The Effects of Workplace Social Support on Employee's Subjective Well-Being

Paul Chou

Business Administration Department, Minghsin University of Science & Technology, No. 1, Xinxing Rd.,
Xinfeng Shaing, Hsinchu County 30401, Taiwan, R.O.C.
Email: pchou@must.edu.tw

Abstract

Despite the extensive evidence that organizational change can adversely affect employees' subjective well-being, the human side of impact during change is frequently taken as a peripheral issue, this study aims to investigate subjective well-being at an individual level in order to understand the inner working of affecting subjective well-being during organizational change. The results from a sample of 319 respondents in Taiwan reveal that social support at workplace contributes directly to subjective well-being and indirectly via self-efficacy.

Keywords: social support; perceived supervisor support; perceived coworker support; self-efficacy; subjective well-being.

1. Introduction

Given that numerous studies have shown significant impact of subjective well-being on various organizational outcomes, such as employees' productivity, ability to make decisions and attendance (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Srivastava, Blakely, Andrews, & McKee-Ryan, 2007), it is becoming increasingly evident that promoting employee subjective well-being is an intrinsic good for which all modern organizations should work (Wright & Bonett, 2007). In addition, past theoretical and empirical works have shown that people who encounter job-related stress experience lower levels of subjective well-being (Callan, Terry, & Schweutzer, 1994; Doby & Caplan, 1995; Heinisch & Jex, 1998; Holman, 2002; Kasser & Sheldon, 2009; Nelson, Cooper et al., 1995; Terry, Nielsen, & Perchard, 1993; van Der Doef & Maes, 1999).

However, while organizational change becomes a norm of organizational life and, despite the extensive evidence that organizational change can adversely affect employees' subjective well-being, the human side of impact during change is frequently taken as a peripheral issue (Nelson, Cooper, & Jackson, 1995; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). This fact urges the need to investigate subjective well-being at an individual level in order to understand the inner working of affecting subjective well-being during organizational change. This is particularly true for the case of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan.

After Taiwan became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2002, pressure from increasing competition in both external and internal markets drove Farmers' Associations to initiate organizational change in order to improve the efficiency and quality of their service and to reduce operational costs. Specifically, they strove to retain their competitive edge by reorganizing, downsizing, and implementing new information and human resource management (HRM) systems. As a result, these organizational changes were perceived stressful by their employees (Jaskyte, 2003; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005) for these changes create fear, uncertainty and doubt about these changes.

In essence, employees, who spend a substantial part of their lives at workplace, are dependent on their job to meet several personal needs (Srivastava et al., 2007). In other words, social support at workplace represents a variety of interpersonal behaviors between providers and recipients that can enhance an individual's psychological or behavioral functioning(i.e., psychological well-being) (Harris, Winskowski, & Engdahl, 2007) through demonstrations of "human-heartedness" at workplace (Lu, Gilmour, & Kao, 2001). As such, workplace social support can be considered a valuable tool for preventing work-related stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Sundin et al., 2006) which resulted from organizational change. Hence, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between workplace social support and subjective well-being during organizational change.

With respect to change-related stress, it is suggested that people who are confident in their abilities can mitigate the stressful effects of a threatening event (e.g., organizational change)(Schaubroeck & Merritt, 1997), since people who are confident in their abilities (i.e., high self-efficacy) can view stressful situations as being under their personal control (Taylor, 1983). Thus, it seems likely that individuals who have high levels of perceived control have higher levels of subjective well-being during stressful life events (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Accordingly, the second aim of this study is to investigate the mediating role that self-efficacy plays on the relationship of social support with subjective well-being.

In summary, as workplace social support can be taken as a means of promoting control over stressful aspects of the working environment (organizational change, in this case) (Ashford, 1988; Daniels & Guppy, 1994), this study aims to investigate whether employees who have received supports from their supervisors and

coworkers may increase their self-efficacy and, further, enhances their subjective well-being during organizational change.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Workplace Social Support

According to Cobb (1976), social support is conceived to be information leading an individual to believe that he/she is cared for, loved, esteemed and valued, and that he/she belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation. Conceptually, social support is defined as the "actions of others that are either helpful or intended to be helpful" (Deelstra et al., 2003, p. 324). Specifically, Karasek and Theorell (1990) defined workplace social support as the "overall levels of helpful social interaction available on the job from coworkers and supervisors" (p. 69). According to these views and definitions, this study conceptualizes workplace social support as support that an individual receives from the supervisor and coworkers.

2.1.1 Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

At workplace, supervisors play an important role in structuring the work environment, providing information and feedback to employees (Griffin, Patterson, & West, 2001), and controlling the powerful rewards that recognize the employee's personal worth (Doby & Caplan, 1995). In accordance with this view, Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) suggested that the social interaction between an employee and his/her immediate supervisor is the primary determinant of an employee's attitude and behavior at workplace.

Supervisor support depends on the interpersonal skills of supervisors and is displayed in terms of trust, respect, friendship and a deep concern for their subordinates' needs (Iverson, 1996). Just as employees form global perceptions of their value to the organization, they also develop general views regarding the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988).

2.1.2 Perceived Coworker Support

In addition to supervisor support, coworker support also involves the interpersonal transfer of instrumental or emotional resources (cf. Yoon & Thye, 2000; House, 1981). As Hobfoll (1988) argued, coworkers can be a key source of resources for employees. On condition that coworkers are willing to listen to job-related problems, are helpful in assisting with the job, can be relied upon when things become difficult on the job and share worries and concerns with each other, work group cohesion is enhanced (Iverson, 1996) and all these appear to be effective in buffering responses toward job-related stress (Ashford, 1988).

2.2 Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being refers to satisfaction with one's life and the more frequent experience of pleasant than unpleasant emotions and to a state in which individuals are relatively free of strain.(Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). In this regard, high-strain work, which results in worry and depression, is associated with a lower level of subjective well-being (van Der Doef & Maes, 1999).

According to the cognitive adaptation theory (Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Brown, 1988), individuals with the highest levels of well-being during stressful events are those who have high levels of self-esteem (e.g., a high sense of self-worth), optimism (e.g., a highly positive outlook on future), and perceived control (e.g., a view of situations as being under personal control) (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). On the basis of this premise, the relationship of workplace social support and self-efficacy with subjective well-being will be discussed and research hypotheses will be developed accordingly.

2.3 Workplace Social Support and Subjective Well-Being

Psychologically, feeling valued, cared for and supported by one's supervisor and coworkers makes a work environment seem more pleasant or less stressful. Moreover, individuals with high levels of social support have been found to have a more optimistic view of the future than those with low levels of support (Karademas, 2006; Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983).

With respect to the relationship between workplace social support and subjective well-being, the buffering model proposes that social support protects an individual against the adverse effects of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Terry et al., 1993). Empirical studies have also shown that people experience higher levels of subjective well-being when they feel closer and more connected to other people at workplace (Kasser & Sheldon, 2009). In this regard, workplace social support, which represents the amount of care and love, might be a critical factor in determining an individual's subjective well-being.

Furthermore, according to Eisenberger et al. (2002), support at workplace functions to help reduce one's uncertainty or stress, through the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages that convey emotion, information, or referral (Joe, 2010). In accordance with this view, social support at workplace can be seen as a flow of emotional concern, instrumental aid, information and/or appraisal (i.e. informational relevant to self-evaluation) between people (i.e., supervisor and coworkers) (Sundin et al., 2006).

2.3.1 Supervisor Support and subjective well-being

At workplace, supervisors have been recognized as being instrumental in developing the roles and expectations of employees (cf. Griffin et al., 2001; Graen & Scandura, 1987) by structuring the work environment and by providing information and feedback to employees (Griffin et al., 2001). Consequently, the perception that one's supervisor is supportive is indicative of a pleasant work environment, which is likely to have a positive effect on subjective well-being (Terry et al., 1993) and job satisfaction (Griffin et al., 2001; Harris et al., 2007). In other words, when intrinsically favorable and satisfying job conditions are interpreted by individuals as a sign of care and respect from the supervisor (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003), subjective well-being will be enhanced. Empirically, the finding that a supportive leadership environment had a high positive association with subjective well-being (Holman, 2002; Terry et al., 1993) provides evidence for existing research hypothesize that a supportive supervisor has a significant effect on employee subjective well-being. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is stated as:

H1: There is a direct positive relationship between Supervisor Support and subjective well-being.

2.3.2 Coworker Support and subjective well-being

Like supervisor support, coworker support also involves the interpersonal transfer of instrumental or emotional resources (cf. Yoon & Thye, 2000; House, 1981). Similarly, coworker support allows individuals to feel valued, cared for and supported by colleagues, which makes a work environment more pleasant and rewarding (van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003). Empirical findings indicate that variations in satisfaction between coworkers influence significantly the internal work motivation of employees (Howard & Frink, 1996). In other words, supportive interactions between coworkers may be key motivators for individuals and are likely to have a positive effect on subjective well-being. In particular, past theoretical and empirical studies have shown that people experience higher levels of subjective well-being when they feel close to and connected to their coworkers (Kasser & Sheldon, 2009).

In summary, supportive relationships among colleagues generally enhance well-being, as coworker support at workplace is likely to fulfill the need for affiliation between coworkers (Chay, 1993). Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is proposed as:

H2: There is a direct positive relationship between Coworker Support and subjective well-being.

2.4 Mediating role of Self-efficacy

2.4.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a psychological construct advanced by Bandura in his social cognitive theory (Malone, 2001) and is defined as an employee's belief in his/her capabilities to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources and the courses of action needed to exercise control over events in their lives (Wood & Bandura, 1989). According to this definition, self-efficacy delineates the extent to which individuals believe themselves to be capable of successfully performing a specific behavior or carrying out an assigned task (Bandura, 1986) and enables individuals to integrate cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral sub-skills in order to accomplish a particular objective (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999).

Self-efficacy has been consistently found to influence thought patterns, behaviors, emotional arousal (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993) and performance (Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998). Conceptually speaking, an appraisal of working experience (e.g., a threat or challenge) is a function of a specific set of environmental conditions that are appraised by a particular person with particular psychological characteristics (e.g., self-efficacy) (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1996). In general, the greater a person's self-efficacy, the more confident he/she is of being successful in a particular task domain (Prussia et al., 1998).

With respect to the mediating role that self-efficacy plays in the relationship of social support with subjective well-being, two other conditions are required for mediation in addition to the linkage mentioned above. First, self-efficacy must be related to personal support. Second, self-efficacy must be linked with subjective well-being (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

2.4.2 Workplace Social Support and Self-efficacy

As Michel, Stemaier, and Salvador (2010) posited, individuals in organizations strive for self-esteem which is derived from group membership and how the group to which one belongs is valued by others (i.e., workplace social support). More specifically, self-esteem is enhanced through social support, by communicating to individuals that they are valued for their own worth and experiences and are accepted, regardless of any difficulties or personal faults (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Empirically, it has been found that high self-esteem was significantly related to social support network (Sarason, et al., 1983). Self-esteem and self-efficacy have also been found to be highly correlated (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002); hence, self-efficacy can be perceived as the proxy of self-esteem (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991). In view of this, it is plausible to argue that people who receive support from their supervisors and/or coworkers are likely to have higher self-efficacy (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 1999).

Furthermore, according to Bandura (1997), there are four ways for enhancing self-efficacy, namely

enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and feedback. In view of this, workplace social support, to some extent, can provide vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and positive feedback, as well as new strategies for solving problems (Srivastava et al., 2007). For example, employees who are the beneficiaries of social support may look upon problems as opportunities, instead of threats, and think of themselves as potential winners (Srivastava et al., 2007).

In summary, the perceived availability of social support may enhance an individual's confidence that the job will be done well (van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003) , and encourages an individual to confront challenges and to overcome problems more confidently at workplace. Specifically, as Bandura (2000) argued, supportive relationships at workplace can enhance self-efficacy. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that workplace social support may boost self-efficacy.

2.4.3 Self-efficacy and subjective well-being

It is widely accepted that employees' subjective assessment of the work environment is likely to be related to their subjective well-being (van Yperen & Snijders, 2000). From this perspective, overbearing and persistent stress at work can become very distressing, thus posing adverse effects on an individual's subjective well-being. Indeed, an organizational event becomes stressful when it is appraised by an individual as a threat to his/her level of well-being (Callan, 1993). According to cognitive adaptation theory (Taylor & Brown, 1988), individuals with the highest levels of well-being during stressful events are those who have high levels of perceived control. In other words, self-efficacy (i.e., perceived control) is likely to be a preserver of subjective well-being. In this regard, self-efficacy is important to employee's reactions to stressful events.

Conceptually, job stress can be defined as an imbalance between perceived demands of work and the perceived ability to meet that demand (Fox, Dwyer, & Ganster, 1993; Iwi, Watson, Barber, Kimber, & Sharman, 1998). As a result, when employees are experiencing high levels of stress, this may result in decreased well-being (Heinisch & Jex, 1998). Empirically, high-strain work has been found to be associated with lower subjective well-being (van Der Doef, & Maes, 1999). In this regard, self-efficacy can function as a supportive resource for employees whilst dealing with major work events, especially those which result in strain (Judge et al., 1999), since efficacious people are more likely to view stressful situations as learning experiences and opportunities to demonstrate skill, rather than as a threat (cf. Ashford, 1988; Jones, 1983).

Conceptually, perceptions of control affect an individual's appraisal of an objective situation and have a significant impact on the stressfulness felt in demanding or threatening situations (Fox et al., 1993). Further, self-efficacy has been found as a critical effect on an individual's ability and willingness to exercise control (Litt, 1988). That is, people with high levels of self-efficacy have confidence in their ability to exercise control (Litt, 1988; Schaubroeck & Merritt, 1997). In addition, it has also been suggested that a strong sense of self-efficacy not only enhances an individual's levels of perceived control, but also helps equip the members of an organization with the ability to cope with high levels of stress (Armenakis et al., 1993; Ashford, 1988). More specifically, job control has been found to have a positive association with subjective well-being (Holman, 2002).

In summary, past theoretical (Taylor & Brown, 1988; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and empirical (Judge, et al., 2002 ; Reis, et al., 2000) studies have shown that people experience higher levels of subjective well-being when they feel efficacious. Thus, it is plausible to reason that there is a direct positive relationship between self-efficacy and subjective well-being and, as noted above, self-efficacy has been inferred to be related to both supervisor and coworker support and subjective well-being. Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 are proposed as:

H3: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between Supervisor Support and SWB.

H4: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between Co-worker Support and SWB.

3. METHOD

3.1 Sample and procedure

Using a survey, this study collected data from 15 farmer associations in Taiwan. There are currently 301 Farmers' Associations all over the island, providing various services that target to promote agricultural production and to enhance the farmers' quality of life. This study began by sending invitations to general managers of farmer associations who attended a management training program sponsored by the Council of Agriculture. As a result, 15 out of 20 associations agreed to participate.

A total of 1350 questionnaires were sent to the employees of 15 Farmers' Associations in Taiwan. Attached to each questionnaire was a cover letter, explaining the purpose of the survey, and a return envelope, to ensure that participants were able to return the survey independently. A total of 1103 questionnaires were returned (82% response rate) and there were 939 valid questionnaires after screening (70%).

3.1.1 Participant characteristics

The descriptive statistics for the valid respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive profile of respondents

Gender	Male	40%
	Female	60%
Job Rank	Managerial position	18%
	Non-managerial position	82%
Age (years)	Under 30	5%
	31-40	25%
	41-50	47%
	Over 50	23%
Seniority (years)	Over 15 years	60%
	11-15 years	23%
	5-10 years	8%
	Under 5 years	9%
Education	Masters	2%
	Degree	17%
	Diploma	31%
	High school	50%
Annual income (NT$)	Over 800,000	24%
	600,001 – 800,000	31%
	400,001 – 600,000	31%
	Less 400,000	14%

3.2 Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all responses were made using a 6-point scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). 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.

3.2.1 Perceived supervisor support – perceived supervisor support was measured by seven items, adopted from Cummings and Oldham's (1997) measures (e.g., "My supervisor helps me solve work-related problems and encourages me to develop new skills"), with higher scores indicating greater PSS. The Cronbach's alpha for these items was 0.96.

3.2.2 Perceived coworker support – perceived coworker support was assessed by three items, developed by Yoon and Thye (2000) (e.g., "My coworkers are willing to listen to my job-related problems"), with higher scores indicating greater level of perceived coworker support. The Cronbach's alpha for these items was 0.71.

3.2.3 Self-efficacy

To reduce the number of items in the research questionnaire, only the even-number items (i.e., item nos. 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10) of the original 10 measures developed by Schwarzer, et al.,(1997) were used in this study (e.g., "When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions"). The choice was made after a pre-test conducted on different samples (33 MBA students) with the original 10 items. The correlations between the original 10 items and the odd-number items, the original 10 items and the even-number items, and the odd-number items and the even-number items are .98, .98, and .93 respectively. The results of the pre-test minimize, at least to some extent, the concern of content validity; and the Cronbach's alpha for the five items adopted in the present study was 0.89.

3.2.4 Subjective well-being

Since culture can be a major force in constructing the concept of happiness and, consequently, in shaping its subjective experiences (Lu & Gilmour, 2004), subjective well-being was measured using the Chinese short version (CHI) 5-item scale, developed by Lu (2008). For each of the five items of the CHI, respondents were asked to check one of the statements that express their feeling of subjective well-being over the last 3 months (e.g., "I feel: unhappy; happy; very happy; extremely happy"). All responses were converted into a score of 1-4, so a higher aggregated score indicates better subjective well-being. The Cronbach's alpha for these items was 0.80.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis technique

Structural equation modeling (SEM), using the AMOS computer program (Arbuckle, 2003), was employed to test all four hypotheses simultaneously. In addition, the chi-square difference test, the goodness-of-fit (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), the Tucker-Lewis non-normed fit index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the normed fit index (NFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were utilized in the model's construction and assessment.

Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) recommendations, a two-stage approach was utilized to analyze the data. The first stage evaluated the independence of the constructs examined, by assessing the measurement model, and the second stage tested the hypothesized structural relationships between the latent variables.

4.2 Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Constructs

Before testing the hypotheses of the study, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, using AMOS software (Arbuckle, 2003), to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of measurements for the study. According to Hair, Andersen, Tatham and Black, (2006), convergent validity is adequate when the constructs have an average variance extracted (AVE) of at least 0.50. To assess the discriminant validity, the four study variables were tested by comparing the fit of four nested models: (a) a one-factor model, incorporating all four constructs; (b) a two-factor model, combining the perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support (factor 1) and combining self-efficacy and subjective well-being (factor 2); (c) a three-factor model, combining perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support (factor 1), self-efficacy (factor 2) and subjective well-being (factor 3), and (d) the hypothesized model, which distinguishes all four constructs.

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2. The chi-square difference test (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982) shows that each incrementally articulated model provides a better fit to the data. The four-factor model is the only model that satisfies the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) criterion of 0.08 or less and has a comparative fit index (CFI) and a Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) value above the recommended cutoff value of 0.90. In addition, the procedures outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) were employed to determine whether the AVE for two constructs should exceed the square of the correlation between the constructs (see Table 2). Overall, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, the test of reliability and validity demonstrates that the measures used in the latter statistical analyses are acceptably reliable and valid.

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analyses Model Fit Indices

Model	CFI	TLI	GFI	AGFI	X^2	df	$\triangle X^2$	RMSEA
One-factor	.61	.57	.57	.46	5030.78*	170		.18
Two-factor	.80	.78	.74	.68	2615.31*	169	2415.47*	.12
Three-factor	.89	.88	.86	.83	1499.92*	167	1115.39*	.09
Four-factor	.95	.91	.88	.85	855.70*	164	644.22*	.07

Note:
The one-factor Model incorporating all four constructs. The two-factor Model combining the perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support (factor 1) and combining self-efficacy and SWB (factor 2). The three-factor model comprising the combining of perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support (factor 1), self-efficacy (factor 2), and SWB (factor 3). The four-factor Model treats the four constructs as separate factors.
CFI= comparative fit index; TLI=Tucker-Lewis index; GFI=goodness-of-fit index; AGFI=adjusted goodness-of-fit index; $\triangle X^2$ =the difference in Chi-square from the next model; RMSEA=root-mean-square error of approximation.
*< 0.05.

4.3 Concern of common method variance

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 = .88; CFI = .95; TLI = .91; RMSEA = .07) had a better fit than did the single-factor model (GFI = .57; CFI = .61; TLI = .57; RMSEA = .18). Thus, despite of the presence of common method bias in the data, it does not seem to pose a serious problem in this study.

4.4 Factor Correlations

Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations between the study variables. As predicted, latent variable correlations indicate that perceived supervisor support is positively associated with subjective well-being (Hypothesis 1), perceived coworker support is positively associated with subjective well-being (Hypothesis 2), and perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support are both positively associated with self-efficacy (Hypothesis 3 & 4). The patterns of these relationships satisfy the first three conditions for

mediated relationships proposed by Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, (1998), i.e., the initial variable should be related to the criterion variable, the initial variable should be related to the mediator, and the mediator should be related to the outcome variable.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	Cronbach α	CR
1. PSS	4.02	1.12	(0.88)				0.96	0.96
2. PCS	4.36	0.75	.390***	(0.71)			0.71	0.72
3. SLFEFFICACY	4.20	0.68	.281***	.279***	(0.79)		0.89	0.90
4. SWB	2.39	0.51	.332***	.311***	.347***	(0.67)	0.80	0.80

Note:
CR= composite reliability.
Values along the diagonal represent the square root of average variance extracted (AVE).

4.5 Hypothesized Model and Competing Models

In accordance with Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) nested model approach, a series of competing models were tested: a fully mediated model (Model 1) and two partially mediated models (Models 2 & 3). For the hypothesized model, the paths from both perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support to subjective well-being were varied. The two competing partially mediated models (i.e., Models 2 and 3) have individual direct paths from either perceived supervisor support or perceived coworker support to subjective well-being. Table 4 presents the fit indices for the hypothesized structural model, along with those for a series of competing models. As shown in Table 4, the hypothesized model is the best-fitting model, while none of the three competing models significantly improve upon the fit indices.

Table 4 Competitive model test

	X^2	df	X^2/df	$\triangle X^2$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	GFI
Hypothesized model	252.874	74	3.417		.087	.939	.925	.901
Alternative Model 1	236.728	73	3.243	16.146	.084	.944	.930	.944
Alternative Model 2	198.208	.72	2.753	54.666	.074	.957	.945	.919
Alternative Model 3	197.916	71	2.788	54.958	.075	.957	.944	.919

*Alternative Model 1 only added the direct path from workplace social support to behavioral support for change.
**Alternative Model 2 added (1)the direct path from workplace social support to behavioral support for change.(2) the direct path from workplace social support to affective commitment to change.
*** Alternative Model 3 added (1)the direct path from workplace social support to behavioral support for change..(2) the direct path from workplace social support to affective commitment to change. (3) the direct path from self-efficacy to behavioral support for change.

4.6 Mediating Role of Self-efficacy

The last step is testing the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between workplace social support and subjective well-being with bootstrapping. Although there are different methods for testing mediating effects (e.g., Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step approach and the Sobel (1986) test), bootstrapping, at present, is regarded as a more powerful one (Hayes, 2009). In particular, different from the testing of Baron and Kenny (1986) and Sobel (1986), bootstrapping gives confidence intervals around the estimated coefficient in addition to using the strategy of multiple resamples of the sample data for calculating an estimate of the population coefficient (Hayes, 2009).

Bootstrapping with AMOS software was employed to test directly the mediator (i.e., self-efficacy).

The standard estimated indirect effect of perceived supervisor support on subjective well-being was 0.050 (95% CI: 0.024 ~0.086), while that of perceived coworker support on subjective well-being was 0.049 (95% CI: 0.021 ~0.084). The test results indicate that both perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support have significant indirect associations with subjective well-being via self-efficacy. Thus, through combining this result with the competing results of Model 1 and the hypothesized model, shown in Table 4, it is confirmed that both perceived supervisor support-subjective well-being relationship and perceived coworker support-subjective well-being relationship are partially mediated by self-efficacy, revealing partial support for Hypotheses 3 and 4, respectively. With respect to the direct effect of perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support on subjective well-being, as shown in Figure 1, perceived supervisor support has a significant direct effect on subjective well-being (β = .20; P < .001), which supports Hypothesis 1, and perceived coworker support has a significant direct effect on subjective well-being (β = .16, p < .001), which supports Hypothesis 2.

In summary, the results of hypotheses testing are presented in Table 5 and the standardized parameter estimates for this model are shown in Figure 1. For ease of presentation, the structural model is presented, rather than the full measurement model.

Table 5 Hypotheses Testing Results

| H 1	There is a direct positive relationship between Supervisor Support and SWB.	Supported
H 2	There is a direct positive relationship between Coworker Support and SWB.	Supported
H 3	Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between Supervisor Support and SWB.	Partially Supported
H 4	Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between Co-worker Support and SWB.	Partially Supported
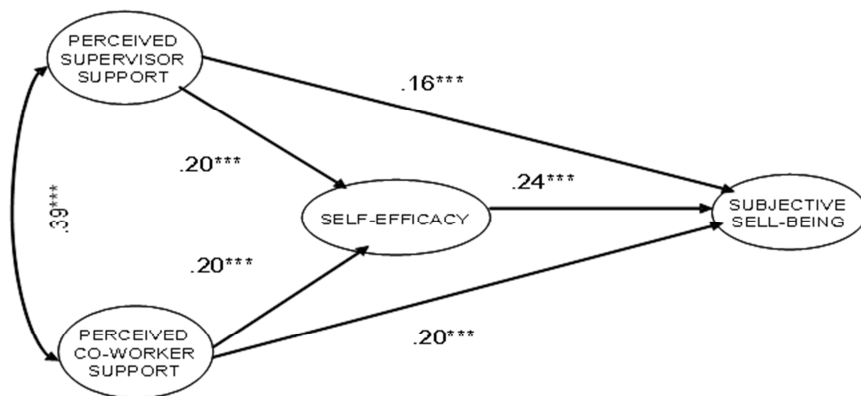
Figure 1. Results from test of hypothesized model

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION
5.1 Summary of Findings
In investigating the relationship of workplace social support with subjective well-being and the mediating role of self-efficacy, as predicted, the results of this study show that both perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support contributes directly to subjective well-being and indirectly via self-efficacy. In other words, workplace social support is related to subjective well-being because it provides positive social relationships and confidants (Diener, et al., 1999).

The findings of this study, which are consistent with the results of research conducted in the West (e.g., Cohen & Wills, 1985; Heinisch & Jex, 1998; Karademas, 2006; van Der Doef & Maes, 1999) with regard to the relationship between social support and subjective well-being, reveal some fundamental similarities in both the cognition and experience of happiness for the Taiwanese people and their Western counterparts (Lu, 1999). In other words, despite the absence of a universal structure of subjective well-being, there may exist a similar structure applicable to different cultures with resemblance in characteristics and features (Diener, 1984).

With respect to the mediating role of self-efficacy, in this study, workplace social support, which

provides emotional support and encouragement, was found to be significantly associated with self-efficacy. On the other hand, the results of this study, in accordance with the findings of Judge, et al. (2002), also show a significant association of self-efficacy with subjective well-being.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The results of this study have important practical implications for organizations and human resource management (HRM). First, given that employees spend a substantial part of their lives at work and subjective well-being affects employees' productivity, ability to make decisions and attendance (Danna & Griffin, 1999), the findings of this study provides a valid rationale for the management and HRM managers to enhance social support at workplace in order to promote employees' subjective well-being.

As previously mentioned, a noteworthy feature of social support is the mutual social interaction and the processes that take place between the provider and the recipients of support. These interactions and processes, as suggested, are affected by social factors within an organization (Sundin et al., 2006). In this regard, the establishment of a supportive culture/climate through management and HRM practices is critical to the enhancement of social support within the organization since employees are dependent on their working environment to meet basic psychological needs (Srivastava, et al., 2007; Taylor & Brown, 1988) and it creates positive affections, a sense of predictability and stability in one's life situation and a recognition of self-worth (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Second, the supervisor, in particular, is the main source of support at workplace. Training supervisors should demonstrate open, trustful and caring behavior toward their subordinates in order to establish a supportive work atmosphere within the organization. Another means of providing a supportive culture and climate is the development of team spirit within the organization through sound HRM practices (e.g., performance appraisal and rewards programs), since a supportive work atmosphere is characterized by team spirit and good comradeship in a workplace where individuals support each other (Sundin et al., 2006).

Third, as the social cognitive theory has demonstrated, the importance of its effect in influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors (Malone, 2001) and expectations regarding personal abilities are central to the formation of human behavior (Bandura, 1986). In view of this, raising self-efficacy is just as important as increasing supervisor and coworker support in enhancing employees' subjective well-being. Therefore, it is suggested that management and HRM should also focus on building self-efficacy with the ultimate goal of enhancement in employees' SWB.

Finally, with respect to building employee's self-efficacy, according to the findings of this study, it is suggested that organizations should implement HRM practices such as leadership development, mentoring, coaching, competency development and task support programs in order to enhance self-efficacy. These suggestions are in line with Holman's (2002) argument that these HRM practices have been demonstrated to have a positive effect on employees' subjective well-being.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Same as previous research, this study has certain limitations. First, although testing results indicate that common method bias is not a serious problem in this study, it introduces potential problems as the research variables were gathered from the same source. Second, caution is necessary when make causal inferences between the variables because this study is conducted with cross-sectional approach. Third, the sample is confined to a limited number of FAs in Taiwan, which might in turn limit the generalizability of its findings and conclusions either to other FAs or private enterprises. Finally, one must be cautious when interpreting the findings 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 biased survey estimates.

5.4 Contributions of this Study

This study contributes to the current literature in various ways. First, in combination with the literature on relationship of supervisor and coworker support with subjective well-being, these results provide additional empirical evidence that workplace social support (either from supervisors or coworkers) enhances employees' subjective well-being at workplace. Second, this study confirms that self-efficacy mediates the effect of workplace social support on subjective well-being and explains the manner in which that relationship is mediated and the processes through which it develops, from both theoretical and practical points of view.

What determines individual's subjective well-being? Better clues, as Myers and Diener, (1995) noted, come from knowing whether the person enjoys a supportive network of close relationships and whether the person has a faith that entails social support. In accordance with that, the results of this study provide sound explanations of the psychological mechanism how workplace social support affects personal beliefs in shaping self-efficacy and, further, enhances individual's subjective well-being.

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Paul earned his Ph.D. degree in human resource management from the School of Management, National Central University, Taiwan in 2007. Before enrolling in the Ph.D. program, he had worked as an HR practitioner for 28 years in several multinational companies in Taiwan. His current research interests are strategic human resource management and organizational change management.

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