Transformational Leadership and Employee's Behavioral Support for Organizational Change

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Abstract

The successful implementation of organizational change has become an important management task, given that countless companies fail to implement organizational changes successfully in recent decades. Further, there has been a lack of empirical research on the role of transformational leadership in a change context per se. In this regard, the present study aims to fill this gap by conducting an empirical research in hopes of contributing to a better understanding of the inner workings of employees' supportive attitudes and behavior toward change by investigating the relationship between transformational leadership and employee's behavioral support for organizational change. The results from a sample of 448 respondents in Taiwan provide additional insight into the mechanism through which transformational leadership influences behavioral support for organizational change.

Key words: Transformational leadership; self-efficacy; affective commitment to change; behavioral support for change.

1. Introduction

As modern organizations pursue changes to enhance their competitive positions and their survivability in competitive markets (Higgs & Rowland, 2005), these ongoing and seemingly endless changes put a lot of strain not only on organizations but also on individuals (McHugh,1997;Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Specifically, they strove to retain their competitive edge by reorganizing, downsizing, and implementing new information and human resource management (HRM) systems. In practice, these changes were perceived stressful by their employees (Eby, et al., 2000; Elrod & Tippett, 2002; Jaskyte, 2003; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005) since organizational changes create fear, uncertainty and doubt (Jackson, & Rothmann, 2006) which, in turn, catalyses their tendency to resist, avoid, and devalue organizational change (Oreg, 2003).

Indeed, countless companies have failed to implement organizational changes successfully in recent decades (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Jaros, 2010; Judge, Thoresen, Pucik & Welbourne, 1999). These failures indicate that there is considerable room for researchers to provide insights into opportunities for improving the success of these changes (Parish, Cadwallader & Busch, 2007). Nevertheless, there is limited understanding of the numerous factors associated with people's motivation to support organizational change (Lamm & Gordon, 2010). In this regard, this study believes it is both important and beneficial to gain a greater understanding of the complexities of individuals' affective reactions during organizational change (Herold, Fedor & Caldwell, 2007) in the attempt to improve the success of organizational changes (Parish et al., 2007).

Many studies asserted that positive attitudes to change were found to be vital in achieving organizational goals and in succeeding in change programmes (Eby et al., 2000). In this regard, leadership has been seen as one of the most important variables affecting the attitudinal dimension of organizational life (Jaskyte, 2003) and been considered a critical element in organizational change (Yousef, 2000). Specifically, in the last two decades, evidence has reported that transformational leadership is an influential mode of leadership that is associated with high levels of individual and organizational performance (Kark & Dijk, 2007). Therefore, although previous research has shown that transformational behaviors are related to high employee performance (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996), scholars have given little attention to what underlying mechanisms, in the process of change, enable transformational leaders to affect followers' attitude and to arouse different types of motivation among their followers (Avolio, et al., 2004; Bono & Judge, 2003; Kark & Shamir, 2002; Kirk & Dijk, 2007).

Further, despite the rather large literature concerning transformational leadership and organizational change-related concepts, the vast majority of studies have been done in the United States and other western countries. In addition, literature on organizational change has been limited by the fact that past studies have tended to investigate the affective and attitudinal responses of employees to organizational change more than behavioral responses (Lamm & Gordon, 2010). Hence, the goal of the present study is twofold. First, is to examine the underlying process through which transformational leadership influence followers' behavioral support for change. Second, is to explore the mediating roles of self-efficacy and affective commitment to change on the

relationship between transformational leadership and behavioral support for change.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses
2.1 Transformational leadership
There is evidence that employees engage in an exchange relationship with both the organization as a whole and their immediate supervisor (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). In many respects, the supervisor is the most immediate and salient person in the context of an individual's work, as employees tend to view actions by agents of the organization as actions of the organization itself (Livinson, 1965). Hence, the supervisor must have a direct influence on their subordinate's attitudes which, in turn, determine their behaviors through leading behaviors.

Transformational leadership has been portrayed in the literature as different from transactional or monitoring types of leadership. For instance, Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) distinguished transformational leaders from transactional leaders. Specifically, Bass and Avolio (1994) identified four behaviors associated with transformational leaders: (1) idealized influence, which can be defined as serving as a charismatic role model to followers; (2) inspirational motivation that involves articulation of a clear, appealing, and inspiring vision to followers; (3) intellectual stimulation of follower creativity by questioning assumptions and challenging the status quo; and (4) individual consideration, which involves attending to and supporting the individual needs of followers.

In essence, transformational leadership arouses team spirit, reframes stressful events into developmental opportunities, and inspires others to perceive difficult situations as meaningful challenges necessary for developing one's professional and personal skills (Sosik, et al., 2000). Further, by emphasizing the importance of collective interest, transformational leadership evokes followers' higher-order needs and motivates them to identify with a vision that reaches beyond their own self-interest (Judge & Bono, 2000).

2.2 Behavioral Support for Change
Behavioral support for change refers to behaviors that are consistent with the goals of change (Orth, 2002). According to Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), there are three kinds of behavior which are supportive to change: compliance, cooperation and championing. Compliance refers to employees' willingness to do what is required of them by the organization in implementing the change. Cooperation refers to employees' acceptance of the "spirit" of the change and willingness to do little extras to make it work. Finally, championing refers to employees' willingness to embrace the change and "sell" it to others.

In practice, organizational change causes changes to, and demands readjustment of, average employees' normal routines (Graetz & Smith, 2010) and creates fear, uncertainty, and doubt (Jaskyte, 2003). Moreover, employees are skeptical about change and concerned about its outcomes during organizational change (Lau & Woodman, 1995). This, consequently, results in a natural tendency for employees to resist, avoid, and devalue organizational change (Oreg, 2003). Since employee attitudes toward change can impact their acceptance and support to change, employees' supportive behavior are a necessary condition for successful planned change (Fedor et al., 2006; Meyer, et al., 2007; Miller et al.,1994; Parish et al., 2007).

2.3 Transformational Leadership and Behavioral Support for Change
Job-related stress is often a function of an individual's perception of organizational and environmental events (organizational change, in this case) and meaning attached to these events (cf. Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; McCauley,1987; Schuler,1980). The meaning which individuals associate with these events is often influenced by significant others, such as an immediate supervisor (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000;Kram and Hall,1989;Simircich and Morgan,1982).Indeed, supervisors play an important role in structuring the work environment by providing information and feedback to employees (Griffin, Patterson & West, 2001) and by controlling the powerful rewards that acknowledge the employee's personal worth (Doby & Caplan, 1995). As such, the social interaction between an employee and his/her immediate supervisor is the primary determinant of an employee's supportive behavior to organizational change(Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

Because transformational leaders are change-oriented and inspiring, such leaders would be expected to create greater identification with other work unit members and extract extra effort from its members (Hogg, 2001). Specifically, the influence of transformational leaders is based on their success in connecting followers' self-concept or identity to the mission of their unit or organization (Kark and Shamir, 2003). Thus, transformational leaders are able to influence followers' behavior by promoting higher levels of intrinsic value associated with goal accomplishment, emphasizing the linkages between followers' effort and goal achievement, and by creating a higher level of personal commitment on the part of the leader and followers to a common vision, mission, and organizational goals (Avolio, et al., 2004).

Moreover, according to the concept of personifying the organization (Levinson, 1965), the immediate supervisor's behaviors are likely to be perceived by employees as representative of organizational decisions (Griffin et al., 2001). Thus, favorable or unfavorable treatment by the employees' immediate supervisors is

interpreted as the organization's benevolent or malevolent orientation towards them (i.e., perceived organizational support) (Loi, Ngo, & Foley, 2006). Accordingly, employees, based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), develop a generalized felt obligation to care about the organization's welfare and help the organization achieve its objectives (e.g., successful implementation of change) (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

In sum, during the period of change, transformational leadership arouses team spirit, reframes stressful events into developmental opportunities, and inspires others to perceive tough situations as meaningful challenges (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).Thus, it seems likely that transformational leaders tend to orient their followers to perceive organizational change in a positive way and, accordingly, to enhance their followers' supportive behavior toward organizational change. Accordingly, hypothesis 1 is stated as:

H1: There is a direct positive relationship between transformational and behavioral support for change.

2.4 The mediating roles of Self-efficacy and Affective Commitment to Change

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the roles of self-efficacy and affective commitment to change as mediators of the transformational leadership–behavioral support for change relationship are supported, in part, by the links between: (1) transformational leadership and behavioral support for change, (2) transformational leadership and self-efficacy, (3) self-efficacy and affective commitment to change, and (4) affective commitment to change and behavioral support for change. Hence, all the links mentioned above, except the link between transformational leadership and behavioral support for change, are discussed as follows.

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership and Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as an employee's belief in his/her capability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources and the courses of action needed to exercise control over events in their lives (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Based on this definition, self-efficacy defines the extent to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable of successfully performing an assigned task (Bandura, 1986) and enables him/her to integrate cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral sub-skills, in order to accomplish a particular objective (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999).

For decades, self-efficacy has consistently been found to influence thought patterns, behaviors and emotional arousal (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). Self-efficacy gradually emerges through the experiences that an individual accumulates. The cognitive appraisal and integration of the data stemming from these experiences ultimately determine an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982).

With respect to the relationship between transformational leadership with self-efficacy, based on the four sources of self-efficacy (i.e., Mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal) specified by Bandura (1982), this study expects transformational leadership to have an effect on inducing the four sources of efficacy judgments previously identified by Bandura (1986, 1997). For example, a transformational supervisor can provide opportunities for mastery and vicarious experiences to their subordinates, in addition to serving as a model of encouragement, through verbal persuasion (Schyns, 2004).

Moreover, it is suggested that individuals in organizations strive for self-esteem (Michel, Stemaier, & Salvador, 2010). Although self-esteem and self-efficacy are distinct, they are related both theoretically and empirically (Gardner & Peirce, 1998). According to Michel et al. (2011), self-esteem is derived from group membership and from the way in which the group to which one belongs is valued by his or her supervisor. In this regards, this study assumes a supervisor who involves articulation of a clear, appealing, and inspiring vision to followers (inspirational motivation), and involves attending to and supporting the individual needs of followers (individual consideration) is likely to enhance followers' self-esteem and a positive self-concept.

Empirically, previous research supports the contention that transformational leaders can persuade employees that they are capable of producing expected outcomes (Tierney & Farmer, 2002).In other words, a transformational leader in the workplace is perceived by recipients as a major organizational resource upon which they can rely when performing daily tasks. Specifically, during organizational change, the perceived availability of transformational leadership may enhance employees' confidence that the job will get done well.

In summary, it is reasonable to state that a transformational leader allows subordinates to feel confident in their ability to confront challenges and overcome problems successfully in the workplace, which in turn enhances their self-efficacy. Thus, this study assumes that there is a direct positive relationship between transformational leadership and self-efficacy.

2.4.2 Self-efficacy and Affective Commitment to Change

It is suggested that a negative relationship exists between stress caused by organizational change and attitudes towards organizational change (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). In other words, one of the challenges of organizational change is to keep their employees committed throughout these change processes (Van den Heuvel et al., 2009). According to Elizur and Guttman (1976), attitudes toward change reflect a person's cognitions about change, affective reactions to change, and behavioral tendency toward change. In general, employees'

attitudes to an organizational change can be ranged from strong positive attitudes (i.e., high commitment to change) to strong negative attitudes (i.e., low commitment to change) (Piderit, 2000).

As noted above, positive attitudes to change were found to be vital in succeeding in change process (Eby et al., 2000). In essence, commitment to change captures the notion of positive, proactive intent, which involves lack of resistance to change and the absence of negative attitudes (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Piderit, 2000).According to Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002, commitment to change in general consist of three components: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment to change. Specifically, this study focuses on affective commitment to change which reflects a desire to provide support for the change based on a belief in its inherent benefits (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Conceptually, there is a human tendency to resist change, because it forces people to adopt new ways of doing things (Lunenburg, 2010) and is intended to alter key organizational variables (e.g., systems and/or processes). As a result, individuals experience uncertainty and have fears about the potential failure in coping with the new situation (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005) that then affect his or her attitudes and behaviors toward changes(Jimmieson, Terry, & Callan, 2004). More specifically, fears about the potential failure in coping with the new situation causes resistance to change (Lunenburg, 2010).

Bandura (1986) portrayed how individuals as personal agents have the capacity for self-reflection, and with this capacity they are not only agents of change but also capable of reviewing and reflecting on their self-efficacy to successfully address confronting challenges. Further, according to Bandura (1991), an individual's belief in their own efficacy influences the choices they make, their aspirations, the level of effort they will sustain on a given task and how positively or negatively they think when coping with change. Also, evidence exists in the organizational change literature supporting the importance of perceived control in coping with change.

In theory, the greater a person's self-efficacy, the more confident he or she is about being successful in a new task domain (Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998). In other words, self-efficacy has a critical effect on an individual's perceived ability and willingness to exercise control in the process of change (Litt, 1988). In other words, employees with high self-efficacy are more prone to strive to complete a difficult task (e.g., organizational change) and less prone to give up when obstacles appear during organizational change (Schyns, 2004). Accordingly, it is reasonable to infer that employees with high self-efficacy are more prone to have high affective commitment to change.

### 2.4.3 Affective Commitment to Change and Behavioral Support for Change

Theoretically, individuals with strong affective commitment to an organizational change initiative might show strong willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty to find ways to make the initiative work (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). As previously suggested, those who buy-in to a change and want to make efforts to ensure its success (i.e., strong affective commitment) should be willing to do more than is required of them, even if it involves some personal sacrifice (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer et al., 2007).

Empirically, commitment to change has been found to be a better predictor of specific change-related behaviors (Fedor et al., 2006; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Furthermore, affective commitment to change was found to be positively related to non-discretionary behavior (i.e., compliance behavior) and discretionary behavior (i.e., cooperation and championing behaviors) (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer et al., 2007). Thus, this study assumes that there is a direct positive relationship between affective commitment to change and behavioral support for change.

In summary, on the basis of all of the inferences previously discussed for the simple bivariate associations incorporated in the initial hypotheses, this study assumes that transformational leadership not only exerts effect on behavioral support for change directly, but also indirectly affects behavioral support for change via self-efficacy and affective commitment to change. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is stated as:

H2: self-efficacy and affective commitment to change mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and behavioral support for change.

Figure 1 depicts the hypothesized relationships among variables in this study.

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model
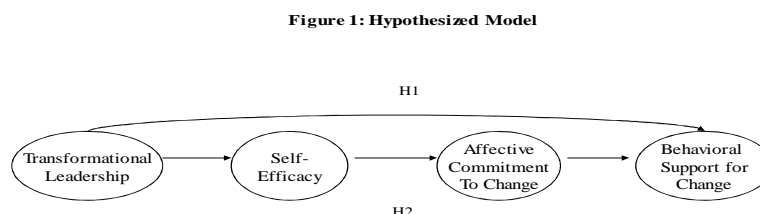
3. Methods

3.1 Participants

Survey data for this study was collected from 10 companies locate at Hsinchu County, Taiwan. This study began by sending invitations to 25 HR managers who attended a management training program. As a result, 25 out of 10 companies agreed to participate. Procedure-wise, a total of 1200 questionnaires with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey were sent to the HR head of 10 surveyed companies along with a return envelope for each participant to ensure that participants could send back their replies independent of their organizations. A total of 553 questionnaires were returned (46% response rate), with 448 valid questionnaires after screening (37%).

3.2 Measures

Although it is reported that there are 71% of research using 5- or 7-point scale (Infosurv, 2006), this study chooses to use 6-point scale for the sake of preventing respondents from neutral marking. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all responses were made on a 6-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree.

3.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was assessed through four dimensions, namely individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence, using Chou's (2013) 12 items which was adapted from Sosik and Godshalk's (2000) 15 items. The responses were measured along a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" with respect to the respondent's certainty as to their immediate supervisor's leadership ability. The internal consistency of this 12-item scale was .97 in the current sample.

3.2.2 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy was measured using the ten items developed by Schwarzer, Bäßler, Kwiatek, Schröder & Zhang (1997) (e.g., "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough"). The internal consistency of the ten-item scale was 0.88 for this sample.

3.2.3 Affective Commitment to Change

Affective commitment to change was measured with the six items developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002). The internal consistency of this six-item scale was .70 for this sample.

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3.2.4 Behavioral Support for Change

Behavioral support for change was measured by three dimensions with the 17 items developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) (e.g. "I adjust the way I do my job as required by this change" [compliance], "I work toward the change consistently" [cooperation], and "I encourage the participation of others in the change" [championing]). The internal consistency of this six-item scale was .95 in the current sample.

Overall, the strength of the internal consistency estimates of the variables in this study suggests homogeneity of the scale items.

3.3 Analysis

Before testing the study hypotheses, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with AMOS software (Arbuckle, 2003) to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of the study measures. Given the large number of items (48) relative to the sample size (448), the procedures recommended by Mathieu and Farr (1991) were followed by creating five and three composite indicators for self-efficacy and affective commitment, respectively. For the indicators of transformational leadership and behavioral support for change, three sub-dimensions (i.e., idealized influence; inspirational motivation and individual consideration) and three sub-dimensions (i.e., compliance; championship and cooperation; intellectual stimulation), respectively, were used in order to maintain an adequate sample-size-to-parameter ratio (Landis, Beal, & Tesluk, 2000).

Following the approach suggested by Andersen and Gerbing (1988), convergent validity is demonstrated when the path loading (λ) from an item to its latent construct is significant and exceeds 0.50. All path loading (λ) in this study, as shown in Table 2, was above 0.50 (0.71-0.94). In addition, convergent validity is also adequate when the constructs have an average variance extracted (AVE) of at least 0.50 and composite reliability (CR) is greater than 0.6 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2006). As shown in Table 2, the AVEs of all four constructs in this study exceeded 0.50 (0.55-0.84) and CRs of all four constructs exceeded 0.6 (0.85-0.96). Thus, all constructs in our study demonstrate adequate convergent validity.

To assess discriminant validity, the procedures suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981) were employed to examine whether the square root of AVE for the two constructs should exceed the correlation between the constructs. As shown in Table 2, the square root of AVE for the two constructs exceeded the correlation between the constructs. Thus, all tests of reliability and validity lead to the conclusion that the measures used in later statistical analyses fall within acceptable reliability and validity criteria.

In addition, given that the data were collected from a single source, the procedures of Harman's one-factor test recommended by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) were conducted to test whether the hypothesized four-factor model was superior to the one-factor model in order to rule out the influence of common method bias. The result shows that the four-factor model (GFI= 0.95; CFI= 0.98; TLI = 0.97; RMSEA = 0.054) had a better fit than did the single-factor model (GFI= 0.58; CFI= 0.72; TLI = 0.68; RMSEA = 0.192). Thus, although this study acknowledges that common method variance may be present in the data, it does not appear that common method bias is a serious problem in this study.

4. Results

4.1 Sample Characteristics

Among the 10 companies, there are five manufacturing(auto parts) companies, one hospital, one auto sales office, one farmer association, one insurance company and one security company. As mentioned earlier, a total of 553 questionnaires were returned, with 448 valid questionnaires after screening (32%). Descriptive statistics for the valid respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive profile of respondents		
Gender	Male	64%
	Female	36%
Job Rank	Managerial position	18%
	Non-managerial position	82%
Age (years)	Under 30	31%
	31-40	44%
	41-50	20%
	Over 50	5%
Seniority (years)	Over 15 years	15%
	11-15 years	13%
	5-10 years	30%
	Under 5 years	42%
Education	Masters	14%
	University Degree	43%
	Diploma	24%
	High school	19%
Annual income (NT$)	Over 1.200,000	2%
	800,001 – 1,200,000	3%
	400,001 – 800,000	32%
	Less than 400,000	63%

4.2 Hypothesis testing

Means, standard deviations, internal reliabilities, and intercorrelations among the variables are reported in Table 2. All measures show high internal reliabilities, with coefficient alphas ranging from 0.70 to 0.97. The pattern of correlations is consistent with the hypothesized relationships. That is, transformational leadership has a statistically significant positive relationship with the potential mediators, self-efficacy (0.60, $p < 0.01$) and affective commitment to change (0.45, $p < 0.01$), and with the outcome variables of behavioral support for change (0.69, $p < 0.01$). Also, self-efficacy has a statistically significant positive relationship with affective commitment to change (0.43, $p < 0.01$) and behavioral support for change (0.73, $p < 0.01$); affective commitment to change has a statistically significant positive relationship with behavioral support for change (0.57, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach α	CR	Item loading (λ) (min.-Max.)	1	2	3	4
1. TL	4.27	1.00	.97	.96	(.90 - .94)	(.92)			
2. SLF	4.50	.71	.88	.86	(.71 - .76)	.60**	(.74)		
3. ACC	4.20	.66	.70	.85	(.75 - .85)	.45**	.43**	(.81)	
4. BSC	4.51	.69	.95	.91	(.82 - .94)	.69**	.73**	.57**	(.88)

Note:
SS=social support; SLF=self-efficacy; ACC=Affective commitment to change; BSC=behavioral support for change.
CR = composite reliability.
Item loading (λ) is standardized.
Values along the diagonal represent the square root of average variance extracted (AVE).

More conclusive specific tests of these hypotheses were conducted with structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses, using the AMOS software (Arbuckle, 2003) to assess the structural model specifying the relations between the latent constructs. Table 3 presents fit indices for the hypothesized model, along with an alternative model with which to test whether a fully mediating relationship exists between transformational leadership and behavioral support for change.

Table 3. Competitive model test

	X²	df	X²/df	△X²	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	GFI
Hypothesized model	236.728	73	3.243	16.146	.08	.94	.94	.91
Alternative Model	252.874	74	3.417		.08	.94	.93	.90

* Alternative Models only removed the direct path from SS to BSC.

Results of comparison show that the hypothesized model adequately explains the data as indicated by a RMSEA of 0.076, a CFI of 0.96, a GFI of 0.91, and TLI of 0.95, where as the alternative model does not result in a significant improvement in model fit, with a RMSEA of 0.092, a CFI of 0.94, a GFI of 0.89, and an TLI of 0.93. This suggests that self-efficacy and affective commitment to change partially mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and behavioral support for change. That is, transformational leadership not only direct affects behavioral support for change, but also indirectly affects behavioral support for change via self-efficacy and affective commitment to change.

Standardized parameter estimates for the best-fitting model (Hypothesized Model) are shown in Figure 2. For ease of presentation, only the structural model is presented rather than the full measurement model. Examination of the path coefficients reveals that transformational leadership is uniquely related to self-efficacy in the positive direction and has significant direct associations with behavioral support for change; self-efficacy is related to affective commitment to change in the positive direction, and affective commitment to change is related to behavioral support for change in the positive direction. Thus, both hypothesis 1 and 2 are supported.

Figure 2: Final Model
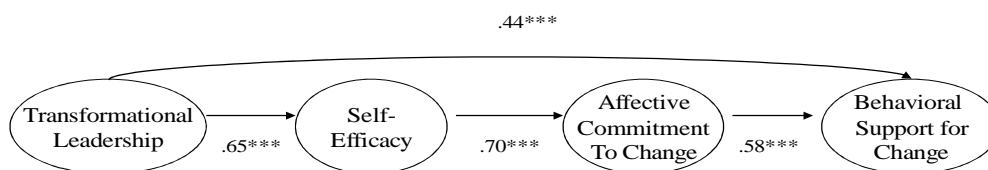
5. Discussion & Conclusio

5.1 Summary of Findings

In exploring the mechanisms through which transformational leadership weaves its effects on employees' behavioral support for organizational change, the findings of this study indicate that transformational leadership functions as a means of mitigating change-related stress by enhancing employees' self-efficacy which, in turn, enhances their affective commitment to change and, further, promotes their behavioral support for change. In sum, the findings this study confirms the importance of transformational leadership in successful implementation of change.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Given that organizational change is a widespread feature of today's work environment (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005), the successful implementation of organizational change has become an important management task. In this regard, the present study has several practical implications for organizations, managers and HRM practitioners facing organizational change. First, the findings of this study suggest that employees' behavioral support for organizational change can be enhanced by transformational leadership at the workplace. Recognizing the importance of transformational leadership during organizational change, managers and HRM practitioners

should consider how they might develop their supervisors/managers in a way of transformational leadership within their organizations via supportive policies and training program with the ultimate intention of enhancing employee's behavioral support for change.

Second, this study demonstrates that self-efficacy accounts for the variance in behavioral support for change via affective commitment to change. As such, organizations that plan changes or that are in the process of organization change should pay particular attention to enhancing their employees' self-efficacy. In particular, this can be done by developing employees' competencies through training programs to strengthen their self-efficacy (Gist, 1987). For example, training supervisors how to support a coaching environment (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009; Malone, 2001) and how to be a behavior modeling (Goldstein & Sorcher, 1974).

Third, during organizational change, it is critically important for organizations to identify employees with high self-efficacy as they are more prone, in comparison with low self-efficacy colleagues, to accept change and are better able to adapt to change (Schyns, 2004). Therefore, employees with high self-efficacy can serve as change agents for their colleagues, which is an integral requirement for any change strategy (Iverson, 1996), in order to increase the chances of the successful implementation of organizational change.

In summary, given that available knowledge of how HRM professionals perform effectively as "change agents" is relatively limited (Alfes, Truss, & Gill, 2010), proving such linkages exist implies that, during organizational change, both management and HRM practitioners should focus their efforts on promoting transformational leadership and employees' self-efficacy with the ultimate intention of enhancing the implementation of successful change.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Like other studies, this study has certain limitations. First, the sample is confined to a limited number of companies (10) in Taiwan and 448 participants, which might in turn limit the generalizability of its findings and conclusions either to other enterprises. Second, despite the appropriateness of using subordinates' evaluations of transformational leadership, affective commitment to change and behavioral support for measures, this approach introduces potential problems with common-method bias as the measures of research variables were gathered from the same source, even though a Harmon single factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003) shows that common method bias is not a serious problem in this study. Third, one must be cautious when interpreting the findings of this study due to the possible constraint of non-response bias, such that non-respondents might hold different views with respect to the variables in question, leading to survey estimates that could be biased. Finally, this study suffers from the common limitations of cross-sectional field research, including the inability to make causal inferences.

Regarding the direction for future research, as noted by Podsakoff et al. (2003), using self-reported measures for both constructs may inflate their correlations due to self-reporting bias. Thus, future research should focus on supervisory ratings of behavioral support for change to reduce common method variance. That is, the use of immediate supervisors' assessments of subordinates' behavioral support for change would further validate the use of individuals' self-reported perceived transformational leadership and affective commitment measures when investigating the relationships between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, affective commitment to change and behavioral support for organizational change. Additionally, this study suffers from common limitations of cross-sectional field research, including the inability to make causal inferences. In this regard, a longitudinal research would further validate the causal relationship.

5.4 Contributions of this Study

Many studies suggested that stress caused by organizational change results in creating negative attitudes toward change (McHugh, 1997;Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005) and the successful implementation of organizational change requires employees' acceptance and support (Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006; Miller, Johnson, & Grau, 1994).Thus, personal attitudes are seen as the most important contributors to the management of organizational change (Graetz & Smith, 2010; Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012). However, little is known about the differential effects of various aspects of organizational change on different elements of the attitudes of those individuals affected by change (Fedor et al., 2006). In view of this, this study has a number of strengths. First, as noted earlier, there has been a lack of empirical research on the role of transformational leadership in a change context per se. In this regard, the present study fills this gap by conducting an empirical research and the results indicate that transformational leadership at the workplace has significant and powerful influence on employees' supportive attitudes and behavior vis-à-vis organizational change.

Second, as noted, improving our understanding of the relationship between leadership and employees' reactions to organizational changes has become increasingly important given that many companies fail to implement organizational changes. In this regard, this study extends prior research by assessing a complex set of relations between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, affective commitment to change and behavioral support for

organizational change. Moreover, this study provides additional insight into the mechanism through which transformational leadership influences behavioral support for organizational change.

Third, given that the vast majority of organizational change-related studies and leadership have been conducted in North American and other Western countries, the results of this research, which conducted in Taiwan and represents the Chinese context, add to our understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' self-efficacy, affective commitment to change and behavioral support for organizational change in different culture. Investigations of this kind can further enhance our ability to predict the effectiveness of organizational change efforts (Self, Armenakis, & Schradeder, 2007).

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