

Affective Commitment to Change and Work-Life Balance:

Mediating Factors

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Abstract

Organizational changes are carried-out to increase organizational performance. Nevertheless, and most importantly, they entail changes to an employee's work experience. Organizational changes have consequences at an individual and organizational level, due to their common increase in work demands, concerns and feelings of uncertainty about one's work life. Due to the increased permeability of the frontier between work and personal life, these consequences of organizational changes in turn have a strong relationship with employees' work-life balance. Furthermore, given that the latter in turn has consequences on employees' job satisfaction, commitment and performance, it is important that managers take into consideration how employees react to change, in order to more effectively manage it and obtain the desired results. In this study, we looked at the relationship between employees' affective commitment to change and work-life balance, and the mediating role of job security, psychological contract fulfilment, emotional exhaustion and disengagement on this relationship. We asked a sample of 111 employees from different organizations, to complete a questionnaire. We found that affective commitment to change has a positive relationship with employees' emotional exhaustion, which in turn is positively associated with work-life balance. Building on the uncertainty reduction theory, Job-Demands-Resources model and social exchange theory, our findings contribute to this body of literature by showing the importance of examining what factors are related to employees' commitment to change and its relationship with work-life balance. For managers it serves as a light into the topic of organizational change management and its consequences.

Keywords: affective commitment to change, work-life balance, job security, psychological contract, disengagement, emotional exhaustion

Affective Commitment to Change and Work-Life Balance: Mediating Factors

Work-life balance, as a concept, was firstly introduced during the 1970's, in the UK (Prasad, 2012). There has been extensive research done on the effects of work-life balance (Tomažević, Kozjek, & Stare, 2014), on its definition (Reiter, 2007), and its causes and consequences (David, 2002). Although there is great discussion around the definition of work-life balance (Kalliath, & Brough, 2008), in this study we defined it as “an individual's subjective appraisal of the accord between his/her work and non-work activities and life more generally.” (Brough, et al, 2014, p. 2728). It has become a hot topic of discussion for psychologists, business managers and health professionals, and is especially cared for by millennials. Deloitte (2016) has found that when financial benefits are removed from the equation, work-life balance is the first factor millennials look for when evaluating job opportunities. This presents a serious challenge to employers given that millennials now represent the greater majority of the workforce. Interestingly it seems that workers are less willing to present unlimited commitment to their organization, perhaps due to the constantly changing nature of the psychological contract employees have with their employer (Guest, 2002). These constant or brutal changes in organizations make it less viable to offer secure progressive careers, and this leads to a sense of insecurity and work-life imbalance (Guest, & Conway, 2002).

Research has pointed as causes or contributors to work-life imbalance factors like working long hours, holding positions of higher responsibility and income in the organization, having multiple jobs, and being a woman (David, 2002). The extended work demands, additional working hours and highly intense work activities, contribute greatly to a reduction in non-work activities, resulting in fatigue, and other psycho-physiological consequences which in turn can

lead to this work-life imbalance (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills, & Smeaton, 2003; Guest, 2002). Moreover, the existing permeability between one's work and personal life, due to increasing situations like taking work home, an increase in weekends and evenings dedicated to work, and greater work pressures (at times due to organizational change) leads to a worsening of one's work-life balance (Guest, 2002). It seems that the busier one's work life is, the less resources the individual has for his personal life. On the other hand, working in a friendly environment where human resources practices are in place and where employees have scope for direct participation and autonomy seems to increase work-life balance (Guest, 2002).

With regards to its consequences, Allen, Kimmieson, Bordia, and Irmer (2007) argued that work-life balance has an effect on (1) work-related outcomes (turnover intentions, absenteeism, job satisfaction and performance), (2) non-work related outcomes (family and life satisfaction and performance) and (3) stress-related outcomes (burnout, substance abuse and psychological strain) (Brough, et al, 2014, p. 2726). It is also positively related to organizational and individual results which improve employee's commitment and attachment to the organization (Wang, & Walumbwa, 2007), and organizational pride and job satisfaction (Mas-Machuca, Berbegal-Mirabent, & Alegre, 2016). Work-life balance also improves organizational financial performance, and raises employee satisfaction and labor productivity (Perry-Smith, & Blum, 2000; Konrad, & Mangel, 2000). In fact, research has shown that 37% of variance in organizational commitment and job satisfaction is due to work-life balance (Azeem, & Akhtar, 2014) and that it is one of the top 3 areas that employees list as a factor that increases their commitment to organizations (Hodges, 2001). Lastly, Zhang, Griffeth, & Fried (2012) demonstrated that work-family conflict is positively associated with emotional exhaustion and

family-work conflict negatively correlated with affective commitment and positively correlated with turnover intentions.

In terms of the importance of work-life balance to society, research refers to consequences such as the affluence, growth of single-parent families, privatization of family life and its consequences like juvenile crime, increased drug abuse, and reduced concern and/or participation in caring for the elderly or disadvantaged (Guest, 2002). Therefore, knowing the impact that this concept has on societies, it is now a topic of high consideration for managers as they can make a difference in its creation.

Affective commitment to change and work-life balance

Due to work-life balance's consequences and the discussed possible causes, it is highly relevant to look at work-life balance in the context of organizational changes. An organizational change, regardless of its magnitude, brings with it change to one's work life (increased workloads and job insecurity) (Ning, & Jing, 2012). Change has become part of most organizations, in the context of globalization, increasingly sophisticated technology, organizational restructuring, and the 24/7 workplace (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). Lewis et al. (2007) show that given this context, more and more people report a fast pace of change which is resulting in a more demanding and intensified work and environment. This new pressure is attributed to new working patterns, increased feelings of pressure, lack of time, and mostly a general sense of 'busyness' (Lewis, et al, 2007) which lead to a feeling of 'work - non-work imbalance' (Guest, 2002). This environment of pressure lead to an increase in individuals' levels of stress, insecurity, uncertainty, which clearly are linked with their work-life balance.

Although organizational change is commonly done to increase organizational performance (Goodman, & Rousseau, 2004), and although change is now part of the routine in

most companies, it doesn't keep employees from resisting to it (Paul, 2016). Resistance to change is well known to be a significant factor that influences the outcomes of this organizational change effort and which can lead to a failure in the accomplishment of the desired results (Sikora, Beaty, & Forward, 2004; Ness, & Cucuzza, 1995). Research has shown that better than organizational commitment, affective commitment to change is a better predictor of behavioral support for a change (Herscovitch, & Meyer, 2002). This concept is defined as the employee's desire to be supportive of the change based on his/her belief in the change's inherent benefits (Meyer, & Allen, 1997).

Affective commitment to change is triggered when a personal or situational factor leads to the individual's recognition of the value of pursuing a certain course of action (Meyer, & Herscovitch, 2001). So during organizational change, an employee may realize that the organization has similar values and goals to theirs and that the change is necessary, if he/she expects their job 'life' to be better after this change (Ning, & Jing, 2012). So expecting positive outcomes out of an organizational change increases affective commitment to change whereas a negative expectation leads to a decrease in the latter. Extensive research has been done about the antecedents of affective commitment to change (Wang, Indridason, & Saunders, 2010), and its relationship with other factors, namely with regards to beliefs about the quality of the change management process impacting affective commitment to change (Morin et al., 2016), and its link to emotional exhaustion (Ning, & Jing, 2012).

Affective commitment to change has an impact on an employees' state of emotional exhaustion, as it serves as a coping resource during organizational change. Employees high on affective commitment to change more freely invest resources in order to achieve their desired results. This helps to protect the employee from experiencing negative consequences of a

stressful organizational change and helps decrease their perception of stress (Ning, & Jing, 2012), making them feel calmer.

Affective commitment to change has been positively associated with trust in management and supervisor (Michaelis et al., 2009; Neves & Caetano, 2006), participation in decision making with regards to the change, fair and just treatment throughout the change process, and satisfaction with change communication (Morin et al., 2016). Research has shown that individuals high on affective commitment to change are more willing to accept change and are also, less likely to engage in withdrawal behavior (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999). Although there is still a gap of research concerning affective commitment to change's effects on individual's work-life balance, research has shown that contexts like those of organizational changes that contribute to feelings of uncertainty (ie. job insecurity, role conflict) (Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, & Walker, 2007; Foster, 2010) and past negative change experiences are negatively related to affective commitment to change (Rafferty, & Restubog, 2010).

Hypothesis 1: Affective commitment to change is positively related to work-life balance.

Taking into consideration the lack of research done on the effect of affective commitment to change on work-life balance, in the current study, we examine this relationship and the different mediating factors that may play a role. We contribute to the literature of work-life balance by investigating a relationship which has been overlooked, and to the body of research on the consequences of organizational change. Firstly, we propose that an employee's affective commitment to change leads to a social exchange in terms of it influencing the psychological contract existing between the employee and employer, which in turn influences the experience of work-life balance.

Secondly, we propose that an employee's affective commitment to change drains resources, leading to emotional exhaustion and disengagement, which are negatively associated with work-life balance. And lastly, we propose that an employee's affective commitment to change reduces uncertainty, leading to a higher sense of job security, which in turn is positively associated with employee's work-life balance experience.

Psychological Contract Fulfillment as a Mediating Factor

When an organizational change takes place, employees gain and lose responsibilities with the new work demands that come with it. They are therefore indirectly pushed to put at test the psychological contract they have with the organization, as their past and future work expectations and the relationship between employee and employer may have changed with the change.

A psychological contract is defined as the "beliefs about reciprocal obligations between the two parties" (Robinson, & Morrison, 2000) or a person's belief about the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange between two or more parties. Therefore, the psychological contract fulfilment is defined as the employee's perceptions of how well their organization fulfilled their psychological contracts. It emerges when one party believes that when a contribution has been made, there is a possibility of future return, and therefore an obligation has been made to provide benefits in the future (Rousseau, 1989).

In the case of an organizational change, when the current working situation changes, the employee re-evaluates whether their work efforts - expenditure of resources - are going to pay off in the future, with the benefits that the change is perceived to bring. If these benefits are deemed to be at same level or higher than the demands, their motivation to stick to the change is more likely to be high. A study by Vakola (2016) shows that when organizational change is

associated with benefits (affectively committed to the change), employees are more likely to have positive reactions towards the change, but when the ratio becomes high cost over low benefits, employees start to resist. The amount of working hours and workload, and the associated returns are part of an employee's psychological contract. So when organizational change entails a change in the amount of working hours and workload, this psychological contract endures a breaching, leading to a shift in the individual's work-life balance (Sturges, & Guest, 1004).

Social exchange theory gives us a perspective "for understanding how employees achieve task performance and commit to their organizations through the relationship between employees and their organization" (Kim, 2014, pp. 41), and helps us understand the concept of psychological contract fulfilment. If not managed well, organizational changes may lead an employee to perceive a discrepancy between what they expected and what occurred (Wanous, 1973), and therefore, perceive a violation in their psychological contract. This can in turn negatively influence an employee's satisfaction with their job and organization. This breach in the psychological contract occurs when the employees' unrealistic expectations go unmet, and their general beliefs about the relationship with the employer is put to test (Robinson, & Rousseau, 1994). One reason for this to happen is because those aspects that weren't met may be the key sources for the employee's work satisfaction. As social exchange theory says, the social exchange occurs when, based on mutual reciprocity and trust, both parties value the exchange relation (Blau, 1964). However, when this contract breach takes place, this mutual reciprocity is no longer perceived to be occurring, thus leading to feelings of anger, betrayal (Robinson et al, 1994), frustration, resentment and dissatisfaction (Baccili, 2003). Because the employee perceives a failure from the organization to 'respect' this relationship, it constrains the potential

for effective strategic change, (Pate, Martin, & Staines, 2000), and leads to a decline in effective problem solving (Boss, 1978) and performance (Zand, 1972).

A psychological contract breach undermines what lead to the emergence of the relationship between the employee and employer, because it binds them together as a guarantee that if both parts do their job, the relationship is beneficial in a mutual way. It is associated with destructive cognitive, affective and emotional consequences like lack of organizational trust and increased cynicism (Porter, & Lawler, 1968; Pate, Martin, & Staines, 2000). These psychological contract violations are therefore negatively associated with satisfaction and trust and positively correlated with employees' intentions to leave and, their actual turnover (Robinson, & Rousseau, 1994). When employees believe that their organization's change is meaningful, necessary and beneficial (affectively committed to the change), as their psychological contract is fulfilled, there is a greater likelihood to strengthen their social exchange relationship. Research has shown that employees are therefore more likely to want to repay their organization by increasing their efforts to the organization (Wayne et al., 1997), and perhaps even increase their affective commitment to the change.

Hypothesis 2: Affective commitment to change is positively related to employees' psychological contract fulfillment, which in turn is positively related to work-life balance.

Burnout – disengagement and emotional exhaustion - as Mediating Factors

As discussed, organizational change causes an increase in the amount of stress an employee feels. This happens not only because a change in the daily routine occurs, but also because it 'forces' the individual to adapt to a new circumstance. Because change normally comes with increased job demands, it entails also an increase demand of resources, which if not available, creates the context for extreme stress, and thus leads to burnout. Burnout is described

as a condition that concerns all kinds of employees, regardless of their job, as long as there is a discrepancy between what their job demands and the resources they have available (Demerouti, Nachreiner, Baker, & Schaufeli, 2001).

It is especially interesting to look at burnout as a consequence of change, so that managers can more readily manage it in a way that they reduce the likelihood that employees experience this condition. It is a work-related syndrome characterized by two aspects: emotional exhaustion and disengagement, that employees experience with regards to their work. Emotional exhaustion is defined as a “state of energy draining” (Reis, Xanthopoulou, & Tsaousis, 2015, p. 9), and disengagement is defined as a loss of concern about one’s work, its recipients and contents (Reis, Xanthopoulou, & Tsaousis, 2015).

In order to examine the relationship between change and burnout, we look at the Job-Demands-Resources Model of Burnout. It claims that there are two categories of job characteristics that may lead to burnout when not in appropriate levels: job demands and job resources (Bakker, & Demerouti, 2007). It proposes that job resources are the most relevant predictors of engagement and therefore of positive results, whereas job demands are predictors of health impairment which in turn may lead to negative organizational outcomes (Bakker, & Demerouti, 2007). In this study, using this model, we claim that affective commitment to change is likely to increase feelings of emotional exhaustion (due to increased job demands), and disengagement (due to the exhaustion of resources), because change requires an increase in demands and usage of resources like attention, energy and time. A study by Ning and Jing (2012) has already found that affective commitment to change is negatively related to emotional exhaustion, and mediates its relationship with expectation of change outcome.

We believe that feeling affectively committed to the change (ie. wanting to be supportive) helps to have a positive view of the available resources and to decrease the perception of stress (Ning, & Jing, 2012). Because burnout has a spill-over effect on work-life balance (Shanafelt, et al, 2012), this decrease in stress positively affects work-life balance (Belkin, Becker, & Conroy, 2016;). Although there is yet no research about the impact of affective commitment to change on disengagement, it is important to take into consideration that experiencing disengagement burnout, leads to lower individual performance, low quality of working life (Yasin, & Khalid, 2015), and organizational commitment (Nafei, 2013). Given this and the relationship between stress, and resources with burnout, it seems relevant to study the relationship between affective commitment to change and work-life balance by looking at individuals' burnout as a mediating factor of this relationship.

Hypothesis 3a: Affective commitment to change is negatively related to emotional exhaustion, which is in turn negatively related to work-life balance.

Hypothesis 3b: Affective commitment to change is negatively related to disengagement, which is in turn negatively related to work-life balance.

Job Security as a Mediating Factor

Organizational change is often related with employees' feelings of stress, anxiety, and insecurity about their jobs and their continued existence (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989). The employee often perceives change as a threat to their job's features, their continuance in the job and organization, expecting possible future events to negatively impact their job, and as a consequence, experience feelings of powerlessness (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989). Experienced or expected loss of tangible, psychological or social resources (Hobfoll, 1998), and high job demands in situations of low control clearly create the optimal context for stress (Karasek et al.,

1998). Organizational changes revoke employees' psychological contracts (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989) and have direct effects on job security and satisfaction and indirect effects on an employee's psychological mood through job insecurity and satisfaction (Burke, 1998). In fact, job insecurity has long been researched as a work stressor, due to its component of uncertainty (Barling, & Kelloway, 1996). It is seen, by stress theories, as a stressor because the lack of predictability that it prevails prevents the employee from evaluating the situation or what should be done about it (Lazarus, & Folkman, 1984). In this study, job security is defined as a psychological state in which an employee feels secure in their organization and job (Oldham, Kulik, Stepina, & Ambrose, 1986).

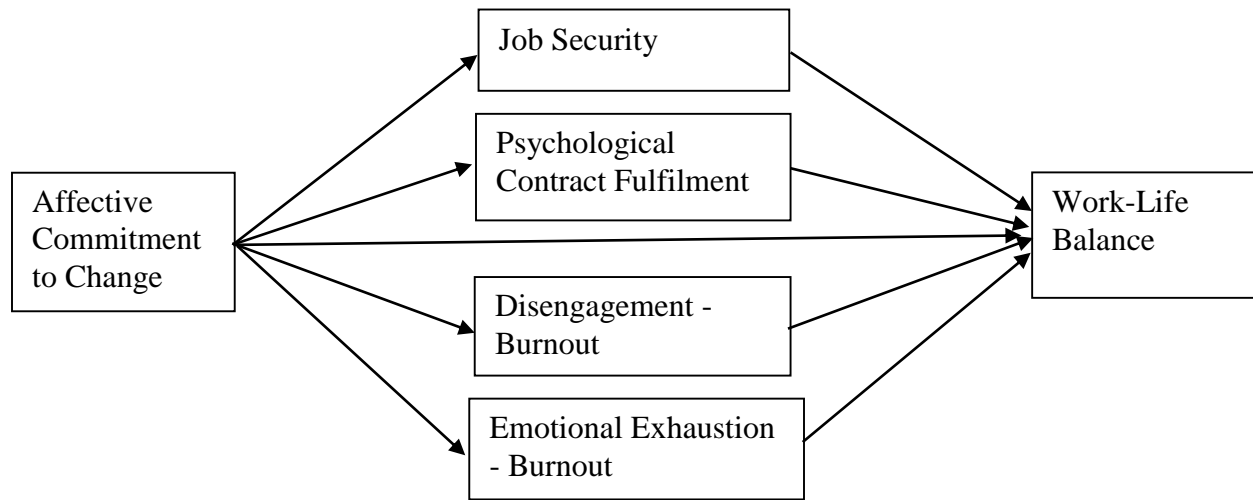
There is still a gap of literature on the topic of affective commitment to change and its relationship with job security, as most research focuses on the consequences of change as a whole. One study examines this feeling of uncertainty (lack of job security) as a negative contributing factor to affective commitment to change (Bernerth et al., 2007; Foster, 2010). So that as the employee perceives a lack of job security, he naturally resists to the change, as the desire to support it is diminished because its benefits are no longer considered. To help us understand the effects of job security, the Uncertainty Reduction Theory claims that because uncertainty (in this case job insecurity) is unpleasant, it is also motivating (Berger, & Calabrese, 1975). For instance, in Kraimer, Wayne, Liden, and Sparrowe's article (2005), the researchers claim that because low job security is psychologically stressful, employees have a tendency to respond to threatening situations (like organizational changes) and to alleviate this stress by decreasing their job performance. On the other hand, employees with high levels of job security are less likely to respond to threat perceptions, because they don't perceive the situations as applicable to them.

However, in this study we aim to look at job security and affective commitment to change as the latter having an influence on job security. Based on the Uncertainty Reduction Theory and the Job-Demands-Resources model, we claim that when employees believe in the benefits of the change, and are therefore supportive of it, they expend more resources to participate in it in order to compensate for the increased demands. As employees feel more motivated to pursue the change, the level of uncertainty and stress reduce, because it is no longer viewed as a threat to their jobs, leading to an increase in their job security.

To resume, research has shown that lack of job insecurity has serious implications at different levels: attitudinal, behavioral and health-related. Job insecurity has a negative impact on employee's intentions to quit, level of commitment and job satisfaction (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989), it leads to mental health, and somatic complaints (Naswall, Sverke, Hellgreen, 2005) and to a decrease in performance (Naswall, Sverke, Hellgreen, 2005). Job insecurity is negatively related to the balance between an employee's work and personal lives, because it is related with other negative aspects that influence both sides of the ratio (marital tension, job satisfaction and vigor at work) (Cheng, Mauno, & Lee, 2014). Job insecurity is also associated with greater work-non-work conflict and emotional exhaustion (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & Harris, 2014). Due to these effects, we believe it is interesting to examine the relationship between affective commitment to change, job security and work-life balance, so that managers can effectively prepare for their change management.

Hypothesis 4: Affective commitment to change is positively related to job security, which in turn is positively related to work-life balance.

Figure 1. Theoretical model



Method

Sample and Procedure

This study involved one hundred and eleven participants. The sample was collected over a period of three weeks, in the months of September and October, 2016, and was carried using voluntary response sampling, in which the participants could voluntarily participate in the questionnaire. The survey was administered over the Internet, in electronic format to a large public. It was made publicly available on online networking platforms, like LinkedIn, Facebook and via E-mail, through which it was publicized. For this reason, the exact number of people to which it was made available is indefinite. There were overall one hundred and forty-nine responses, of which, one hundred and eleven individuals completely answered the questionnaire. This is the sample that was used for the analysis of this study. The public was shown an informative text explaining the purpose of the questionnaire with regards to the daily work and Human Resources practices at their organizations, asking individuals for their participation. The text directed the volunteers to the link associated with the survey, in which further instructions

were available, assuring the confidentiality of the responses. Multiple reminder texts were sent via the same platforms to ask for further volunteers, throughout this same period.

Focusing now on the demographic aspect of the sample, of the total 111 participants, 52,3% were females; the average age was 44,59 years old and the majority (55%) held Bachelor degrees. Also, 1,8% of the sample had reached their Middle School degree, 5,4% their High School degree, 35,1% of the sample held a Master's degree, and only 2,7% a Doctorate degree. The work tenure of the participants varied greatly, ranging from less than 1 year to 32 years in the same organization and an overall average tenure of 10,87 years. The change in which participants based their responses was, on average, 1,81 years ago, and lasted, on average, for 15,09 months (close to 1 year), with the most frequent function being management (22 participants). The majority of participants had undergone a restructuring change (23), or had been given a new supervisor or functional/areas (15).

Measures

Affective commitment to change. Affective commitment to change was measured using the 6-item scale developed by Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002, which characterized how emotionally attached, identified and involved with the organization the respondent felt. Sample items include "This change was a good strategy for this organization" and "Things would have been better without this change" ($\alpha = .91$).

Emotional Exhaustion - Burnout. Emotional exhaustion was measured using an 8-item scale of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, used by Reis, Xanthopoulou, & Tsaousis, 2015, which characterized the respondent's degree of emotional exhaustion. Sample items include "There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work" and "After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities" ($\alpha = .81$).

Disengagement - Burnout. It is an aspect of a greater concept – burnout, which also includes emotional exhaustion, that employees experience with regards to their work. It was measured using an 8-item scale of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, used by Reis, Xanthopoulou, & Tsaousis, 2015, which characterized the respondent's degree of cynicism. Sample items include “I always find new and interesting aspects in my work” and “I find my work to be a positive challenge” ($\alpha = .66$).

Psychological Contract Fulfilment. It was measured using a 5-item scale from Robinson, & Morrison, 2000, which characterized the respondent's degree of psychological contract fulfilment. Sample items include “Almost all the promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far” and “I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions” ($\alpha = .88$).

Job Security. It was measured using a 6-item scale taken from that of 10 items developed by Oldham, et al, 1986, which characterized the respondent's perceptions of job security. Sample items include “I will be able to keep my present job as long as I wish” and “I am confident that I will be able to work for my organization as long as I wish” ($\alpha = .87$).

Work-Life Balance. It was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Brough, et al, 2014, which characterized the respondent's perceptions of work-life balance. Sample items include “I currently have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have available for non-work activities” and “I have difficulty balancing my work and non-work activities” ($\alpha = .85$).

The previous scales were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1- *strongly disagree* to 5 - *strongly agree*.

Control Variables.

Following the recommendation that, in order to increase statistical power, researchers should only include in their analyses variables that are correlated with the outcome variables (Becker, 2005), we tested whether employees' age, gender, tenure and education, should be included in our analysis. We found only age was significantly related to disengagement, emotional exhaustion and job security (none with affective commitment to change or work-life balance), thus we included it in the first path of our model.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and zero-order correlations. Age was significantly related to job security, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement. The older an employee is, the lower their level of job security ($r = -.27, p < 0.01$), level of emotional exhaustion ($r = -.25, p < 0.05$) and disengagement ($r = -.27, p < 0.01$). In order to test our hypothesis, we ran a series of tests. Firstly, to test hypothesis 1, we ran a linear regression, with the control variable age in the first block and affective commitment to change in the second. As we predicted, affective commitment to change was significantly related to work-life balance ($B = .38$; LLCI .19, ULCI .55). Secondly, we used the bootstrapping method (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) given its robustness in testing for conditional indirect effects (Mackinnon, Lockwood & Williams, 2004; Preacher et al., 2007), using PROCESS macro, developed by Hayes (2013), with 5,000 bootstrap samples. For this study, we used bootstrapping model number 4 (as can be seen in Figure 1), to test our different hypotheses. The results from this test are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Affective commitment to change is positively, and significantly related to employees' psychological contract fulfilment ($B = .34$; LLCI .17, ULCI .50), although, contrary to prediction

in hypothesis 2, psychological contract fulfilment is not significantly related to work-life balance ($B = -.01$; LLCI $-.19$, ULCI $.16$). This means that the higher the employees' affective commitment to change, the higher their psychological contract fulfilment; however, this relationship has no relationship on the latter's association to work-life balance.

Moreover, affective commitment to change is significantly negatively related to emotional exhaustion ($B = -.23$; LLCI $-.35$, ULCI $-.11$), which is also significantly and negatively related to work-life balance ($B = -.79$; LLCI -1.05 , ULCI $.53$), which coupled with a significant indirect effect via emotional exhaustion ($B = .18$; LLCI $.08$, ULCI $.32$), supports hypothesis 3a. This result shows that the higher one's affective commitment to change is, the lower their level of emotional exhaustion, therefore related with a better work-life balance.

With regards to hypothesis 3b, results show that affective commitment to change is not significantly related to disengagement ($B = -.10$; LLCI $-.20$, ULCI $.00$), and that the latter is also not significantly related to work-life balance ($B = -.08$; LLCI $-.39$, ULCI $.22$), thus not supporting our hypothesis. Lastly, looking at hypothesis 4, affective commitment to change was not found to be significantly related to job security ($B = .04$; LLCI $-.12$, ULCI $.21$), whereas the latter is positively, and significantly related to work-life balance ($B = .17$; LLCI $.00$, ULCI $.33$). This results claims that the higher an employee's level of job security, the higher their level of work-life balance. Our model explains 45% of the variance in work-life balance.

Discussion

Figure 2. Model with results

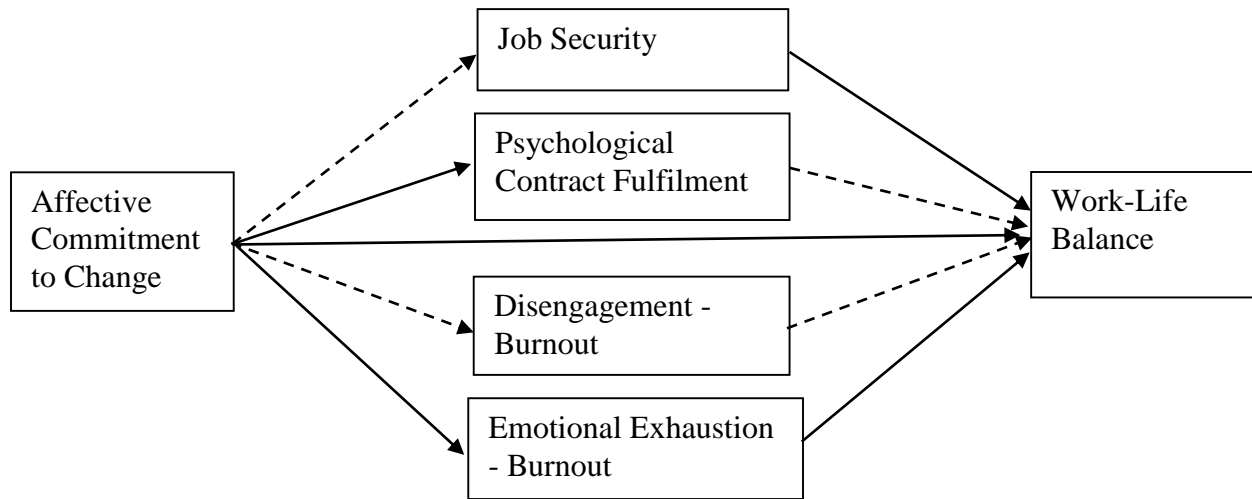


Figure 2 shows the final model with our findings. We found that affective commitment to change is positively related to work-life balance; and that this relationship is positively mediated by the state of emotional exhaustion of the employee. We also demonstrated that affective commitment to change is positively related to psychological contract fulfilment, and that job security is positively related to work-life balance. Lastly, our study showed no significant relationship between affective commitment to change and job security, between affective commitment to change and work-life balance when mediated by disengagement, and between psychological contract fulfilment and work-life balance.

Firstly, according to our results, and alongside with existing research on the consequences of affective commitment to change on work-life balance (Belkin, Becker, & Conroy, 2016), it seems that the greater the desire to be supportive of the change, the better balance employees have between their work and personal lives. The fact that these employees believe in the future benefits of the change allows them to keep a positive attitude towards it

(Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999). This, in turn, because of the spill-over effects between work and personal lives (Ferguson, 2012), affects their work-life balance positively.

Secondly, our results showed that emotional exhaustion served as a mediator in the relationship between affective commitment to change and work-life balance. This means that the more supportive individuals are of the organizational change, the less emotionally exhausted and therefore more energized they will be, leading them to have a better work-life balance. This finding supports our hypothesis and is also in accordance with previous work done on the topic. Affective commitment to change has been pointed as being positively related with emotional exhaustion (Ning, & Jing, 2012), which in turn has a positive effect on work-life balance (Belkin, Becker, & Conroy, 2016; Shanafelt, et al, 2012). Relating back to the Job-Demands-Resources model of burnout, this finding demonstrates that being affectively committed to the change serves as a resource when managing change. Having the desire to support the change because the employee understands the benefits of doing so, leads them to more readily put to use all resources to match the demands. This positive reaction toward the change thus leads the employee to feel less emotionally exhausted, because of the balance between the resources and demands available. This finding is relevant for managers to keep in mind because by targeting employees' affective commitment to change, they may also affect the balance employees have between their work and personal lives. As discussed, both of these measures are significantly related to individual and organizational performance, making them key aspects to take into consideration when managing organizational change. In fact, employees' burnout and work-life balance are significant predictors of employees' job satisfaction (Devi, & Nagini, 2013).

Thirdly, our results showed that affective commitment to change has a positive relationship with employees' psychological contract fulfilment. We interpret this finding as the

more an employee wants to be supportive of the organizational change (due to the benefits perceived by doing so), the more they feel that their psychological contract is being fulfilled. This happens because employees perceive the change as a 'positive' event where the employer showed its respect for the employee and their relationship (social exchange), by effectively communicating and discussing the direct impact that the change was going to have on their daily work. It is essential that in the case of organizational changes, the employee recognizes the value of pursuing this change (Meyer, & Herscovitch, 2001) by believing that it will bring with it benefits (Meyer, & Allen, 1997). This happens only when the employee realizes the similarity between the organization's values and goals and their own, and that the change is necessary for future success (Ning, & Jing, 2012).

This result is essential for managers when managing change, because research has found that when an employee perceives a failure from the organization to 'respect' their relationship, it constrains the potential for effective strategic change, (Pate, Martin, & Staines, 2000), and leads to a decline in effective problem solving (Boss, 1978) and performance (Zand, 1972). So managers, when planning an organizational change, should foster a relationship of trust, and clearly identify the similarity between the organization's values and goals and their own. By building and having this relationship, the manager can also more carefully and specifically personalize his speech when explaining the purpose and course of action of the change.

Lastly, we also found that job security is positively related with work-life balance, which shows that the more secure you feel about your job, the better balanced your work and personal lives are. These findings are also supported by previous research which claims that job insecurity is negatively related to work-life balance (Cheng, Mauno, & Lee, 2014). We believe this happens because when an employee experiences a low level of uncertainty, and feels secure about their

job, the work-side of the ratio becomes positive which is then positively associated (via spill-over effects) to the personal life side.

This finding is highly relevant for managers because of the effects that job security and work-life balance have on the individual and the organization. On the one hand, job insecurity has a negative influence on intentions to quit, level of commitment and job satisfaction (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989), and also leads to decreased performance (Naswall, Sverke, Hellgreen, 2005). On the other hand, work-life balance is also positively related to organizational and individual outcomes which improve employee's commitment and attachment to the organization (Wang, & Walumbwa 2007), increase organization's financial performance, raise employee satisfaction and labour productivity (Perry-Smith, & Blum, 2000; Konrad, & Mangel, 2000). This is relevant for managers to keep in mind also because job insecurity arouses negative emotions that are attributed to the source of stress (which can be the organization as a whole, the supervisor, or the change itself) (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & Harris, 2014). So if managers want employees to feel committed, engaged and satisfied working in the organization, they must be aware of this relationship. For this reason, when managers are preparing an organizational change, it is essential that they look at the levels of job security and work-life balance policies in place, as these may influence the outcome of the change.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study's findings present some theoretical and managerial implications. With regards to our theoretical contributions, we have added to the research body of affective commitment to change and work-life balance, as well as to that of job security, emotional exhaustion and psychological contract. Our research is an extension of the previous research done on work-life balance as it highlights the relationship between affective commitment to change and work-life

balance whilst mediated by emotional exhaustion (Ning, & Jing, 2012; Belkin, Becker, & Conroy, 2016; Shanafelt, et al, 2012), through the Job-Demands-Resources Model of Burnout. It is also an application of the social exchange theory, as discussed previously (Bakker, & Demerouti, 2007), and serves as basis for managers to make effective decisions when planning for organizational changes. With regards to our research findings about job security's relationship with work-life balance, we have added to the research on the theory of uncertainty reduction (Berger, & Calabrese, 1975). And lastly, with relation to the psychological contract being influenced by affective commitment to change, we have supported the research on social exchange theory (Bakker, & Demerouti, 2007).

Given the findings, we therefore believe it is essential to look at what advises we can give to managers. Firstly, in order to promote employees' affective commitment to any change, this change must be communicated in such a way that the employee feels it is urgently necessary for individual and organizational success, and perceives it as beneficial. Change management research highlights the importance of communication during organizational change (Pundzienė, Alonderienė, & Buožiūtė, 2007), because the success of this change depends greatly on how the strategy, purpose and the actual change is communicated to those who will undergo this process (Witherspoon, & Wohlert, 1996). It is important that managers clearly demonstrate what the upcoming courses of action are and what impact these will have on the individual and organizational level, because research shows that change communication has an influence on change-related uncertainty, which in turn influences employees' openness to change (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007). More importantly, it is recommended that it is the employee's direct supervisor who provides implementation and job related information during organizational change, and that it is the senior manager who provides the strategic orientation

(Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007). Research has shown that employees' confidence about future changes' necessity and legitimacy for organizational success is associated with clear and open communication and past experiences with change management (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Furthermore, going back to the Job-Demands-Resources model, if employees are clear about what job demands, and what resources they will have to answer to these, their feelings of resources draining and uncertainty will be reduced, as well as their social exchange relationship will improve. This may lead to a growth in their affective commitment to change as employees now not only perceive the change as something urgent and beneficial, but also believe that they will be able to deal with this organizational change. It is thus empirical that managers clarify what resources are available for employees to use during and after the organizational change.

Secondly, managers need to create an environment in which employees and managers can directly consult each other during these change processes, as these are times of uncertainty, and clarification helps to minimize its negative effects (Morgan, & Zeffane, 2003). Benefits have been shown from participatory processes during organizational changes, such as increased satisfaction, decreased resistance, and an increase in feeling in control (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004; Bordia, Hunt, Paulsen, Tourish, & DiFonzo, 2004). So we suggest that managers positively reinforce two-way constructive feedback, as this will create room for further discussion and clarification of objectives, courses of action, demands and resources.

Surely, there may still be room for employees to feel stressed, unsecure and doubtful of their psychological contract, mostly due to individual differences. Thus, in order to address these feelings, a further suggestion is that the organizational culture acknowledges that stress, anxiety and uncertainty are helpful information to guide organizational behaviour, rather than individual

weakness. Secondly, the organization should have always, but especially during organizational change, an organizational level strategy to address these kinds of feelings, ranging from structural to psychological interventions. These may include a flexibility to change the physical environment in which employees work in, work schedules, increase social support inside and outside the organization (with counsellors), and increased participation in the organization's decision making (Michie, 2002). Work-life balance programs with progressive relaxation and systematic desensitization have also been shown to reduce emotional exhaustion (Higgins, 1986). These strategies combined with those of the change-related communication, should allow for organizational change to have the results it is designed to have.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is based on regressions which implies that we cannot assume causation effects between the variables. Having a causation effect, we could more effectively apply this research to other organizations, but given the nature of the relationship, such method is not possible. In terms of its sampling, given its small size, we cannot draw definitive conclusions from the data, although its pattern is clear. The voluntary response sampling style used may oversample employees who have strong opinions about the matter, and undersample those who don't care so much about it. Therefore, we must be careful when making inferences based on this kind of sampling.

Furthermore, the sample was gathered via voluntary responses via internet. Amongst other information, we cannot be sure of the demographic variables of the population which limits our generalization. Through feedback, we also found that some participants, due to the length of the questionnaire, and although there was no time limit to complete the questionnaire, quit answering when they saw the full length of the survey. Moreover, given the different kinds of

organizational changes experienced by the respondents, they may not have completed the survey deeming their organizational change to not be significant for this research. Lastly, we could have also allowed for a longer time period to gather more responses, but due to time constraints, this was not possible.

This investigation sheds light on further research that can be done on the topic. Our sample had very distinct change experiences, ranging from restructuring to new offices with very distinct lengths and that had taken place at distinct times. This is important as research shows that people react differently depending on the stage of the organizational change in which they are in (Schumacher, Schreurs, Emmerik, De Witte, 2016). The same investigation shows that, across different change stages, the relationship between job insecurity and fairness decreased gradually. Another study found that the transition stage was the phase that created the most job insecurity, as the level of stress increased with the end of the change, when new job demands asked for fewer resources (Smollan, 2015) showing us how important it is to take into consideration in which change stage employees are. In addition to this, it would also be interesting to look at what influence does the extent to which the change happened have on the relationship studied in this paper. This is imperative for managers that look at this study as a basis for action planning (Schumacher, Schreurs, Van Emmerik, & De Witte, 2016).

It would also be interesting to investigate the impact of cultures on the expression of affective commitment to change, as these can have an influence on its relationship with work-life balance (Shankar, & Bhatnagar, 2010). For example, a study by Kim (2014) shows a difference in how individualistic and collectivistic cultures perceive organizational and personal values differently. In individualistic cultures, employees value their personal interests more highly than those of their organizations, and thus have a tendency to pursue their own personal goals versus

those of the organization; versus collectivistic cultures, where the organization is perceived to be more important and values related to the team (harmony, loyalty and cooperation) are highly emphasized and valued (Kim, 2014). The same research claims that these organizational members avoid conflict and therefore expressing their conflicting opinions. So, there is still space to investigate whether employees in collectivistic cultures have a greater tendency to have higher affective commitment to change, due to their collectivistic approach to the organization when compared to those of individualistic societies, and the relationship this then has on their experience of work-life balance as well.

Furthermore, given that our results showed no significant relationship between job security and affective commitment to change, it would be interesting to look at what mediating factors may be playing a role, making this relationship significant. Research has found that fairness and exhaustion were partial mediators of the relationship between job insecurity and affective commitment for instance (Schumacher, et al, 2016).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our findings shed light on the relationship between employees' affective commitment to change and work-life balance, showing that it is only significant when it is mediated by employee's level of emotional exhaustion. The study also found that the more affectively committed an employee is to the change, the more they perceive their psychological contract is fulfilled, and that the higher their level of job security, the better the employees' work-life balance. These findings highlight the effect that increased job demands and the availability of resources have on an individual's balance between their work and personal lives, and the importance of effectively managing change in order to promote change supporters. An effective organizational change management should seek to increase employees' level of

affective commitment to change, in order to decrease employees' level of emotional exhaustion, which in turn will lead to better work-life balance. Managers can do so by effectively communicating to employees what the change is all about, and the immediate and long-term effects that it will have on the individual and the organization. During this communication and throughout the change, managers should highlight the resources that are made available to aid with the job demands. Moreover, in order for organizational change to go as planned, it is essential that feedback is made possible in order to reinforce the social exchange relationship existing between employee and employer. Ensuring that employees perceive the change as beneficial and are therefore supportive of it, will help decrease their levels of emotional exhaustion and increase their work-life balance. Managers can use this research as a highlight to how their organizational change management relates to many other aspects of their employees' lives, that go beyond their performance.

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Table 1. Correlations, means, standard deviations and reliabilities

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	44,59	10,56							
2. Affective Commitment to Change	3,77	1,12	-.07	(.91)					
3. Job Security	2,88	.95	-.27**	.12	(.87)				
4. Psychological Contract	3,49	1,10	-.11	.43**	.20*	(.88)			
5. Disengagement	2,51	.57	-.27**	-.14	.07	-.27**	(.66)		
6. Emotional Exhaustion	2,71	.71	-.25*	-.28**	-.01	-.11	.44**	(.81)	
7. Work-Life Balance	3,15	1,09	.17	.35**	.21*	.29**	-.31**	-.64**	(.85)

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; N = 111

Notes. N= 111; Age

Table 2. Bootstrapping results. (Model 4, Hayes, 2013)

	Job Security				Psychological Contract			
	B	t	LLCI	ULCI	B	t	LLCI	ULCI
<i>Control variable</i>								
Age	-.02	-2.88*	-.04	-.00	-.01	-1.85	-.03	.00
<i>Main effects</i>								
ACC	.04	.51	-.12	.21	.34	4.03*	.17	.50

* p < .05; ** p < .01

Note. N = 111

Table 3. Bootstrapping results. (Model 4, Hayes, 2013)

	Disengagement				Emotional Exhaustion			
	B	t	LLCI	ULCI	B	t	LLCI	ULCI
<i>Control variable</i>								
Age	-.01	-3.08*	-.02	-.00	-.02	-3.69*	-.03	-.01
<i>Main effects</i>								
ACC	-.10	-1.95	-.20	.00	-.23	-4.02*	-.35	-.11

* p < .05; ** p < .01

Note. N = 111

Table 4. Bootstrapping results. (Model 4, Hayes, 2013)

	Work-Life Balance			
	B	t	LLCI	ULCI
<i>Control variable</i>				
Age	.00	.39	-.01	.01
<i>Main effects</i>				
ACC	.10	1.28	-.05	.26
<i>Mediator Variable</i>				
Job Security	.17	2.02*	.00	.33
Psychological Contract	-.01	-.14	-.19	.16
Disengagement	-.08	-.52	-.39	.22
Emotional Exhaustion	-.79	6.03*	-1.05	.53

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Note. N = 111