

The Effect of Employee Agility and Learning Orientation on Readiness for Change with Change Self-Efficacy as a Mediating Variable: A Study on Employees of PT PLN UP3 Padang

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Abstract

Keywords:

Employee Agility; Learning Orientation; Change Self-Efficacy; Readiness for Change; PLS-SEM

This study aims to analyze the effect of Employee Agility and Learning Orientation on Readiness for Change with Change Self-Efficacy as a mediating variable among employees of PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Padang, Indonesia. A quantitative causal design was employed. Using stratified random sampling based on job function from a population of 216 employees, 185 questionnaires were distributed and 142 valid responses were obtained (response rate = 76.76%). Data were analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 and a bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 resamples. The results show that Employee Agility has a positive and significant effect on Change Self-Efficacy ($\beta = .321$; $t = 3.099$; $p = .001$) and on Readiness for Change ($\beta = .250$; $t = 2.254$; $p = .012$). Learning Orientation significantly affects Change Self-Efficacy ($\beta = .272$; $t = 2.559$; $p = .010$) but has no significant direct effect on Readiness for Change ($\beta = .136$; $t = 1.221$; $p = .111$). Change Self-Efficacy significantly affects Readiness for Change ($\beta = .269$; $t = 3.247$; $p = .001$). Change Self-Efficacy partially mediates the effect of Employee Agility ($\beta = .086$; $t = 2.254$; $p = .012$) and fully mediates the effect of Learning Orientation ($\beta = .073$; $t = 1.794$; $p = .036$) on Readiness for Change. The model explains 30.0% of the variance in Change Self-Efficacy and 30.8% in Readiness for Change. The findings imply that change management programs should develop employee agility and learning culture while deliberately strengthening employees' change self-efficacy through mastery experiences and organizational support.

INTRODUCTION

Technological development, industrial competition, and increasingly complex public service demands have become the main drivers for modern organizations to undertake continuous strategic change. This phenomenon occurs across sectors, including the electricity sector, which currently faces pressure from rising energy needs, digitalization of power systems, demands for operational efficiency, and a business-model shift toward renewable energy (Ayamolowo et al., 2019). In this context, PT PLN (Persero), Indonesia's national electricity provider, has carried out an organizational transformation through a holding–subholding restructuring program intended to increase organizational flexibility, accelerate decision making, and strengthen competitiveness. The transformation has not only changed structures and technology but has also affected human resources: some employees still face challenges in adapting to digital work systems, new organizational structures, and increasingly complex competency demands, creating uncertainty about roles, responsibilities, and career paths (Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Markus, 1983). A preliminary interview with five key informants at PT PLN UP3 Padang using a five-point scale found that readiness indicators ranged only between 3.2 and 3.6 (moderate category), suggesting

that employees do not reject change but that their readiness, confidence, and optimism are not yet fully established.

Recent studies have positioned readiness for change as a key precursor to successful organizational transformation (Albrecht et al., 2023; Mladenova, 2022). Employee agility has been shown to influence readiness for change directly and through mediating mechanisms (Hossny et al., 2025; Jayadi & Suryatni, 2025), while learning orientation improves adaptability and change-supportive behavior (Chughtai et al., 2024; Gemici & Zehir, 2023; Hayirli et al., 2024). Meanwhile, self-efficacy has consistently been identified as an important dimension of, and mediator toward, individual readiness for change (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2020; Haffar et al., 2023; Haffar, Al-Karaghoul, Djebarni, & Gbadamosi, 2019).

Nevertheless, most prior research has focused on organizational factors such as leadership and communication (Albrecht et al., 2023; Mladenova, 2022). Studies examining individual factors such as employee agility and learning orientation remain limited, particularly in the utility sector, and previous studies have tended to overlook the psychological mechanism of change self-efficacy as a mediating variable (Bandura, 2024; Duchek, 2020). Much of the existing evidence also comes from the education sector rather than from complex electricity-utility settings.

Based on this gap, the present study examines the relationships among employee agility, learning orientation, and readiness for change, with change self-efficacy as a mediating variable, among employees of PT PLN UP3 Padang. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) — in which agility and learning orientation shape perceived behavioral control, attitudes, and subjective norms, and readiness for change reflects the intention to support change (Jimmieson et al., 2008) — the novelty of this study lies in integrating the three variables in one conceptual model, testing the underlying psychological mechanism, and providing contextual evidence from a state-owned utility undergoing transformation. Seven hypotheses were tested: employee agility affects change self-efficacy (H1); learning orientation affects change self-efficacy (H2); employee agility affects readiness for change (H3); learning orientation affects readiness for change (H4); change self-efficacy affects readiness for change (H5); and change self-efficacy mediates the effects of employee agility (H6) and learning orientation (H7) on readiness for change. The conceptual model of this study is presented in Figure 1.

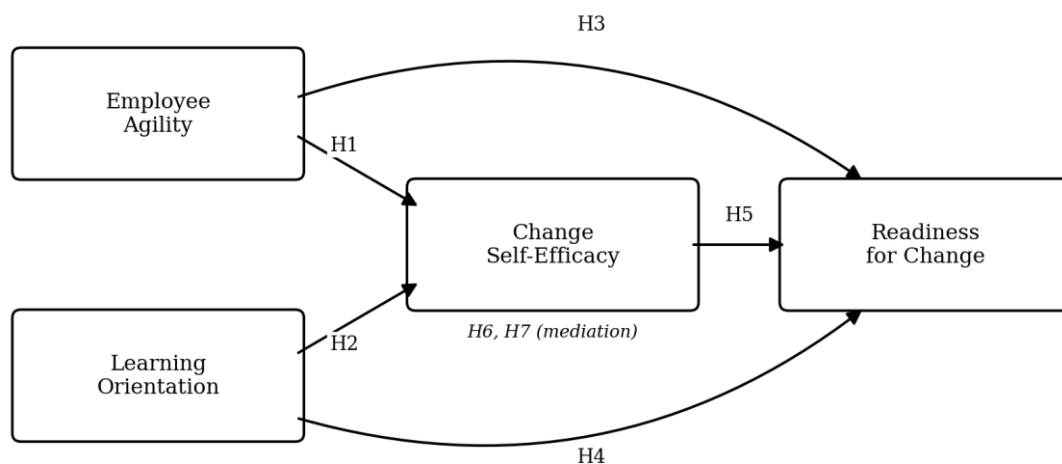


Figure 1. Research Model

METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a causal research design to examine cause-and-effect relationships among the research variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). The population comprised all 216 permanent employees of PT PLN UP3 Padang (January 2026 personnel data). The sample was drawn using probability sampling with a stratified random sampling technique based on job function (upper supervisor, basic supervisor, and functional staff), because job functions reflect different levels of responsibility, task complexity, and authority. The minimum sample size was determined using the Isaac and Michael formula with a 5% sampling error, yielding a minimum of 139 respondents distributed proportionally across strata. A total of 185 closed questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale were distributed directly and anonymously; 142 were returned complete and usable, giving a response rate of 76.76%, which is categorized as very good (Babbie, 2020).

The instrument measured four constructs: Employee Agility (adaptive, proactive, problem-solving, and resilient behaviors at work), Learning Orientation (commitment to learning, openness to new ideas, and shared vision), Change Self-Efficacy (employees' belief in their capability to understand, execute, and overcome obstacles during change), and Readiness for Change (cognitive, affective, and behavioral readiness to accept and support organizational change) (Holt et al., 2007). Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 because it can handle complex models with multiple relationships, works effectively with relatively small samples, and does not require normally distributed data (Ahmed et al., 2024; Hair et al., 2017). The evaluation covered the measurement model (outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and discriminant validity) and the structural model (R-square, f-square, Q-square, and path coefficients). Hypotheses were tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples; a relationship was declared significant when $t > 1.96$ and $p < .05$ (Hair et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The profile of the 142 respondents is summarized in Table 1. Most respondents had a tenure of 5–10 years (48.60%; mean tenure = 13.06 years) and were in the productive age group of 27–32 years (49.30%; mean age = 34.58 years). By grade, the sample was dominated by functional staff (66.20%), and by position group by officers (47.90%), so the study largely represents the views of operational employees who directly face changes in organizational systems and technology, while still covering supervisory and managerial perspectives (33.80% managerial). Half of the respondents held a bachelor's degree (50.70%), indicating adequate academic competence to understand the purpose, benefits, and demands of organizational change. Descriptively, all variables were in the good category: the mean score of Readiness for Change was 3.79, Employee Agility 3.77, Change Self-Efficacy 3.77, and Learning Orientation 3.76.

Table 1. Respondent Profile (n = 142)

Characteristic	Category	Freq.	Percent
Tenure	5–10 years	69	48.60
	11–15 years	39	27.50
	16–20 years	20	14.10
	21–25 years	8	5.60
	> 26 years	6	4.20
Age	27–32 years	70	49.30

Characteristic	Category	Freq.	Percent
	33–37 years	38	26.80
	38–42 years	15	10.60
	43–47 years	13	9.20
	> 48 years	6	4.20
Grade level	Functional	94	66.20
	Basic supervisor	38	26.80
	Upper supervisor	10	7.00
Education	Master (S2)	7	4.90
	Bachelor (S1)	72	50.70
	Diploma 4 (D4)	2	1.40
	Diploma 3 (D3)	39	27.50
	Senior/vocational high school	22	15.50
Position group	Managerial (ULP Manager, Assistant Manager, Team Leader)	48	33.80
	Officer (Junior Officer, Officer, Senior Officer)	68	47.90
	Technician (Junior Technician, Technician)	26	18.30

Source: processed data (2026).

Measurement Model

In the first estimation, five indicators (CSE1, EA5, LO1, LO4, and RC5) had outer loadings below .70 and were removed from the model. After re-estimation, all remaining indicators loaded above .70 on their intended constructs and each indicator's loading on its own construct exceeded its cross-loadings, satisfying convergent validity at the indicator level (Hair et al., 2014). As shown in Table 2, all constructs obtained AVE values above .50, Cronbach's alpha above .70, and composite reliability above .70, so all constructs are valid and reliable.

Table 2. Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Change Self-Efficacy (CSE)	.936	.920	.722
Employee Agility (EA)	.939	.910	.734
Learning Orientation (LO)	.930	.900	.707
Readiness for Change (RC)	.938	.940	.700

Source: processed data (2026).

Discriminant validity was confirmed through the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as presented in Table 3, where the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal) exceeds its correlations with other constructs. The Heterotrait–Monotrait ratios ranged from .473 to .758, all below the .90 threshold, providing further evidence that the four constructs are empirically distinct.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	CSE	EA	LO	RC
CSE	.850			
EA	.514	.857		
LO	.500	.711	.841	
RC	.466	.485	.448	.837

Note: diagonal values are the square roots of AVE. Source: processed data (2026).

Structural Model

The R-square value was .300 for Change Self-Efficacy and .308 for Readiness for Change, meaning the model explains 30.0% and 30.8% of the variance in the two endogenous constructs, respectively — a weak-to-moderate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2017), with the remainder explained by factors outside the model. The effect sizes (f-square) were small, ranging from .013 (LO → RC) to .073 (EA → CSE and CSE → RC). The Q²-predict values of .457 (CSE) and .509 (RC) were both greater than zero, indicating that the model has adequate predictive relevance.

Table 4. R-Square and Q-Square of Endogenous Constructs

Endogenous Construct	R-square	Q ² -predict
Change Self-Efficacy	.300	.457
Readiness for Change	.308	.509

Source: processed data (2026).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses were tested through bootstrapping on direct and indirect effects. The results of the direct-effect test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Path Coefficient Bootstrapping Results (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H1	EA → CSE	.321	3.099	.001	Supported
H2	LO → CSE	.272	2.559	.010	Supported
H3	EA → RC	.250	2.254	.012	Supported
H4	LO → RC	.136	1.221	.111	Not supported
H5	CSE → RC	.269	3.247	.001	Supported

Note: EA = Employee Agility; LO = Learning Orientation; CSE = Change Self-Efficacy; RC = Readiness for Change. Source: processed data (2026).

Table 5 shows that four of the five direct hypotheses were supported. Employee agility significantly affects change self-efficacy and readiness for change, learning orientation significantly affects change self-efficacy, and change self-efficacy significantly affects readiness for change. In contrast, the direct effect of learning orientation on readiness for change is positive but not significant. The indirect-effect results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Bootstrapping Results (Indirect Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H6	EA → CSE → RC	.086	2.254	.012	Supported

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H7	LO → CSE → RC	.073	1.794	.036	Supported

Source: processed data (2026).

Both indirect effects were significant ($p < .05$). Combining Tables 5 and 6, change self-efficacy acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between employee agility and readiness for change, because both the direct and indirect effects are significant. Meanwhile, change self-efficacy acts as a full mediator in the relationship between learning orientation and readiness for change, because the direct effect is not significant while the indirect effect is significant.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings

The support for H1 confirms that employee agility is a significant antecedent of change self-efficacy ($\beta = .321$; $t = 3.099$; $p = .001$) and, with $f^2 = .073$, is the strongest direct predictor of change self-efficacy in the model. Employees who repeatedly succeed in adapting, acting proactively, solving problems, and maintaining performance in dynamic situations accumulate mastery experiences — the most powerful source of self-efficacy in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2024) — which strengthen their conviction that they can face change (Dzimidienė & Bagdžiūnienė, 2022; Liu et al., 2025). The support for H3 ($\beta = .250$; $t = 2.254$; $p = .012$) shows that this agility also translates directly into readiness: more agile employees are more prepared to accept, support, and execute change because they can adjust their behavior and work methods to organizational demands (Hossny et al., 2025; Jayadi & Suryatni, 2025). In terms of the Theory of Planned Behavior, agile employees perceive greater behavioral control over changing work situations, which raises their intention to support change (Ajzen, 1991; Jimmieson et al., 2008).

Learning orientation significantly strengthens change self-efficacy (H2: $\beta = .272$; $t = 2.559$; $p = .010$), in line with studies showing that a learning orientation builds various forms of self-efficacy through continuous learning experiences (Elfgi et al., 2026; Kong et al., 2019). However, its direct effect on readiness for change is not significant (H4: $\beta = .136$; $t = 1.221$; $p = .111$; $f^2 = .013$). This result departs from studies reporting a direct relationship (Chughtai et al., 2024; Gemici & Zehir, 2023), and the full mediation found in H7 explains why: a willingness to learn does not automatically translate into readiness to change unless the learning process first builds employees' conviction that they can understand, adjust to, and work effectively in the changed situation. Learning that remains at the level of conceptual understanding — not yet connected to the concrete tasks, procedures, and standards that are actually changing — does not by itself produce readiness. Change self-efficacy itself significantly increases readiness for change (H5: $\beta = .269$; $t = 3.247$; $p = .001$), the largest direct effect on readiness in the model, consistent with evidence that self-efficacy is a core dimension of, and a consistent mediator toward, individual readiness (Bayraktar & Jiménez, 2020; Eliyana et al., 2016; Haffar et al., 2023).

The two mediation results clarify the architecture of the model. Change self-efficacy partially mediates the effect of employee agility on readiness for change (H6: $\beta = .086$; $t = 2.254$; $p = .012$): agility shapes readiness through two complementary routes, a direct route from adaptive, proactive, problem-solving, and resilient behavior, and a psychological route in which successful adaptation experiences raise self-belief, which in turn strengthens readiness. In contrast, change self-efficacy fully mediates the effect of learning orientation on readiness (H7: $\beta = .073$; $t = 1.794$; $p = .036$): learning contributes to readiness only after it has been converted into confidence to apply what has been learned. Finally, the modest explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = .300$ for change self-efficacy and $.308$ for readiness for change) and the uniformly small effect sizes ($f^2 = .013$ – $.073$) indicate that although the hypothesized relationships are statistically robust and the

model has good predictive relevance (Q^2 -predict = .457 and .509), individual agility, learning orientation, and self-efficacy are important but not exhaustive determinants of readiness; roughly 70% of the variance is attributable to factors outside the model, such as change communication, leadership, and organizational support.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes three theoretical contributions. First, it extends the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to change management by empirically mapping individual capabilities onto the theory's antecedents of intention: employee agility operates as a source of perceived behavioral control, learning orientation shapes attitudes toward change and subjective norms, and readiness for change functions as the intention to support change (Ajzen, 1991; Jimmieson et al., 2008). The finding that both capability variables work substantially through change self-efficacy is consistent with the theory's claim that perceived control is proximal to intention. Second, the study integrates employee agility, learning orientation, and change self-efficacy in a single model — variables that previous research has largely examined separately — and identifies change self-efficacy as the central psychological mechanism, refining resource-based accounts such as Conservation of Resources and Job Demands–Resources theory (Bakker & De Vries, 2021): agility and learning orientation help employees accumulate psychological resources, crystallized as change self-efficacy, which are then invested in readiness for change. The contrast between partial mediation (agility) and full mediation (learning orientation) adds nuance, showing that behavioral capabilities can act directly on readiness whereas learning dispositions require conversion into self-belief first. Third, the study provides contextual evidence from a state-owned electricity utility undergoing holding–subholding transformation, a setting underrepresented in a literature dominated by education and health-care samples (Albrecht et al., 2023; Hayirli et al., 2024; Mladenova, 2022), thereby supporting the generalizability of individual-level readiness mechanisms to public utility organizations.

Practical Implications

The findings imply that increasing employees' readiness for change at PT PLN UP3 Padang cannot rely on developing employee agility and learning orientation alone; both must be accompanied by deliberate strengthening of change self-efficacy. First, management should clarify the direction of change and the actions expected of employees, because employees' understanding of what to do during change (mean = 3.65) and the consistency of leaders' communication of change goals (mean = 3.68) were the lowest-scoring indicators of their respective variables. A concise change roadmap — covering the rationale and benefits of change, implementation stages, impact on jobs, role division, targets, and available help channels — communicated consistently and two-way by unit leaders and direct supervisors, would ensure employees know not only why the organization is changing but what their own role requires. Second, employee agility should be developed through structured work experiences, since the ability to adjust work methods quickly received the lowest agility score (mean = 3.67); change simulations, case-based training, cross-functional rotation, process-improvement teams, and after-action reviews using real work situations, each closed with specific feedback, allow employees to practice responding to real problems and adjusting how they work.

Third, learning activities should be made applicative and aligned across units. The absence of a direct effect of learning orientation on readiness indicates that knowledge sharing, training, and work discussions must use real change problems and be equipped with practice, application targets, and evaluation of results, so that learning does not stop at conceptual understanding. Cross-unit learning and coordination forums should also be used to align understanding of the direction of organizational development, which scored relatively low (mean = 3.65). Fourth, change self-efficacy should be strengthened through graduated mastery experiences and organizational support: giving employees staged opportunities to try new procedures, technologies,

or work systems in controlled settings, accompanied by mentoring from direct supervisors or experienced colleagues. Employees' ability to utilize organizational support was the highest-scoring self-efficacy indicator (mean = 3.87), so this support — active supervisor involvement, clear information, technical assistance, consultation forums, implementation mentoring, and continuous feedback — should be made easy to recognize, access, and use. Fifth, employee readiness should be monitored before, during, and after change programs, covering understanding of goals and roles, confidence in performing new tasks, implementation obstacles, use of support channels, and performance maintenance, so that communication, training, resourcing, and mentoring strategies can be adjusted responsively for units or groups that still need reinforcement.

Limitations and Future Research

The results should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the study was conducted in a single unit, PT PLN UP3 Padang, with 142 of 185 distributed questionnaires returned; although the 76.76% response rate is very good, organizational context, service areas, workloads, and the character of change may differ in other units, so the findings cannot be directly generalized across PLN. Second, the data are cross-sectional and self-reported, so responses may be affected by perception, working conditions at the time of completion, socially safe answering tendencies, and common-method bias, and the design cannot capture how readiness develops over time or establish temporal causal order. Third, the model includes only four constructs; the R^2 values of .300 and .308 mean that around 70% of the variance in change self-efficacy and readiness for change is explained by factors outside the model, such as change communication quality, organizational support, leadership, perceived benefits of change, engagement, commitment, and resistance. Fourth, all significant direct effects had small effect sizes ($f^2 = .013-.073$), so statistically significant relationships should be interpreted proportionally in terms of practical contribution.

Future research is therefore recommended to (1) expand the object and sample by involving several UP3s, ULPs, or PLN units in different regions in a multisite design to test whether the pattern of relationships holds across organizational characteristics and operating environments; (2) adopt longitudinal or time-lagged designs measuring the variables before, during, and after change implementation to trace the development of change self-efficacy and readiness and the sequencing of relationships; (3) combine quantitative and qualitative methods — interviews, focus groups, or case studies — to explore why learning orientation has no direct effect on readiness, how employees acquire self-belief, and the specific obstacles that arise during change; and (4) add relevant variables such as change communication quality, perceived organizational support, transformational leadership, perceived benefits of change, organizational commitment, employee engagement, and resistance to change, tested as predictors, mediators, or moderators, to increase the explanatory power of the model.

CONCLUSION

Based on data from 142 employees of PT PLN UP3 Padang, this study concludes that employee agility has a positive and significant effect on change self-efficacy and readiness for change; learning orientation has a positive and significant effect on change self-efficacy but no significant direct effect on readiness for change; and change self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on readiness for change. Change self-efficacy partially mediates the effect of employee agility and fully mediates the effect of learning orientation on readiness for change, placing it as the key psychological mechanism translating individual capabilities into readiness to change in a state-owned utility undergoing transformation. Descriptively, all variables are in the good category, yet the model explains only about 30% of the variance in the endogenous constructs, so agility, learning orientation, and self-efficacy are important but not the only determinants of readiness.

For PT PLN UP3 Padang, the practical recommendation is to manage change in an integrated way: clarify the change roadmap and employees' roles, develop agility through structured adaptive work experiences, direct learning toward application in real change tasks, strengthen change self-efficacy through graduated mastery experiences, mentoring, and accessible organizational support, and monitor employee readiness periodically. For researchers, extending the model to multiple sites, longitudinal and mixed-method designs, and additional organizational variables offers the most promising path to a fuller account of employee readiness for change.

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