KOTTER'S EIGHT STEP CHANGE MODEL FOR EMPLOYEES' INTENTIONAL, COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL READINESS FOR CHANGE AND DEVELOPING REGIONAL ECONOMY IN SAUDI BANKING SECTOR'S, ROLE OF HOMOLOGOUS COMMUNICATION, LEARNING DEMAND AND JOB INVOLVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

There are different organizations, which in order to comply with the changing business atmosphere, may introduce different kinds of changes in the organizations. In order to implement these changes in a successful manner, it is crucial that there must be readiness by the employees for the change made by the organization. This may be improved by the symmetric communication regarding change towards the employees. Learning demand and job involvement also play a crucial role in this regard. This study has been conducted so that the impact of symmetrical communication on readiness of change in the mediating role of job involvement and learning demand in the banking sector of Saudi Arabia can be studied and analyzed. The researcher has self-administered a questionnaire among 302 employees of banking sector of Saudi Arabia. It has been found out that the impact of symmetric communication is significant on intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness for change. Additionally, the mediating impact of learning demand in the above given relationship is significant in case of intentional readiness for change but insignificant for emotional and cognitive readiness for change. Lastly, the mediating impact of job involvement in the aforementioned relationship is significant in case of all dependent variables.

Keywords: Job Involvement, Learning Demand, Symmetric Communication, Readiness for Change

INTRODUCTION

Readiness to change has huge importance in the implementation of any kind of change in an organization. In the absence of readiness to change, the organization has to face a lot of resistances in the implementation of that particular change. Therefore, in order to overcome that resistance to change, it is necessary to give attention to the proper implementation of readiness to change. In this domain some questions raised such as what is symmetric communication? What is readiness for change? What are intentional, cognitive and emotional readiness for change? What is learning demand? What is job involvement? Different dimensions have been studied in this regard and the most important ones include intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness to change (Adams, 2017). The first dimension, intentional readiness involves the degree to which the employees of an organization are struggling to go through the change process. On the other hand, cognitive readiness involves the thinking and mentality of the employees in relevance of change in the organization. In the last, emotional readiness refers to the emotional or affective reactions that come out in the response of some change. All these dimensions come handy in different stages or scenarios while the implementation of a change process, but it is also believed that sometimes these dimensions work in relation with each other

too (Men & Jiang, 2016). Symmetrical communication has great importance during any change implementation process as it involves the fact that the organizations give attention to the concerns and perspectives of their stakeholders in regard of that change and the respond to those concerns in a constructive way instead of just ignoring them, which will be the opposite condition called as asymmetrical communication. In addition, another concept, learning demand is very crucial in this regard (Austin, Chreim & Grudniewicz, 2020; Huang, Hong, Yu, Ding & Jiang, 2019). As a matter of fact, there is huge difference between the language that is used in everyday life and the language that is related to particular scientific or technical concept. This difference between these two types of languages is referred to as learning demand and in order to meet this learning demand, different technical concepts must be presented in such a way that they make sense in context of everyday language. Job involvement is also very important concept as far as the readiness to change is concerned. It involves the extent to which an employee connects with the work and considers it as his identity (Dealtry, 2017; White et al., 2019). It involves motivation and satisfaction as crucial aspects that contribute towards the job involvement.

In Saudi Arabia Banking Sector, Banks are important commercial organizations in societies as they contribute to the development of the regional economy. Lately, the banking industry is developing at the highest rate worldwide. In Saudi Arabia, there were about 1,289 commercial bank branches in 2006, while this number has been increased to 2,079 branches by 2017 (Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority [SAMA], 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Symmetrical communication, fulfillment of learning demands and the involvement of employees in their jobs are very crucial aspects in order to enhance the readiness for change in context of its different dimensions such as intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness. However, it has been observed that in Saudi Arabia, Symmetrical communication, fulfillment of learning demands and job involvement are somehow lacking and thus creating difficulties in the readiness to accept change in the organizations. Other developing and under developed countries are also facing similar issues. Thus it is very important to resolve these issues as soon as possible so that the readiness towards change may be enhanced in these countries.

In the past, there are various studies that have explored the aspects of readiness for change in its different dimensions. Different studies have also studies the role of communication in this regard but there is no study in the past that has seen the mediating impact of learning demand and job involvement between the relationship of symmetrical communication and readiness for change in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, Thien (2019) has recommended to conduct this study.

Research Purpose and Significance

This study has the following objectives:

- To analyze the impact of symmetric communication on intentional, cognitive and emotional readiness for change in the banking sector of Saudi Arabia
- To determine the mediating role of learning demand between symmetric communication and intentional, cognitive and emotional readiness for change in the banking sector of Saudi Arabia
- To explore the mediating role of job involvement between symmetric communication and intentional, cognitive and emotional readiness for change in the banking sector of Saudi Arabia

With the advancement of technology and other organizational aspects, changes in the organizations have become inevitable and thus it is necessary to study the factors that enhance the readiness for change implementation in the organizations in Saudi Arabia and in other countries. Therefore the scope of this study revolves around the impact of symmetrical

communication on readiness of change in the mediating role of job involvement and learning demand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past, various theories have been developed and practiced effectively in order to implement a particular change in an organization successfully. Among these theories, there is an important theory named, Kotter's Eight Step Change Model that was developed and introduced by Kotter, professor at Harvard Business School, in his own book "Leading Change" published in 1995.

Kotter's Eight Step Change Model

According to Kotter (1995), the first step in any change process is to create the sense of urgency for that change. In other words, it is necessary to put such image of a change in front of people that they become motivated and develop a want for that change (Upham et al., 2018). The second step of this process is to convince them to adopt that change and it requires a lot of efforts and effective leadership, having powerful convincing powers. The next step is to visualize the change in front of the employees in such a way that it becomes very easy for them to understand and adopt it. If the change is scattered in pieces, it becomes difficult to understand and adopt the changes. According to Quy, Dong & Nguyen (2018), the forth step, which is directly related to this particular study is that the vision behind the change must be communicated to the people effectively. This communication must not only be performed in specially called meetings of the employees but the change vision must become the part of the organization's daily work. The fifth step is to eradicate any barrier that come in the way of implementing change either for the organization or for the employees working there. Kang and Sung (2017) discussed that the sixth step of the model is to show people that the change implementation has been proved successful for the organization and this must be shown with proof and statistics related to the change. The seventh step is to make decisions according to the change implemented and the final step is to make that particular change a crucial part of the organization and act according to it (Lambert, Qureshi, Frank, Klahm & Smith, 2018). As this model relates the two important concepts of the study *i.e.,* communication and readiness for change, thus this model may be effectively used in the study.

Readiness for Change

According to the studies conducted in the past on the readiness for change, the individual readiness for change is actually the process in which a person's beliefs and objectives play an important role in deciding that to what extent and what kind of changes are required. In addition, it also incorporates the idea that how an individual or the organization in which that person is working will make a successful implementation of a particular change. Ahmad, Ishak & Bunyamin (2019) have identified the similar concept in such a way that the degree to which the employees of an organization are putting physical, psychological and mental efforts in order to go with the implemented change and conform to it in the organization. In accordance with the studies conducted in the past, it has been found out that readiness for change is a multi-dimensional aspect and it contains various dimensions. The most important dimensions that have been identified by Qu, et al., (2016) include intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness for change. All these dimensions have been considered to be at individual level in these studies.

Symmetric Communication and Intentional Readiness for Change

Communication plays a very crucial role in the successful implementation of changes in the organizations in different ways. As per the Kotter's eight step change model, it has been seen that the communication is an important step while introducing the change. It has been discussed by Czarniawska (2017) that when the change is effectively communicated in all it aspects to the employees of the organization, they not only understand its motive but also made their efforts to agree with these changes. The first dimension discussed in the past studies is intentional readiness for change, which involves the degree of efforts which the employees of an organization are putting to go with the change implemented. Symmetric communication is directly involved in motivating them to put their utmost efforts in this regard.

Symmetric Communication and Emotional Readiness for Change

In the similar way, the second dimension is emotional readiness for change which involves the affective feelings and reactions of the individuals towards the implementation of change and if they are properly communicated about the pros and cons of the change, they may get emotionally attached to the change positively.

Symmetric Communication and Cognitive Readiness for Change

According to the study by Loke, et al., (2017), the last dimension is cognitive readiness that is connected with the employees' beliefs about the implications of a particular change implemented in the organization and the effective communication may prove very helpful in making these beliefs positive about that change. As far as all these dimensions are found in any organization for a change, the organization puts all its efforts to reduce all the other resistances that might come in the way of change. Thus the readiness may be considered as the first step towards change implementation (Ruelens et al., 2016).
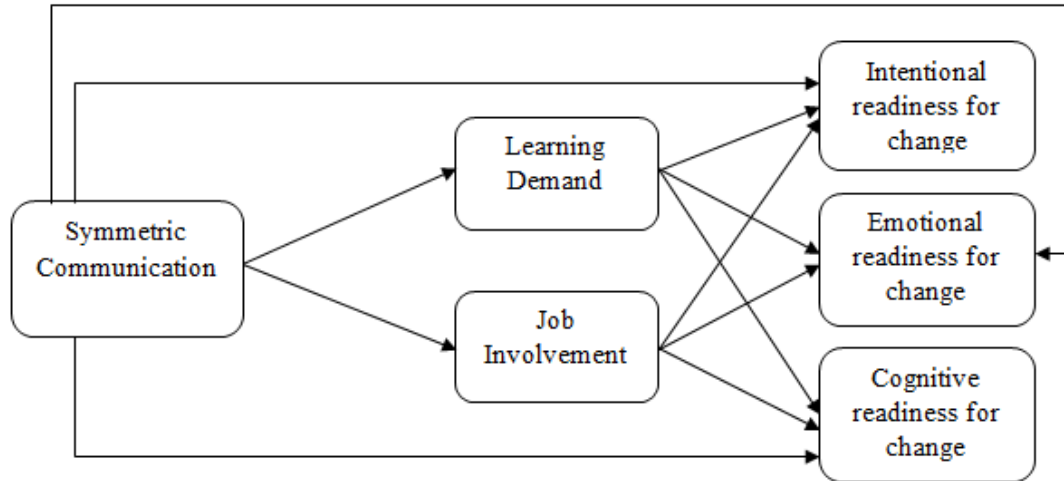
Learning Demand and Readiness for Change

Benzer, Charns, Hamdan & Afable, (2017) described learning demand as the difference that occurs between the language that is used by people in everyday life and the language that is used in the understanding of different scientific and technical aspects of life. This difference called as learning demand may be fulfilled by effective communication that is symmetric and involves two way responses between the individuals. The degree of learning demand actually refers to the extent to which the efforts must be made in order to understand a technical concept in everyday language (Men & Sung, 2019). This aspect is very useful in the change implementation process as it requires effective communication to the people for which the change is being implemented. All the dimensions of readiness for change may be related to the learning demand of the employees *i.e.,* intentional, emotional and cognitive, as per the steps introduced in Kotter's eight step change model discussed earlier. The fulfillment of learning demand may induce the feelings and beliefs of agreeing and going with the changes and also to put their utmost efforts to participate in that particular change (Nilsen, Wallerstedt, Behm & Ahlström, 2018).

Job Involvement and Readiness for Change

Kabat-Farr, Walsh & McGonagle, (2019) discussed that the degree to which the employees are connected to their jobs may be referred to be job involvement and it plays a crucial role in inducing the readiness for change in the employees of an organization. In other words, if the employees are more involved into their jobs, it enhances the feeling of readiness to

accept a particular change implemented by an organization. This readiness may be related to any of the dimensions of readiness *i.e.,* intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness. The impact of communication is also multiplied many folds positively when the degree of job involvement is higher. According to Welbourne & Sariol, (2017), job involvement also puts the feelings and emotions as well as the beliefs and attitudes of the employees that are positively beneficial for the implementation of a particular change in the organization

FIGURE 1
THEORETICAL MODEL

METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

Impact of Symmetric Communication on Intentional, Cognitive and Emotional Readiness for Change As far as all these dimensions are found in any organization for a change, the organization puts all its efforts to reduce all the other resistances that might come in the way of change. Thus the readiness may be considered as the first step towards change implementation (Ruelens et al., 2016). Thus based on the Kotter's model and the literature reviewed from the past, the researcher has formulated the following hypotheses:

H 1(a): Symmetric communication has significant impact on intentional readiness for change
H 1(b): Symmetric communication has significant impact on emotional readiness for change
H 1(c): Symmetric communication has significant impact on cognitive readiness for change

Impact of Symmetric Communication on Intentional, Cognitive and Emotional Readiness for Change *via* the meditating variable of Learning Demand The fulfillment of learning demand may induce the feelings and beliefs of agreeing and going with the changes and also to put their utmost efforts to participate in that particular change (Nilsen, Wallerstedt, Behm & Ahlström, 2018). Thus based on this discussion of the literature from the past, the researcher has generated the following hypotheses:

H 2(a): Learning demand has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and intentional readiness for change
H 2(b): Learning demand has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and emotional readiness for change
H 2(c): Learning demand has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and cognitive readiness for change

Impact of Symmetric Communication on Intentional, Cognitive and Emotional Readiness for Change *via* the meditating variable of Job Involvement According to Welbourne

& Sariol, (2017), job involvement also puts the feelings and emotions as well as the beliefs and attitudes of the employees that are positively beneficial for the implementation of a particular change in the organization. Thus these instances and statements from the literature from the past, reviewed by the researcher result in the formation of the following hypotheses:

H 3(a): Job involvement has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and intentional readiness for change

H 3(b): Job involvement has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and emotional readiness for change

H 3(c): Job involvement has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and cognitive readiness for change

Sample Description

As the current study has been conducted in order to investigate the impact of symmetrical communication on readiness of change in the mediating role of job involvement and learning demand, the researcher has collected data for this purpose from the banking sector of Saudi Arabia. 302 employees working in different banks in Saudi Arabia have been selected as the respondents in this study. For sampling, the purposive sampling technique has been employed by the researcher. These employees have been selected due to the reason that they have enough and required information about the different dimensions of readiness for change and the role of symmetric communication, learning demand and job involvement in this regard. Thus they may provide accurate and essential data for the research.

Instrument Used

Self-administered questionnaire has been used by the researcher in order to collect essentially required data from the respondents. The questionnaire has been designed carefully in a well sequenced manner, having a blend of different interesting questions, so that the interest of the respondents may be held during data collection process. The language and content used in the questionnaire has been used in accordance with the knowledge and understanding of the respondents so that ambiguity and confusion may be avoided and the data may be free from all biases. The questions and items in the questionnaire have been discussed in this section as follows.

Measurement

The variables used in the study include intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness for change as dependent variables, symmetric communication as independent variable, and job involvement and learning demand as mediating variables. Intentional readiness for change has been measured by using three items, one of which is "I am willing to put energy into the process of change". In addition, the other dependent variable, emotional readiness for change has been measured by three items, one of which is "I experience the change as a positive process". The last dependent variable, cognitive readiness for change has been measured through two items, one of which is "I find that most changes will have a negative effect on students". All these items that are used to measure intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness for change have been taken from the study conducted by Bouckenooghe, Devos, and Van den Broeck (2009). Moreover, the independent variable, symmetric communication has been measured by using 6 items, taken from the study conducted in the past (Roper, 2005). The first mediating variable, learning demand has been measured through two items, which have been developed by a researcher is the past study (Leach & Scott, 2000). The other mediating variable, job involvement has been measured on the basis of four items, which have been developed in a study conducted in the past in the similar context (Reeve & Smith, 2001). All these items have

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been rated on a five point Likert scale that ranges from 1 to 5, where 1(strongly disagree) and 5(strongly agree). As the measurement items have been taken from the past studies, it enhances the validity and reliability of the items and the data collected through the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographics

The demographics of the study indicate that the total number of respondents in the current study is 302 and these include males and females in the ratio of 52% and 48% respectively. All the respondents are the employees working in the banking sector of Saudi Arabia. In context of education of the respondents, it has been found out that 37 respondents were having graduation, 131 respondents were having post-graduation, 103 respondents were Master's Degree holders and the remaining 31 respondents had different other educational qualifications. Apart from education, another important context of demographics given here is age of the respondents. In this regard, the number of respondents having age from 21 to 30 years is 69, those having age from 31 to 40 years are 87, those having age from 41 to 50 years are 97 while the remaining 49 respondents were having age more than 50 years.

Reliability and Validity

To determine the reliability and validity of the research-measuring instrument, this research used Descriptive Statistics. As per the results of descriptive statistics presented in table 1, it can be evaluated that there is no out liar present in the collected data. This evaluation is made on the basis of almost all the values of minimum and maximum values of data that range from 1 to 5. In addition to this, it has also been evaluated that the data is skewed between -1 and +1, thus indicating its normality. These evaluations suggest that the data is valid to be used in the study.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**
SYMCOM	302	1.00	5.00	3.5811	1.07530	-.886	.140
LD	302	1.00	5.00	3.5993	1.14486	-.724	.140
JI	302	1.00	5.00	3.5911	1.10814	-.834	.140
IR	302	1.00	5.00	3.6104	1.08010	-.853	.140
ER	302	1.00	6.33	3.4117	1.08826	-.239	.140
CR	302	1.00	5.00	3.4437	1.14923	-.522	.140
Valid N (listwise)	302						

Table 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Factory Loading and Convergent Validity

Two types of results have been presented in table 2 *i.e.,* factor loading and convergent validity. The factor loading of all the indicators that have been used in the study are greater than 0.7, thus suggesting that the collected data is eligible to be used in the study and to be applied different tests and techniques for further analysis. On the other hand, two types of values have been given in context of convergent validity *i.e.,* composite reliability and average valiance extracted. The values of CR for all indicators is greater than 70% while AVE values are greater than 50%, thus indicating the authenticity of the collected data.

Table 2
FACTORY LOADING AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY

	SC	LD	JI	IR	ER	CR	CR	AVE
SC1	.700						0.940	0.725
SC2	.777							
SC3	.832							
SC4	.839							
SC5	.833							
SC6	.821							
LD1						.796	0.902	0.821
LD2						.807		
JI1		.827					0.937	0.788
JI2		.854						
JI3		.886						
JI4		.813						
IR1			.814				0.902	0.754
IR2			.859					
IR3			.810					
ER1				.778			0.870	0.690
ER2				.812				
ER3				.846				
CR1					.816		0.859	0.754
CR2					.833			

Discriminant Validity

As the discriminant validity results presented in table 3, shows that all the variables used in the study are having different loading values, thus they are not related to each other and thus the data collected obtained is valid to be used in the study.

Table 3
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

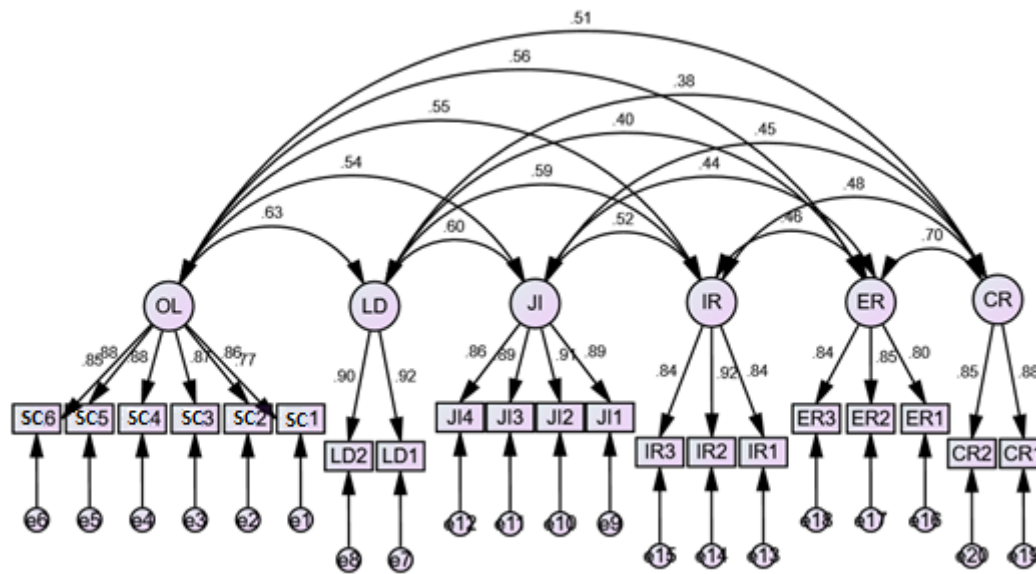|	IR	SC	LD	JI	CR	ER
IR	0.868					
SC	0.546	0.851				
LD	0.592	0.631	0.906			
JI	0.523	0.543	0.601	0.888		
CR	0.484	0.510	0.381	0.447	0.868	
ER	0.455	0.555	0.397	0.444	0.453	0.864

Statistical Analysis

The collected data has been subjected to the specialized software SPSS and AMOS, by the researcher so that it may be analyzed effectively. Various tests and techniques have been applied on the collected data through the aforementioned software. In this regard, demographic analysis, descriptive analysis and factor analysis can be effectively obtained from SPSS. On the other hand, confirmatory factor analysis and structure equation modeling are obtained by using AMOS. All the results that have been obtained through these tests and techniques are then analyzed and interpreted accordingly in the next section

Confirmatory Factors Analysis and KMO

Two types of results have been presented in table 4 *i.e.,* confirmatory factor analysis and KMO. CFA results show that all the values for the indicators are within the threshold range

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given in the table. In addition, the KMO value, 0.922 being very close to 1.00 shows that factor analysis may be useful for the study.

		Table 4				
	CONFIRMATORY FACTORS ANALYSIS AND KMO					
CFA Indicators	CMIN/DF	GFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	KMO
Threshold Value	≤ 3	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08	0.6 – 1.0
Observed Value	1.711	0.919	0.978	0.978	0.049	0.922

FIGURE 2
CFA

Structural Equation Modeling

The results of structural equation modeling have been presented in table 5, by the researcher. As seen in the table, it is evident that the first hypothesis involving the symmetric communication having significant impact on intentional readiness for change has been accepted. In the similar way, next two hypotheses involving the symmetric communication having significant impact on emotional and cognitive readiness for change have also been accepted in the study. As far as the learning demand is concerned, the next hypothesis which stated that learning demand has significant mediating impact between symmetric communication and intentional readiness, has also been accepted. However, the next two hypotheses, which stated that learning demand has significant mediating impact between symmetric communication; and emotional and cognitive readiness, have been rejected as the p-value is greater than 0.05. In the last, the results of mediating impact of job involvement have been shown. It can be seen that all three hypothesis showing the significant mediating impact of job involvement between symmetric communication; and intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness, have been accepted.

	Table 5			
	STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING			
Hypothesis	B-Value	SE	P-Value	Decision
SYMCOM→IR	.220	.063	***	Accepted
SYMCOM→ER	.406	.068	***	Accepted
SYMCOM→CR	.338	.074	***	Accepted
SYMCOM→LD→IR	.177	.053	***	Accepted
SYMCOM→LD→ER	.002	.057	.952	Rejected

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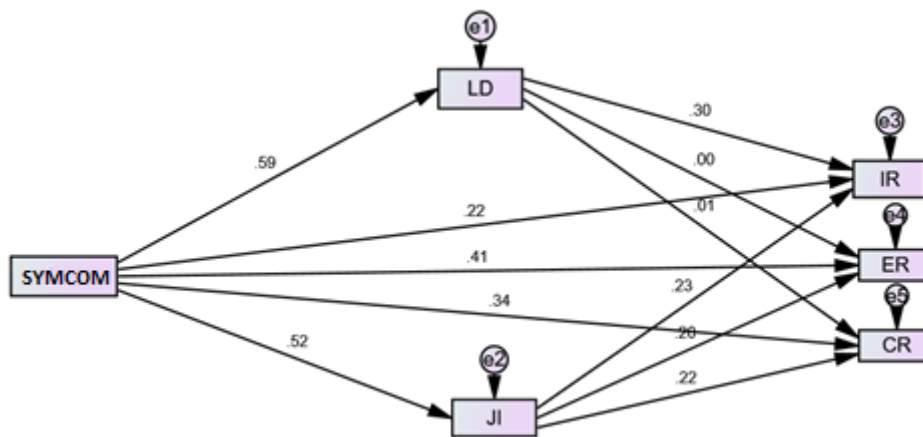| SYMCOM→LD→CR | .006 | .062 | .854 | Rejected |
SYMCOM→JI→IR	.116	.052	***	Accepted
SYMCOM→JI→ER	.100	.056	***	Accepted
SYMCOM→JI→CR	.113	.061	***	Accepted

FIGURE 3
SEM

DISCUSSION

It has been very clear from the earlier sections that this study has been designed in order to explore different aspects of the impact of symmetrical communication on readiness of change in the mediating role of job involvement and learning demand. In this regard, the first hypothesis which indicated that symmetric communication has significant impact on intentional readiness for change, has been accepted. This result is consistent with the studies that have been conducted in the past having similar variables (Dobrev et al., 2016). In the similar manner, the next two hypotheses which suggested that symmetric communication has significant impact on emotional and cognitive readiness for change each; have also been accepted, as per the results. These results are also in line with the past studies (Hannon et al., 2017; Upham et al., 2018). In context of learning demand, the next hypothesis which indicated that learning demand has significant mediating impact in the relationship between symmetric communication and intentional readiness, has also been accepted, which is in accordance with a past study (Gant, 2019). On the other hand, the next two hypotheses, which indicated that learning demand has significant mediating impact between symmetric communication; and emotional and cognitive readiness, have been rejected as per the results. The past studies having similar context strengthen these results (Ahmad et al., 2019; Lambert et al., 2018). In the last, all three hypotheses showing the significant mediating impact of job involvement between symmetric communication; and intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness, have been accepted, totally in consistency with studies of other researchers (Kirrane, Lennon, O'Connor & Fu, 2017; Peeroo, Samy & Jones, 2017; Vakola & Ioannis, 2017).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH INDICATIONS

This study has the sample size of 302 employees, which must be increased in the future studies. In addition, any sector other than banking sector may be considered by other researchers. Apart from Saudi Arabia, other countries must be considered so that their perspective in the similar context may be obtained. The variables used in the current study may be replaced with others and a whole new study will be designed in this way.

CONCLUSION

Various organizations may introduce different kinds of changes in order to comply with the changing business atmosphere and revolutionized technology era. In order to make these changes successful, it is very important that there must be readiness for the suggested change made by the organization. This may be enhanced by the symmetric communication regarding change towards the employees. Learning demand and job involvement also play an important role in the increase in readiness. This study has been designed in order to study and analyze the impact of symmetrical communication on readiness of change in the mediating role of job involvement and learning demand in the banking sector of Saudi Arabia. The results of the study indicate that the impact of symmetric communication is significant on intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness for change. On the other hand, it has been found out that the mediating impact of learning demand in the above given relationship is significant in case of intentional readiness for change but insignificant for emotional and cognitive readiness for change. In the same way, the mediating impact of job involvement in the aforementioned relationship is significant in case of all dependent variables.

Implications

This study has various theoretical, practical and policy making implications as discussed by the researcher. This study contains a significant amount of information on the change readiness aspects such as intentional, emotional and cognitive readiness as well as symmetric communication, job involvement and learning demand. Different researchers may find this information useful for their studies. Organizations may get guidance in regard of any change implementation and to communicate them to the employees. Different policies regarding change implementation may also be designed by the policy makers in the similar context.

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