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EMPOWERMENT AND INTENTIONS TO RESIST FUTURE CHANGE: THE
MODERATING EFFECT OF ORGANIZATION-BASED SELF-ESTEEM

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Abstract

Nowadays, organizations face a constant need for adaptability, increasing the importance of change management. Our study focuses on how empowering leadership influences intentions to resist future changes, mediated by the effects of psychological and structural empowerment. From the responses of the two questionnaires ($N_1=230$; $N_2=113$), we found that empowering leadership fosters psychological and structural empowerment. Structural empowerment was the main driver in reducing intentions to resist future change when an employee has high organization-based self-esteem. Our findings add to the literature by examining how we can anticipate and manage change under an empowering context, building on social exchange and uncertainty reduction theories.

Keywords: Empowerment, empowering leadership, empowering leadership behaviors, psychological empowerment, structural empowerment, OBSE, intentions to resist change

Introduction

Nowadays, due to the economic crisis that Portugal is facing, there is a constant need for adaptability in the workplace, crucial to reach higher performance. Thus, a variety of competencies and techniques are becoming increasingly important to companies, used as a way to find new solutions for longstanding problems such as team conflicts, low performance, discouragement and others. In this sense, organizations need to adjust, restructure and employ new methods and processes that make organizational change a necessary and recurrent practice (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). However, more than 50% of the overall cases of organizational changes fail to reach their goals (Choi, 2011). In fact, the success of change can be highly influenced by a set of key factors, namely its content and process, the context in which the organization is included, the characteristics of the employees (Walker et al., 2007; Galpin, 1996) and the level of resistance to change (Reger et al., 1994; Szabla, 2007), being the last seen as the main opponent to achieving a successful organizational change.

Taking this into account, the implementation of employee empowerment practices can be an advantage in these contexts and reduce the resistance to change. Employees that feel empowered will better deal with organizational changes. In the one hand, exploring good social interactions with their leaders and co-workers, employees will feel competent and self-determinant, perceiving their job as meaningful and having a high impact in it (Spreitzer, 1995). On the other hand they will have access to the necessary information, support and resources and while seeing an opportunity in their job (Laschinger et al., 2001) resulting in a reduction over uncertainty.

In the context of change, both change agents and change recipients' sensemaking should be considered (Ford et al., 2008) because resistance to change is not irrational. As key change agents, empowering leaders influence employees' sensemaking since they are the closest members to employees in the organization (Lewin, 1943) and transmit the organizations'

intentions. Thus, they play a critical role in the implementation of change (Liden et al., 2004).

Through this study, we want to investigate the impact of empowerment in organizational change. In other words, we want to evaluate if in the presence of a leader that shows empowering leadership behaviors, promoting the structural and psychological empowerment of an employee, helps reducing the intentions to resist future change on an affective, behavioral and cognitive level. Finally, we assess if employees that have high organizational based self-esteem (OBSE) display higher effectiveness in reducing their intentions to resist future change.

Consequently, this study adds to the literature, firstly, by analyzing change as a future event and not as a particular event. This is important because events and experiences are interconnected where past experiences will influence future events (Neves et al. unpublished manuscript). Secondly, this study examines simultaneously two different paths that influences intentions to resist future change. The first evaluates the effect of psychological empowerment using social exchange theory while the second studies the effect of structural empowerment using uncertainty reduction theory. Finally, it extends the proposal of Ford et al. (2008) to change agents and recipients by examining the importance of time and continuity in organizational life. In fact, we introduce a link between empowerment and intentions to resist future change, an issue that still lacks discussion in the literature. In addition, we established OBSE as boundary condition in reducing intentions to resist future change.

Empowerment: Empowering leadership, psychological and structural empowerment

In contemporary management literature, employee empowerment is seen as the foundation for new organizational structures and forms (Mills and Ungson, 2003). Empowerment processes do not only rely on the employee or the employer themselves, but also on the relationship between both.

Accordingly, empowering leadership is viewed as a “process of implementing conditions that enable sharing power with an employee by delineating the significance of the employee’s job, providing greater decision-making autonomy, expressing confidence in the employee’s capabilities, and removing hindrances to performance” (Zhang and Bartol, 2010, p.109).

There was an evolution on the definition of empowerment as firstly defined by Conger and Kanungo (1988) as a motivational concept of self-efficacy. Later, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) argued that empowerment should be seen as a multidimensional concept. Following this argument, Spreitzer (1995) defined psychological empowerment as a process or a psychological state of “intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact” (p.1443). Thus, it is an enabling process that heightens employees’ initiation and persistence. The first dimension, meaning, corresponds to the feeling that one’s work is valued, requiring a fit between beliefs, values, behaviors and work role (Brief and Nord, 1990; Hackman and Holdham, 1980). Competence, also known as self-efficacy, is the belief in one’s capability to perform with skill and successfully his or her tasks (Gist, 1987). Self-determination refers to the autonomy of choice over how to initiate and continue tasks. Last but not least, impact reflects one’s perception of the degree of his or her influence in the work’s outcome. Although each dimension is different, their blend allows for an overall description of psychological empowerment as presented by Spreitzer (1995).

Despite the limited literature, it is evident the existence of a relationship between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment (Ahearne et al., 2005; Zhang and Sims, 2005). Firstly, an empowering leader highlights the significance of the work by helping an employee to understand his or her contribution for the overall organization effectiveness. Secondly, by prospecting a high performance from an employee, an empowering leader

shows confidence in the employee's competence. Third, by encouraging employees to carry out in their own way their tasks, an empowering leader provides autonomy and creates a feeling of self-determination (Pearce et al., 2003; Sims and Manz, 1996). Last of all, an empowering leader may provide a higher feeling of impact by fostering participation in decision-making (Manz and Sims, 1987). As result, employees will have a greater sense of control over the work situation and feel that their behaviors can make a difference in the final result. Hence, it is reasonable to hypothesize that empowering leadership is positively related with psychological empowerment.

Hypothesis 1a: Empowering leadership is positively related with psychological empowerment.

Besides psychological empowerment, empowerment also comprises the concept of structural empowerment. So, considering Kanter's (1993) theory of structural empowerment, the higher the level of access to opportunity, support, information and resources the higher is the perception of structural empowerment. Access to opportunity is the ability to increase the expertise and skills and to have the chance to grow within the organization (Kanter, 1993). Access to resources refers to the possibility of having materials, time, financial means and supplies in order to be able to achieve the goals, while access to information corresponds to the access to data, technical knowledge and expertise necessary to reach the effectiveness required in the job. Lastly, access to support is related to one's capability to take non-ordinary and risk taking actions by being supported by the necessary feedback and guidance from his or her subordinates, peers and leaders (Kanter, 1979). These four dimensions form structural empowerment.

Additionally, Kanter argues that structural empowerment refers to organizational policies and practices initiated by leaders where the perception of being structurally empowered depends on the relationship between leaders and employees (Dahinten et al.,

2014). Thus, structural empowerment is also a result of empowering leadership practices (Faulkner and Laschinger, 2008) that are shown by empowering behaviors of leaders (Greco et al., 2006). An empowering leader fosters participation in decision-making, enhances the meaningfulness of work, expresses confidence in high performance and removes bureaucratic constraints (Ahearne et al., 2005) while providing access to information, support and opportunity and investing and giving resources to employees has an extreme importance. Therefore, this study proposes a positive relationship between empowering leadership and structural empowerment.

Hypothesis 1b: Empowering leadership is positively related with structural empowerment.

Empowerment and Change Management

Each employee plays an important role in an organizational change. Thus, managing an organizational change is largely dependent on the management of the people involved. Consequently, how employees will react to a potential change should be managed and anticipated in order to effectively introduce a change. Indeed, change recipients' attitudes towards change play a key role in determining the change's potential to succeed (Bartunek et al., 2006). According to the literature, Piderit (2000) defined employees' intentions to resist change as a tripartite model of resistance to change, composed by affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions. The first dimension regards how employees feel, followed by what they think and, lastly, what they intend to do in response to the change. These three dimensions are important because each one is influenced by different antecedents and they influence different outcomes (Oreg, 2006). This definition allows the capture of the complexity of change by understanding the relationship between resistance and its antecedents and consequences. Analyzing just one dimension of these intentions to resist

change is viewed as incomplete since each of these dimensions represents an important part of employee' experiences towards change (Piderit, 2000). Individuals anticipate change by having in mind previous experiences within their organization, leading to the creation of a link between the past and the future. Thus, change is a continuous process of sensemaking (Neves et al., unpublished manuscript).

Herscovitch and Mayer (2002) see empowerment as a recommended strategy for change management. Psychological empowerment is seen as decentralization of decision-making, enabling employees to act and think strategically on their own, feeling in control of their work and being responsible for the quality of their performing tasks, contributing to the improvement of the organization functioning (Mills and Ungson, 2003; Pardo del Val and Lloyd, 2003). Hence, when empowered, employees will experience more trust, not only on their supervisors but also on the organization, therefore, committed and resilient when dealing with adversities (Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1998). A psychologically empowered employee is able to take initiative, be autonomous when dealing challenges at work and be encouraged by the organization (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997). Social exchange theory helps explaining this relationship, arguing that interactions between parties evolve through time and are contingent to the other party's action (Blau, 1964), being mainly based on norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), implying, in most cases, that such reciprocation leads to a favorable treatment. Afterwards, this favorable treatment is expected to cause a reduction in intentions to resist future change. Moreover, as change is a sensemaking process (Neves et al., unpublished manuscript) a psychologically empowered employee will feel the need to reciprocate by being open to unforeseen future changes (i.e. less resistant to change). The meaning of the work, the feeling of competence, self-determination and the feeling that one over work is strengthened trough interactions in workplace. In this sense, over time these interactions gain relevance and as past experiences are reflected in future reactions to a certain

event (Neves et al., unpublished manuscript), a psychologically empowered employee will reciprocate by feeling positively about change, believing that change can be an opportunity rather than a harmful event and expressing behaviors that are in favor to its implementation. Thus, our study proposes that psychological empowerment can reduce affective, cognitive and behavioral intentions to resist future change.

Hypothesis 2: Psychological empowerment is negatively related with a) affective, b) cognitive and c) behavioral intentions to resist future change.

An organizational change is increasingly charged with higher uncertainty (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1990; Nelson et al., 1995). According to the uncertainty reduction theory (Berger and Calabrese, 1975), individuals try to reduce uncertainty by interacting with others before acting (Berger and Calabrese, 1975). This is the result of individuals' attempts to "make sense" of the enclosing environment and events. In accordance, employees can see structural empowerment as a long-term investment strategy of organizations. This can lead to reduce perception of uncertainty. Once again, this recalls to the importance of history and continuity in organization because change recipients "make sense" of past experiences, an important mechanism in the interpretation of change events. Providing information as well as support is seen as crucial for an effective management at resistance to change (Axtel et al., 2002; Gaertner, 1989; Wanberg and Banas, 2000). Besides, it decreases uncertainty by being better informed about the situation where "knowledge of outcomes is a pre-requisite to the ability to influence outcomes" (Terry and Jimmieson, 1999, p.95). This not only decreases affective intentions to resist future change by reducing feelings of anxiety and fear associated with uncertain events, but also improves the perception concerning change, thereby, decreasing cognitive intentions to resist future event. Finally, employees interpret structural empowerment as a more concrete action of the organization and, thus, exhibit an extra effort on its behalf (Mowday et al., 1979), decreasing behavioral intentions to resist future change.

In accordance, we propose that structural empowerment will reduce affective, cognitive and behavioral intentions to resist future change.

Hypothesis 3: Structural empowerment is negatively related with a) affective, b) cognitive and c) behavioral intentions to resist future change.

The moderating effect of organization based self-esteem

An empowering leader, with his or her behaviors, decreases intentions to resist change. A leader plays an important role in change implementation (Liden et al., 2004) by establishing good interactions with change recipients and decreasing uncertainty. However, intentions to resist change also depend on variables that are related with the individual's characteristics (Oreg, 2006). Thus, organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) may impact in this situation.

OBSE is one's belief about own value and competence as an organizational member (Bowling et al., 2010). In fact, Pierce et al. (1989) defined OBSE as the "degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization" (p.625).

OBSE tends to be higher in the presence of favorable working conditions such as perceived organizational support, social support from supervisor and co-workers and autonomy (Bowling et al., 2010) because employees interpret it as a signal that they are worthy and valued by the organization (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). On the opposite end, it tends to be lower in the presence of job stressors as job insecurity and role conflict because it could interfere with successful job performance (Bowling et al., 2010) and their sense of competence. Moreover, organization-based self-esteem is positively related with many positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, OCBs, organizational commitment and job performance, while presenting a negative relation with turnover intentions (Bowling et al., 2010).

High self-esteem is considered to be an important component in the prediction of employees' attitudes and behaviors (Brockner, 1988; Judge and Bono, 2001; Korman, 1970, 1976; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). According to self-consistency theory (Korman, 1970) individuals with high OBSE engage in behaviors that maintain it while low OBSE employees refuse task-related effort as a protecting mechanism (Pierce and Gardner, 2004).

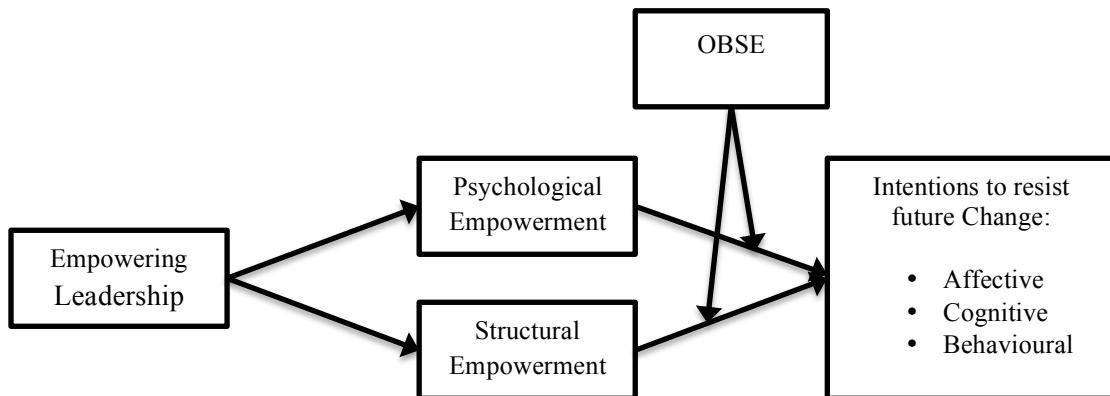
Organizational change obliges individuals to stare at their own capabilities to make change successful (Armenakis et al., 1999). Moreover, change is a stressful event where an employee with OBSE can better deal with it (Hui and Lee, 2000) by having a positive perspective about the future. These employees will show a lower emotional resistance to a future change. Moreover, they will see change as an opportunity to learn and show their competence, thereby reacting positively to empowerment. This develops positive thoughts about change declining its resistance. Finally, employees with high OBSE will exhibit behaviors that will result in a successful change in order to maintain their perception high competence (Pierce et al., 1989). On the contrary, employees with low OBSE will see changes as a stressful and threatening event. Hence, they will not feel competent and will see an organizational change as a damaging situation. Therefore, they will exhibit behaviors that preserve themselves in a comfortable situation, hence, maintaining their perception of competence and value. Consequently, their intentions to resist future change will be probably higher. Accordingly, we proposed OBSE as a boundary condition in reducing intentions to resist future change.

Hypothesis 4: Empowering leadership has a conditional indirect effect in a) affective, b) cognitive and c) behavioral intentions to resist future change via psychological empowerment such that it will be stronger when OBSE is high.

Hypothesis 5: Empowering leadership has a conditional indirect effect in a) affective, b) cognitive and c) behavioral intentions to resist future change via structural empowerment

such that it will be stronger when OBSE is high.

Figure 1: Theoretical model proposed in this study.



Method

Sample and Procedure

Our source of data was questionnaires. These questionnaires were collected in two different periods of time, t_1 and t_2 , separated by a time period of six weeks, in order to reduce common method bias. We created a matching system where the respondents had to produce a code composed by four numbers and two letters, used in both surveys, enabling the link between responses while maintaining the confidentiality of the answers. In t_1 , we had 230 answers while, in t_2 only 150 participants answered, leading to a response rate around 64%. The history of change in an organization has a crucial role in how employees react to a future change (Bouckenooghe, 2012). Concerning this perspective, individuals anticipate future events by making a connection between past and future thus, employees' actions will depend on the previous experiences within their organization. Change is a continuous process of sensemaking carrying implications for that specific event as well as for future ones. Therefore, we only counted participants that had already gone through an organizational change that reduced our final sample to 113.

Concerning the characteristics of the sample, 61,1% of the participants worked in public sector and 38,9% worked in private sector. They operate in areas such as defense and public

administration (41,6%), health care (12,4%), audit and consulting (8,8%), education (8,8%), communication (7,1%), insurance and financial activities (5,3%), artistic and sport activities (4,4%), restoration and accommodation (4,4%), administrative activities and support services (2,7%), industry (2,7%) and wholesale (1,8%). Regarding the demographic indicators of the sample, the average age of the participants was around 39 years old (38 years and 10 months) with a standard deviation of 10 years (10 years and 5 months) where 51.3% were male and 48,7% were female. Concerning the level of education, the responses indicated that 8% had a lower secondary education, 43.3% had upper secondary education, 23.9% had a bachelor degree and 24,8% had a master's degree or higher. Lastly, the average of employee's tenure in the organization is 11.97 years with an average tenure with the supervisor of 4.82 years.

Measures

The questionnaires included questions concerning empowering leadership (EL), structural empowerment (SE), psychological empowerment (PE), organization based self-esteem, (OBSE) and openness to experience (OE) in t_1 and intentions to resist future change (IRC) in t_2 . Both questionnaires used a 5-point Lykert scale for all measures ranging from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree".

Empowering leadership (t_1), we used Ahearne et al.'s (2005) scale. This scale has 12 items divided into four dimensions, each with 3 items and used as a unidimensional scale. The referenced dimensions are enhancing the meaningfulness of work (e.g.: "My manager helps me understand the importance of my work to the overall effectiveness of the company."), fostering participation in decision-making (e.g.: "My manager often consults me on strategic decisions."), expressing confidence in high performance (e.g.: "My manager expresses confidence in my ability to perform at a high level.") and providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (e.g.: "My manager allows me to do my job my way.") ($\alpha = .90$).

Psychological empowerment (t_1) was assessed using the scale of Spreitzer (1995). The scale has four dimensions with 3 items each. The dimensions are the following: meaning (e.g.: “The work I do is meaningful to me.”), competence (e.g.: “I am confident about my ability to do my job.”), self-determination (e.g.: “I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.”) and impact (e.g.: “My impact on what happens in my department is large.”) ($\alpha = .88$).

Structural empowerment (t_1) was evaluated with the CWEQ-II (Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire-II) developed by Laschinger et al. (2001). It includes four subscales with 3 items each: opportunity (e.g.: “In my present job I consider my job challenging.”), information (e.g.: “I consider that I have information regarding the current state of the company.”), support (e.g.: “Regarding my work, I consider that I receive specific information about things you do well.”) and resources (e.g.: “In my job, I consider that I have sufficient time to meet with the job’s requirements.”) leading to an overall construct constituted by 12 items ($\alpha = .76$).

Organization based self-esteem (t_1) was measured using the 10-item scale developed by Pierce et al. (1989). A sample item is “I can make a difference in this organization.” ($\alpha = .90$).

Intentions to resist future change (t_2) were assessed by the change attitude scale of Oreg (2006) where the participants were asked to think about how they would react to a potential change. Thus, the wording of the items was changed to focus on a potential future event. This scale evaluates three dimensions affective (e.g. “I would be afraid of the change.”), cognitive (e.g.: “I would believe that the change would make my job harder.”) and behavioral (e.g. “I would protest against change.”). In order for Cronbach’s alpha to exhibit a value close or higher .70, in the cognitive dimension the item “I would believe that I could personally benefit from the change.” (reverse coded) was deleted, a procedure also applied to the item “I would speak rather highly of the change to others.” (reverse coded) in the behavioral

dimension. The first dimension presents 5 items and the remaining two are composed by 4 items each. In the end, the Cronbach's alpha of each dimension was .68, .69 and .70.

Control variables. In this analysis, we only used variables that are correlated with the outcomes variables (structural empowerment, psychological empowerment and intentions to resist future change) in order not to reduce statistical power reasons (Becker, 2005). In this sense, we included employees' age, level of education and openness to experience in our model as control variables. Employees who are high on openness to experiences are open to new ideas and suggestions, are tolerant and perceptive, can demonstrate effective coping mechanisms and it is documented to be positively related with positive attitudes towards change (Vakova et al., 2004)). The scale used was part of the "Big Five Inventory" (Oliver P. et al., 1991) with 10 items (e.g. "I see myself as someone who is original, comes up with new ideas.") ($\alpha = .77$).

Bootstrapping analysis

The software chosen to analyze the data was SPSS Statistics. The results presented in this study were a moderated mediation, so a Bootstrapping analysis was made using the process macro of Preacher et al. (2007) and employing model 14.

Results

Given the high mortality rate, it was important to compare the final sample ($N_{tf}=113$) with the other participants ($N_{t1-tf}=117$). In order to evaluate the differences between both groups, we conducted an ANOVA test. In this analysis, we found that the differences between groups in psychological empowerment ($F=2.61, p>.05$), structural empowerment ($F=.77, p>.05$), empowering leadership ($F=1.26, p>.05$), OBSE ($F=3, p>.05$) and openness to experience ($F=.26, p>.05$) were not significant. Additionally, we found the same pattern in

demographics. There were no differences in tenure in organization ($F=.15, p>.05$), tenure with supervisor ($F=.12, p>.05$), age ($F=2.20, p>.05$), gender ($F=2.46, p>.05$), sector of operation ($F=.95, p>.05$), area of operation ($F=2.05, p>.05$) and level of education ($F=1.34, p>.05$).

Therefore, we can conclude that the final sample is similar to the original. Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliabilities, ^{a,b}

	Mean ^a	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Empowering leadership (EL)	3.67	.68	0,90 ^b							
2. Psychological empowerment (PE)	4.14	.57	.65**	0,88 ^b						
3. Structural empowerment (SE)	3.53	.57	.68**	.53**	0,76 ^b					
4. OBSE	4.07	.62	.69**	.71**	.53**	0,90 ^b				
5. IRC (affective)	2.22	.65	-.05	-.16	-.18	-.15	0,68 ^b			
6. IRC (cognitive)	2.17	.70	-.08	.02	-.21*	.00	.65**	0,70 ^b		
7. IRC (behavioral)	2.17	.68	-.09	-.11	-.23*	-.18	.67**	.69**	0,69 ^b	
8. Openness to experience (OE)	3.67	.56	.34**	.37**	.31**	.41**	-.26**	-.15	-.18	0,77 ^b
9. Age	38.81	10.44	.02	.15	-.06	.18	.07	.20*	.06	.08
10. Education	---	---	.06	-.03	.17	.08	-.07	-.20*	-.25**	.11

^a 5-point scale.

^b Cronbach's alpha is reported on the diagonal.

** Correlation is significant at 0,01 level.

* Correlation is significant at 0,05 level.

In order to test our hypotheses, we ran 3 bootstrapping models, one for each dimension of intentions to resist change (affective, behavioral and cognitive) where our interaction terms were previously centered, (psychological empowerment, structural empowerment and OBSE). Results are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Results of the Bootstrapping analysis – Mediators

Predictors	Mediators			
	Psychological Emp. (PE)		Structural Emp. (SE)	
	B	t	B	t
Control variables				
Openness to experience (OE)	.17	2.13*	.08	1.08
Age	.01	1.53	-.00	-.61
Education	-.03	-.06	.06	1.27
Main effects				
Empowering Leadership (EL)	.49	7.88**	.55	.82**

** Correlation is significant at 0,01 level.

* Correlation is significant at 0,05 level.

Table 3: Results of the Bootstrapping analysis – Outcomes

Predictors	Outcomes								
	IRC (Affective)			IRC (Cognitive)			IRC (Behavioral)		
	B	t	R ²	B	t	R ²	B	t	R ²
Control variables									
Openness to experience (OE)	-.29	-2.36*		-.28	-2.26*		-.12	-.91	
Age	.00	.62		.01	-1.05		.00	-.41	
Education	-.02	-.23		-.07	-1.00		-.16	-2.12*	
Main effects									
Empowering Leadership (EL)	.19	1.34		.11	.75		.18	1.18	
OBSE	-.11	-.68		.03	.20		.00	.00	
Mediators									
Psychological Emp. (PE)	-.07	-.45		.18	1.11		-.07	-.37	
Structural Emp. (SE)	-.16	-1.08		-.32	-2.04*		-.34	-2.05*	
Interaction effects									
PE x OBSE	.36	1.63		.51	2.29*		.22	.95	
SE x OBSE	-.39	-2.13*	.14	-.40	-2.16*	.18	-.27	-1.38	.14

** Correlation is significant at 0,01 level.

* Correlation is significant at 0,05 level.

The results showed that empowering leadership is positively related to both psychological and structural empowerment (B=.49, p=.01; B=.55, p=.01) which supports our first two hypotheses: 1.a) and 1.b).

Moreover, we found that neither psychological empowerment nor structural empowerment exhibited a significant impact towards affective intentions to resist future change (B=-.07, p=.65; B=-.16, p=.28), leading to the rejection of our hypothesis 2.a) and 3.a). As for cognitive intentions to resist future change, the direct effect of psychological empowerment was not significant (B=.18, p=.46), resulting in the rejection of the hypothesis 2.b) conversely our hypothesis 3.b) is supported due to the significant impact of structural empowerment (B=-.32, p=.04) in this dimension. Finally, concerning behavioral intentions to resist future change, a similar trend was found, psychological empowerment has no impact (B=-.07, p=.71) while structural empowerment is significant and negatively related with it (B=-.34, p=.04). Thus, we reject our hypothesis 2.c), but support 3.c).

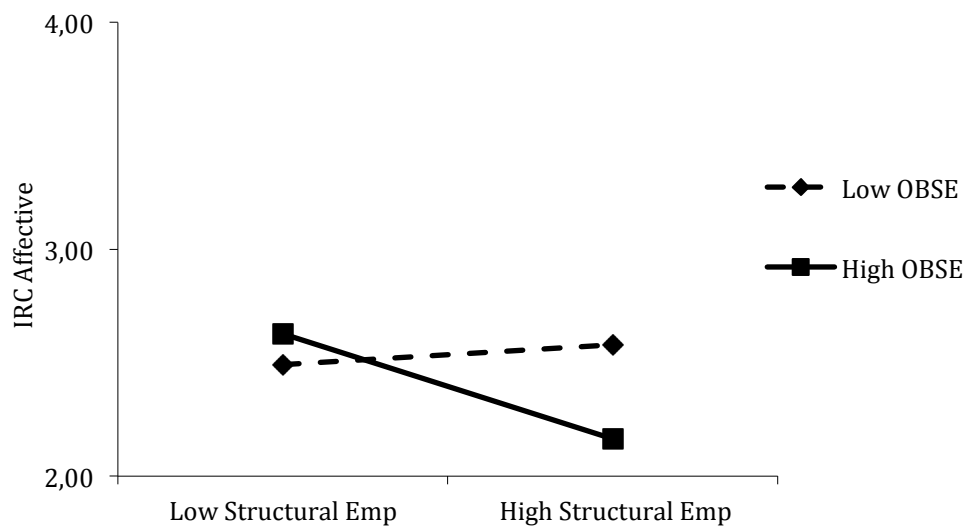
As a first step in assessing the conditional indirect effect of empowering leadership in intentions to resist future change (via psychological and structural empowerment dependent

on OBSE), we examined the interaction effects.

We found a non-significant interaction effect between psychological empowerment and OBSE on affective intentions to resist future change ($B=.36$, $p=.11$), thus, our hypothesis 4.a) is rejected. On the other hand, we found a significant interaction effect between structural empowerment and OBSE on affective intentions to resist future change ($B=-.39$, $p=.04$).

When OBSE is high, structural empowerment reduces affective intentions to resist future change ($t=-2.13$, $p<.05$). Reversely, when OBSE is low, this interaction becomes non-significant ($t=.41$, $p>.05$). Figure 2 depicts this interaction.

Figure 2: Interaction effect of structural empowerment and OBSE on affective intentions to resist future change.

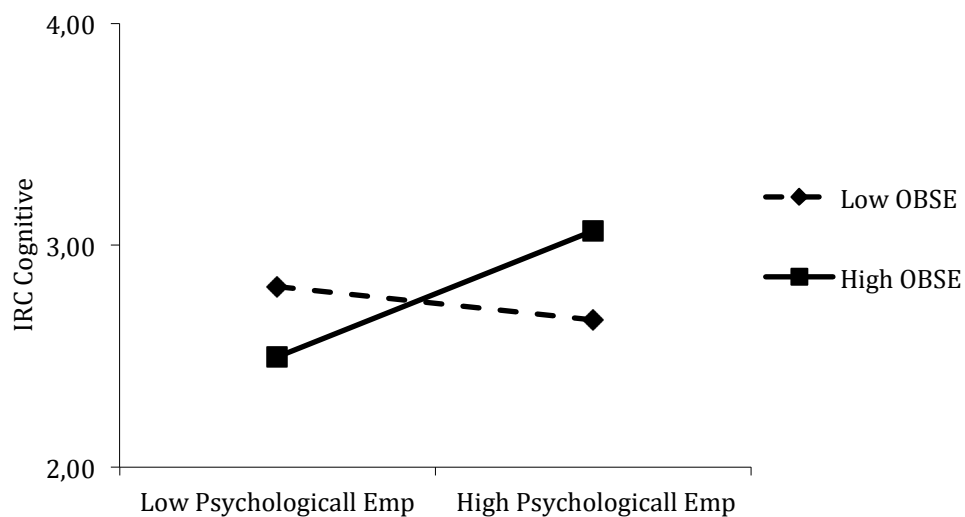


As a second step, we analyzed the moderated mediation model. When OBSE is high, empowering leadership reduces affective intentions to resist future change ($B=-.22$; $p<.05$) via structural empowerment. However when OBSE is low, this indirect effect has no impact ($B=.04$; $p>.05$). These results support our hypothesis 5.a).

Moreover, the interactions effect between psychological empowerment and OBSE, and structural empowerment and OBSE on cognitive intentions to resist future change were significant ($B=.51$, $p=.02$; $B=-.4$, $p=.03$).

When OBSE is high, psychological empowerment increases cognitive intentions to resist future change ($t=2.12, p<.05$), differently to the effect that would be expected. On the other hand, OBSE is low, psychological empowerment has no impact on cognitive intentions to resist future change ($t=-.68, p>.05$). Figure 3 characterizes this interaction effect.

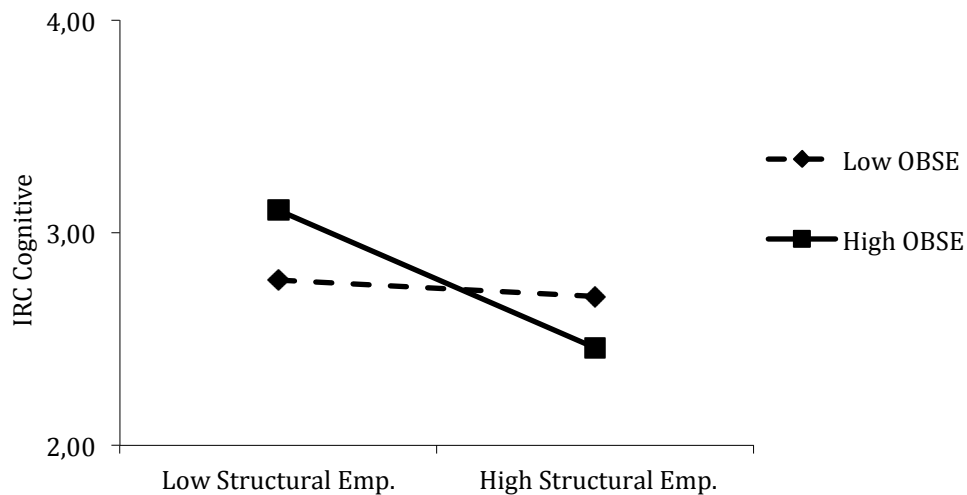
Figure 3: Interaction effect of psychological empowerment and OBSE on cognitive intentions to resist future change.



By analyzing the moderated mediation model, when OBSE is high, empowering leadership increases cognitive intentions to resist future change ($B=.25; p<.05$) via psychological empowerment. However when OBSE is low, this indirect effect has no impact ($B=-.07; p>.05$). These results support our hypothesis 4.b).

Furthermore, when OBSE is high, structural empowerment reduces cognitive intentions to resist future change ($t=-2.92, p<.05$). Nonetheless, when OBSE is low. This interaction becomes non-significant ($t=-.35, p>.05$). Figure 4 illustrates this interaction effect between structural empowerment and cognitive intentions to resist future change.

Figure 4: Interaction effect of structural empowerment and OBSE on cognitive intentions to resist future change.



The analysis of the moderated mediation model, when OBSE is high, empowering leadership reduces cognitive intentions to resist future change ($B=-.31$; $p<.05$) via structural empowerment. However when OBSE is low, this indirect effect has no impact ($B=-.04$; $p>.05$). These results support our hypothesis 5.b).

Regarding the interactions effects between psychological empowerment and OBSE, and structural empowerment and OBSE neither the first nor the second has impact on behavioral intentions to resist future change ($B=.22$, $p=.34$; $B=-.27$, $p=.17$), rejecting 4.c) and 5.c).

With these results, we can conclude that the interaction effect of structural empowerment with high OBSE reduces the affective and cognitive intentions to resist future change, while the combined effect of psychological empowerment with high OBSE increases cognitive intentions to resist future change. Lastly, structural empowerment reduces behavioral intentions to resist future change.

Discussion

Change is seen as a process of sensemaking where past experiences will influence the reactions of today's experiences and resistance to change is clearly related with it. When

interpreting changes employees will recall their last change in order to plan and react towards a potential change (Neves et al., unpublished manuscript). Usually resistance to change does not consider the possibility that change agents contribute to this situation given their actions, or inactions, ignorance and lack of management (Ford et al., 2008). Moreover, the immediate leader plays an important role in what regards the implementation of change (Liden et al., 2004).

In accordance to our results, a leader that demonstrates empowering behaviors fosters the not only psychological, as defended by Zhang and Bartol (2010), but also structural empowerment a result in line with the findings of Faulkner and Laschinger (2008). Additionally, an empowering leader plays an essential role in reducing uncertainty and creating interactions with employees which will influence employees' sensemaking process by giving a notion of what goes on in the organization and it is a signal of an investment in the relationship (Tsui et al, 1997).

Moreover, our results also show that in a presence of an empowering leader, the main driver in reducing intentions to resist future change is structural empowerment. An empowering leader has a conditional indirect effect on reducing affective and cognitive intentions to resist future change via structural empowerment and when employee' OBSE is high. Therefore, as change is a sensemaking process, leaders play an important function in reducing uncertainty. In fact, structural empowerment is seen as a long-term practice where and organizations shows its intentions to employees. Information and support are considered important in the change process (Axtell et al., 2002; Gaertner, 1989; Wanberg and Banas, 2000) by reducing uncertainty and, consequently, their intentions to resist future change. Only in the presence of employees with high OBSE, affective intentions to resist future change are reduced because this characteristic allows employees to deal with change in a positive perspective (Hui and Lee, 2000) as they have faith in a better future. Moreover, these

employees will see change as an opportunity to learn and show their competence, thus, declining cognitive intentions to resist future change.

Furthermore, empowering leadership decreases behavioral intentions to resist future change via structural empowerment. If an employee feels supported and has necessary information about change, it is expected that the openness towards change is higher. Thus, in order to show positive behaviors regarding potential changes, employees that have experienced a change before, should see that the organization reduces the uncertainty of that event expressed by giving access to information, resources, opportunities in their job, and support.

Psychological empowerment has no effect on affective and behavioral intentions to resist future change. While literature evidences that psychological empowerment supports individual readiness to change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Cunningham et al., 2002; Rafferty and Simmons, 2006; Lam et al., 2007) as well as self-esteem (Wanberg and Banas, 2000) thus, lower intentions to resist future change. However, empowering leadership increases cognitive intentions to resist future change via psychological empowerment when OBSE of an employee is high. This could be explained because employees that see their work as meaningful, feel competent in their job, being self-determinant and feeling that they have impact on work outcomes may not want to change these situation. This is reinforced because employees with high OBSE do not want to damage their perception about their competence and value by facing a threatening situation. Low OBSE has no impact in this situation.

Concluding, our results imply two important things. Firstly, as change is a sensemaking process where the memory of past changes will affect the way an employee will react to a potential future change. In these situations, employees see the reduction of uncertainty as very important for reducing their intentions to resist future change. Secondly, the social

interactions are crucial in the workplace but not when intentions to resist future change need to be reduced.

Theoretical and managerial implications

The outcome of this study has, simultaneously, theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretically, the main finding of the study is related to our process perspective of organizational change. Employees will recall their past experiences when they prepare and plan to react to a future event. (Neves et al., unpublished manuscript). Taking into consideration that the life in an organization matters, the way an organization manages change will influence employees' intentions to resist change not only in that specific situation but also for a future event.

Secondly, this study allows the analysis of two paths simultaneously regarding intentions to resist future change. Firstly, it examines the effect of psychological empowerment in intentions to resist future change building on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). The second path examines the importance of structural empowerment in intentions to resist future change building on uncertainty reduction theory (Berger and Calabrese, 1975) where individuals reduce uncertainty by interacting with others before they act. The study finds evidence that uncertainty reduction (i.e. structural empowerment) is the main driver in reducing intentions to resist future change.

In this sense, this also highlights our third contribution which is the extension of the proposal of Ford et al. (2008) to agents and recipients where only its combination results in reduction of intentions to resist change. Time and continuity in organizational life matters, thus, leaders' behaviors will influence employees' intentions to resist future change. In this sense, one cannot blame only employees or only change agents by the failure of an

organizational change since, as mentioned, change agents influence employee' intentions to resist change. Change agents try to “make sense” of employee' intentions to resist future change and change recipients try to interpret their leaders behaviors Therefore, change resistance is a function of the quality of the interactions between change agents and recipients.

Hence, in practical terms, organizations should recruit, develop and train leaders so that they can exhibit empowering behaviors, which increases the psychological and structural empowerment of employees, reflecting, afterwards, in a more proactive attitude, higher performance and enhancement of attitudes that promote change acceptance, instead of resistance. In addition, organizations, through the contribution of the immediate leader, should implement practices that foster OBSE by decreasing job stressors such as job insecurity, role ambiguity or role conflict, increasing the support given by the supervisor and co-workers and providing autonomy in their job (Bowling et al., 2010). Also, when recruiting organizations should pay attention to individuals that have propensity to develop OBSE.

Limitations and future research

This study exhibits some limitations, which, on the one hand, can be seen as a constraint, but, on the other hand, can be an incentive to future research.

The first limitation that can be pointed out to this study is related with the size of the sample ($N_{it}=113$), which can be considered small. As a consequence, such restraint may impact the results as statistical power since is reduced as the samples becomes smaller (Aguinis and Harden, 2009). Thus, with a larger sample, our results would probably become more robust and powerful hence, our results are very strong.

Secondly, the sample used to obtain the final results only took into consideration the individuals that had already passed through a process of change, giving us results that might differ from those that would be obtained if we also consider participants that would go

through a process of change for the first time. It would be interesting to compare a first time change with a history of change.

Future research could be built on this research by deepening the knowledge of the outcomes studied, empowerment (psychological and structural) and intentions to resist future change. Moreover, given the lack of research between the relationship of empowerment and intentions to resist future change, future research could integrate resources role as boundary condition, by trying to examine, at the context level, the role of organizational trust (Robinson and Rousseau, 2004), psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) that decreases the feelings of uncertainty experienced in change processes or exploring the effect of openness to experience by the strength that this variable evidenced in this study. Moreover, Forrester (2000) argues that leaders should not empower all employees in the same way as the main source of failure comes from applying the “one-size-fits-all-empowerment approach” (p.69) and employees must choose to be empowered (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997). Future research could test what are the employees that should be empowered by empowering leader Finally, the relationship between OBSE and intentions to resist future change should be deepened by examining the impact of OBSE in intentions to resist future change under another style of leadership such as transformational and transactional (Bass, 1985), leader-member exchange (Liden et al., 1997) or ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005).

Conclusion

Employees' resistance to change is the main source of failure of organizational change. Consequently, our findings clarify the role of empowerment in reducing intentions to resist future change, highlighting the importance of OBSE as a boundary condition in this process. Change is a sensemaking process where both change agents and recipients are crucial to effectively implement a change. A change management strategy should start before the

organization decides to do so in order to be aligned with sensemaking process as well as understanding that employees respond differently to different stimulus. Thus, according to Oreg (2006) “in interpreting employees’ responses to change proposals, managers should be sensitive to the different forms in which resistance can manifest itself.” (p. 97).

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