneh & Abebe, 2019). Consistent with earlier studies, participants associated these characteristics with stronger workplace trust and organizational commitment (Marouf & Agarwal, 2016; McShane & Von Glinow, 2011; Meria et al., 2022; Nafei, 2014; Oreg et al., 2011; Peccei et al., 2011; Yue et al., 2019; Zayim & Kondakci, 2015).

Participants also emphasized the importance of perceived organizational support, describing an environment in which lecturers felt valued, appreciated, and cared for by both the department head and the institution. These perceptions correspond with the concept of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Robbins & Judge, 2009; Lan et al., 2020) and are consistent with studies linking organizational support with greater work engagement, commitment, and readiness for change (Gigliotti et al., 2019; Prakoso et al., 2022; Ramdhani & Desiana, 2021; Taufikin et al., 2021).

While the findings discussed above are consistent with previous research on transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support, the principal contribution of the present study lies in the way these organizational conditions were experienced by the lecturers. Rather than describing leadership, departmental culture, and organizational support as separate influences on readiness for change, participants consistently portrayed them as interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions of the same organizational environment.

More specifically, participants described transformational leadership as fostering a collaborative organizational culture characterized by trust, open communication, and continuous professional learning. This culture, in turn, strengthened perceptions of organizational support by creating an environment in which lecturers felt valued, respected, and cared for. These experiences reinforced their willingness to invest effort in implementing organizational change despite its challenges. Rather than functioning as independent organizational characteristics, the three facilitators appeared to operate as an integrated relational system in which each strengthened the influence of the others.

This interpretation extends previous research in an important way. Although transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support have each been widely recognized as predictors of readiness for change, they have generally been examined independently. In contrast, the present findings suggest that lecturers experienced these organizational conditions holistically rather than separately. Participants rarely referred to only one facilitator when explaining their willingness to accept change; instead, they naturally combined references to leadership, departmental culture, and organizational support as different expressions of the same supportive organizational environment. The findings therefore suggest that understanding the interaction among these organizational conditions

may provide a more comprehensive explanation of lecturers' readiness for change than considering each construct in isolation.

Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory offers a useful theoretical analogy for interpreting this interaction. Rather than suggesting that lecturers themselves possess particular attachment styles, the theory is used here as a conceptual lens for understanding how organizational relationships may foster a sense of relational security during periods of change. Attachment Theory originated as a developmental theory explaining how early relationships between infants and caregivers shape internal working models of the self and others (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969). Subsequent work identified a fourth attachment classification-disorganized/disoriented attachment-in addition to the original secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant patterns (Main & Solomon, 1990). Although these classifications were originally developed to explain caregiver-child relationships, attachment theory has since been extended to adult interpersonal relationships and, more recently, to organizational contexts. In organizational settings, researchers have argued that leaders and work environments may function as sources of psychological security, influencing employees' trust, engagement, coping with uncertainty, and openness to organizational change (Harms, 2011; Yip et al., 2018).

Viewed through this theoretical lens, the present findings suggest that transformational leadership, a collaborative organizational culture, and perceived organizational support may collectively create a form of relational security that encourages openness to change. Participants repeatedly described feeling trusted, listened to, appreciated, and professionally supported. Importantly, these experiences were not discussed as isolated organizational practices but as interconnected aspects of a work environment that enabled lecturers to approach organizational change with confidence rather than uncertainty. Attachment Theory therefore helps explain not only why each facilitator contributes to readiness for change, but also why their interaction may be particularly influential in promoting openness to organizational change.

Because attachment orientations were not measured directly, the present findings should not be interpreted as evidence that lecturers exhibit secure, anxious, avoidant, or disorganized attachment styles. Rather, Attachment Theory is used here as a cautious theoretical analogy suggesting that transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support may function collectively as organizational sources of relational security during change.

In addition to the relational interpretation proposed above, other contextual characteristics of the department may also have contributed to the positive organizational relationships described by the participants. For example, many lecturers had worked together for extended periods, creating long-standing professional relationships and mutual trust. The relatively small size of the department may have facilitated frequent communication, close collaboration, and a stronger sense of belonging than might be expected in larger academic units. Furthermore, the department experienced several significant challenges collectively, including the transition to CEFR, the rapid shift to emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent disruptions associated with the security situation in Israel. Successfully navigating these shared experiences may itself have strengthened interpersonal trust, cohesion, and commitment among staff members. Although these contextual factors were not examined systematically in the present study, they may have interacted with transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support in shaping lecturers' readiness for change. Future research could explore the relative contribution of these contextual characteristics alongside the relational processes proposed here.

The findings also suggest that the absence of these relational conditions may contribute to resistance to organizational change. Previous research has associated inappropriate leadership with resistance to change (Ford et al., 2008), untrustworthy organizational cultures with reduced willingness to engage in organizational initiatives (Shimoni, 2017), and insufficient organizational support with unsuccessful change implementation (Holt & Vardaman, 2013). The present findings extend this perspective by suggesting that resistance may arise not only from deficiencies in individual organizational characteristics but also from the absence of the integrated relational environment described by the participants.

Interestingly, many lecturers spontaneously compared their experiences in the English Department with those in other higher education institutions where they had worked. Without prompting, they contrasted the supportive environment described in this study with workplaces characterized by weaker leadership, limited collaboration, or lower levels of organizational support. These comparisons reinforced the view that lecturers' willingness to accept change depended not only on the nature of the reforms themselves but also on the quality of the organizational relationships surrounding them. As one participant explained:

I can tell for sure that, even though the changes were quite challenging, I was willing to go along and implement them because of the general department atmosphere and my loyalty to the department head. I wouldn't as readily do the same in the other colleges as I feel quite anonymous there (Respondent 6).

This account illustrates how participants experienced transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support as interconnected elements of a relational environment that encouraged trust, commitment, and openness to change.

Although participants consistently emphasized the combined influence of these three organizational facilitators, many also regarded transformational leadership as the initiating force that set the remaining processes in motion. Their accounts suggest that leadership established the conditions from which a collaborative organizational culture and perceptions of organizational support developed. Rather than diminishing the importance of the latter two factors, this finding highlights the leader's role in fostering the relational environment through which readiness for change was promoted.

One possible explanation is that the department head's leadership philosophy emphasized relational leadership, characterized by trust, accessibility, collaboration, and professional growth. Such values are consistent with transformational leadership and may help explain why participants perceived leadership, organizational culture, and organizational support as interconnected rather than separate organizational characteristics.

This explanation is further supported by research demonstrating that transformational leadership strengthens organizational resilience by promoting adaptability, proactive problem solving, and effective responses to uncertainty (McLeod & Dulskey, 2021; Oiku, 2024; Rahman & Mendy, 2019; Southwick et al., 2017; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). Organizational resilience has been identified as an intermediate mechanism linking transformational leadership with successful adaptation and innovation (Chi et al., 2023; B. N. Liu & Zhang, 2023). Similarly, Yu and Xiang (2025) argue that transformational leadership enhances team innovation performance through its positive influence on organizational resilience. Although this relationship has primarily been examined in business settings, the present findings suggest that a comparable process may operate in higher education, whereby transformational leadership initiates a broader relational process that strengthens organizational culture, perceived organizational support, and ultimately lecturers' readiness for change.

Taken together, the findings extend current understanding of readiness for change by suggesting that transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support are experienced not simply as separate organizational predictors but as interdependent dimensions of a psychologically secure relational environment. Future research should examine this proposed relational model across different higher education contexts and explore whether the interaction among these organizational conditions explains readiness for change more effectively than each construct considered independently.

Conclusion

This research offers valuable contributions to the field of higher education by providing a nuanced understanding of how leadership, departmental culture, and organizational support were perceived by participants to interact in fostering readiness for change. The lecturers interviewed in this study were unanimous in their positive perceptions of and willingness to implement a variety of organizational changes and reforms. Participants attributed these experiences to the combined presence of transformational leadership, a communicative and developmental departmental culture, and perceived organizational support from both their colleagues and the department head. Although many participants viewed these three facilitators as operating together, some regarded transformational leadership as the initial catalyst for the change process, with organizational culture and perceived support reinforcing its influence.

This research may assist educational leaders, including department heads, principals, and university administrators, in understanding the potential role of transformational leadership in facilitating organizational change. Likewise, faculty members and academic staff may benefit from recognizing how their working environment, including departmental culture and perceived organizational support, may influence their readiness to engage with change. The findings suggest that participants perceived the combined presence of transformational leadership, a collaborative organizational culture, and perceived organizational support as particularly helpful in encouraging their readiness for change.

Moreover, policymakers and administrators within educational institutions may view these findings as preliminary insights when considering change management strategies. Although the present study was conducted within a single academic department, the findings suggest that fostering supportive organizational cultures, investing in transformational leadership, and promoting organizational support may contribute to positive experiences of change. These implications should, however, be regarded as tentative until examined in other institutional, disciplinary, and cultural contexts.

Finally, professionals working in organizational development and change management may find the proposed relational perspective useful as a conceptual framework for understanding readiness for change. However, because the study was based on the experiences of lecturers within one higher education department, caution should be exercised when extending these findings to other organizational settings. Future research is needed to examine whether the interaction among transformational leadership, organizational culture, and perceived organizational support is experienced similarly across different organizations and cultural contexts.

Recommendations

Given the ongoing importance of organizational change in higher education, future research should examine lecturers' readiness for change across multiple institutions, disciplinary contexts, and national settings to determine whether the

relational processes identified in this study are transferable beyond a single department. Comparative studies involving institutions with different organizational cultures, leadership styles, and levels of perceived organizational support would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact in shaping readiness for change. Future research should also include lecturers at different career stages, incorporate multiple sources of data (e.g., observations, institutional documents, and interviews with academic leaders), and compare readiness for mandatory and voluntary organizational changes, such as the adoption of emerging educational technologies and innovative teaching methodologies.

The findings also suggest several practical implications for educational leaders. Participants consistently described open communication, opportunities for professional collaboration, shared decision-making, ongoing professional learning, and accessible emotional and professional support as important characteristics of a work environment that encouraged their willingness to accept change. Educational leaders may therefore wish to consider practices such as regular communication forums, collaborative teaching-resource sharing, participatory decision-making processes, and structured opportunities for professional development when implementing organizational reforms. These practices should be viewed as suggestions derived from participants' experiences rather than as proven causal strategies and warrant further examination across diverse institutional contexts.

Limitations

The research was limited in scope as it interviewed lecturers in a single English department in one regional college. Additionally, the changes were inevitable as they were either required by a supervising body (the transition to the CEFR-aligned curriculum) or forced by adversity (COVID-19 and war).

Another potential limitation of the findings was the remarkable consistency of participants' positive perceptions regarding leadership, departmental culture, and organizational support. Contrary to what is often reported in studies of organizational change, participants rarely expressed resistance to the reforms themselves or criticism of the organizational environment. This pattern appears to reflect the characteristics of the study context rather than selective reporting. The participants represented a single academic department that had worked together for many years under stable leadership and had collectively navigated multiple successive disruptions, including the transition to a CEFR-aligned curriculum, the COVID-19 pandemic, and wartime adaptations. The shared experience of repeatedly confronting complex challenges may have strengthened interpersonal trust and collective efficacy, contributing to the high degree of consensus observed in the interviews. Nevertheless, the relatively homogeneous sample drawn from one department should be considered when interpreting the transferability of the findings.

Ethics Statements

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Hemdat College of Education Ethics Committee. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interests.

Generative AI Statement

As the author of this work, I used the AI tool Chat GPT for the purpose of finding synonyms and paraphrases. After using this AI tool, I reviewed and verified the final version of my work. I, as the author, take full responsibility for the content of my published work.

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