A dual model of coping with and commitment to organizational change: the role of appraisals and resources

Jinia Mukerjee
Montpellier Business School, Montpellier, France and
Montpellier Research in Management, Université de Montpellier, Montpellier, France
Francesco Montani
University of Bologna – Rimini Campus, Rimini, Italy, and
Christian Vandenberghe
HEC Montreal, Montreal, Canada

Abstract

Purpose – Organizational change is usually stressful and destabilizing for employees, for whom coping with the induced stress is primordial to commit to the change. This paper aims to unravel how and when change recipients can enact different coping strategies and, ultimately, manifest different forms of commitment to change.

Design/methodology/approach – We propose a theoretical model that identifies challenge appraisal and hindrance appraisal as two primary appraisals of organizational change that fuel, respectively, proactive and preventive coping strategies and, indirectly, affective and normative forms of commitment to change. Moreover, this framework suggests that coping strategies and commitment are influenced by the secondary appraisal of two vital resources – resilience and POS – allowing individuals to react effectively to primary change-related appraisals. Finally, the relationship between coping strategies and the components of commitment to change is proposed to be moderated by employees' regulatory focus.

Findings – Using appraisal theory and conservation of resources theory as guiding frameworks, our integrated model describes the antecedents, processes and boundary conditions associated with coping with the stress of organizational change and how they ultimately influence commitment to it.

Originality/value – This is the first theoretical paper to identify a conditional dual path to disclose the different reactions that change recipients can manifest in response to the stressful aspects of organizational change.

Keywords Appraisals, Coping, Commitment to change, Resources

Paper type Research Paper

Introduction

Organizational change is a process that causes stress and fatigue among employees (Callan, 1993; De Jong *et al.*, 2016; Mäkikangas *et al.*, 2019). Change initiatives disrupt established routines, identities, interpersonal relationships at work; they induce uncertainty, and call for adjustment to new work relationships and strategic goals (Dahl, 2011; Pollard, 2001). Thus, change is often experienced as stressful (Bamberger *et al.*, 2012; Rafferty and Griffin, 2006; Terry and Jimmieson, 2003). At the same time, change initiatives also provide the possibility for recipients to improve current work conditions, learn and master new competencies and

skills and perform their job more effectively (Fugate and Soenen, 2018; Rafferty and Restubog, 2017). This paradox makes it critical to understand how individuals *cope* with such demanding events, maintain positive functioning and contribute to the success of change initiatives. The role of stress coping strategies in the organizational change context is indeed crucial, since research over the past decades has consistently linked poor stress-coping to severe impairments of both physical and psychological health (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Vakola and Petrou, 2018a).

While studies have documented the impact of change-related demands (or stressors) on employee reactions to change (e.g. Chauvin *et al.*, 2014; Day *et al.*, 2017), the dual nature (i.e. hindrance vs challenge) of such demands has been largely ignored. More importantly, recent research on job demands suggests that the dual nature of stressful work experiences cannot be captured by the perceived characteristics of the demands since almost any stressor is likely to contain challenging and threatening aspects to some extent (Mazzola and Disselhorst, 2019; Webster *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, scholars have made a call to understand how individuals cognitively *appraise* job demands (i.e. as challenging vs hindering). The role of appraisal in the change process has been integrated in Oreg *et al.*'s (2018) affect-based model of change recipients' responses to organizational change. These authors proposed that primary appraisals (i.e. the evaluation of the event's relevance to the self) and secondary appraisals (i.e. the evaluation of one's ability to cope with the event) influence the valence of affective and behavioral responses to change. However, the role of appraisals with regard to the challenging vs hindering nature of the change process is omitted in this model. Empirically, a few studies have begun to address this issue. For example, Kaltiainen *et al.* (2019) reported evidence for a reciprocal relationship between work engagement and change-related challenge and hindrance appraisals. Similarly, Fugate and Soenens (2018) found that challenge and hindrance appraisals were, respectively, positively and negatively related to change-supportive behaviors (i.e. compliance and championing).

Despite these preliminary insights, to our knowledge there has been no attempt to theorize and examine how change-related appraisals may affect employee coping responses. The dearth of such research is at odds with the tenet of stress theory that appraisal processes drive coping responses (Webster *et al.*, 2011). Thus, current theorizing on change recipients' coping responses to change remains incomplete, leaving us without a clear understanding of what people can do to alleviate the demanding aspects of the change process and, thereby, commit to it. In this paper, we thus attempt to theoretically address the following research question: How and when do change-related appraisals enhance or stifle coping responses and, ultimately, organizational commitment to change?

The goal of the present study is to develop a conceptual framework that (a) explicates the dual impact of challenge and hindrance change-related appraisals on commitment to organizational change via coping responses and (b) clarifies the boundary conditions associated with these effects. Commitment to change, which is a mindset that binds an individual to the change initiative and the course of actions required for the success of the change implementation (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002), has been thought to be an important factor driving the success of change implementation (Ling *et al.*, 2018; Morin *et al.*, 2016). Indeed, as Conner and Patterson (1982) pointed out, "the most prevalent factor contributing to failed change project is a lack of commitment by people" (p. 18).

We contend that, as primary appraisals, change-related challenge and hindrance appraisals influence affective and normative commitment to change by activating different coping strategies, namely proactive and preventive coping. Moreover, we argue that the effectiveness of change-related coping depends on the secondary appraisal of two resources that might be available (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 2001; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984): psychological resilience [1] and perceived organizational support (POS). We conceptualize psychological resilience (hereafter referred to as resilience) as a personal resource that acts as stress

resistance (Hobfoll, 1989) during organizational change and facilitates employees committing to it. Although traditionally explained within a social exchange framework, we consider POS (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986) as a major resource that has instrumental value in enhancing self-esteem by showing approval and consideration by the organization, as well as symbolic value in creating a positive sense of self. Hence, if harnessed in organizational change contexts, POS may encourage employees to accept and invest in the change implementation.

Our conceptual, dual model of coping with and commitment to change is presented in Figure 1. This model posits that challenge appraisals of change-related demands lead to affective commitment to change via proactive coping strategies, and threat appraisals lead to normative commitment to change via preventive coping strategies. Further, the enactment of coping strategies is facilitated when individuals make a favorable secondary appraisal of two vital resources – resilience and POS. Moreover, the relationship between coping strategies and components of commitment to change is moderated by employees' regulatory focus, which determines the amount of coping efforts. Our model integrates the appraisal, coping and commitment to change literatures and represents an integrative framework of the antecedents, processes and boundary conditions associated with coping with and committing to change.

An appraisal and coping perspective to organizational change

The perception that the organizational change process is stressful is far from idiographic as there is a broad consensus in the literature to its stressful nature (Dahl, 2011; Elrod and Tippett, 2002; Liu and Perrewe, 2005). Organizational change involves going from known to unknown and is often accompanied by a sense of precariousness in one's survival and meaning of life in the organization. Organizational change leads to the modification of organizational goals, processes, structure, work tasks and technology all of which are major hindrance stressors for employees (Iverson, 1996; Rafferty and Griffin, 2006). Thus, not surprisingly, organizational change has been associated with a variety of negative outcomes, such as job insecurity, family and work conflicts, threat to psychological well-being, loss of sleep and illness, among others (Greubel and Kecklund, 2011; Rafferty and Jimmieson, 2017; Vakola and Petrou, 2018b).
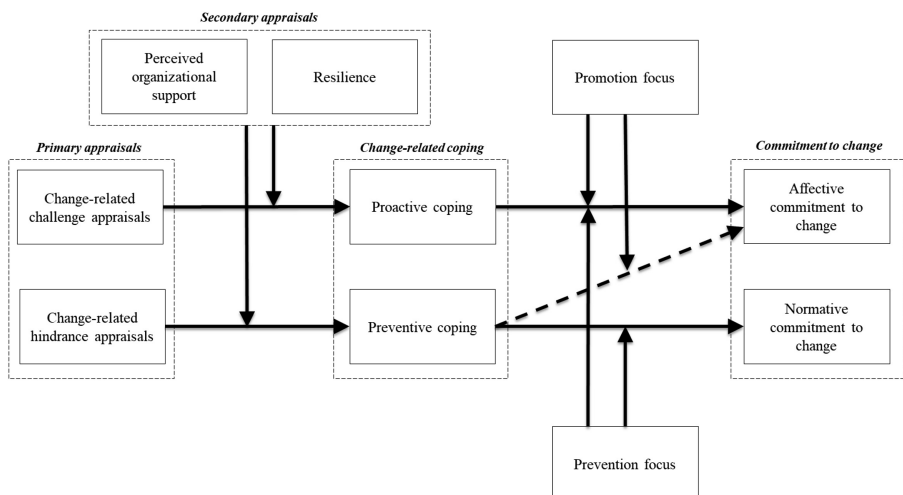

Figure 1.
Conceptual model

However, change events are not always hindering. The implementation of organizational changes, while demanding for change recipients, can also provide them with the opportunity to achieve valued and meaningful outcomes at work. For instance, implementation of a new technology may require employees to learn new processes, i.e. a resource investment that adds up to the resources already invested to accomplish regular work duties. However, employees might perceive such supplementary effort as worthy as it allows them to obtain valued resources in the future, such as increased work performance, acquiring long-term competencies or mastering their job tasks. Likewise, the increased work responsibilities that come along with the change process, may engender anxiety due to the expected increase in the complexity of work tasks. Yet, at the same time, such responsibilities might offer change recipients the opportunity to work on a wider variety of tasks, thereby making their job more enriching. As a result, employees would have greater odds of achieving improvements and experiencing enjoyment in their job (Marinova *et al.*, 2015).

Taken together, these premises suggest that the demanding nature of change events can either represent a hindrance or a challenge to employee functioning. To date, the most advanced theorizing on the distinction between the challenging and hindering aspects of job demands (i.e. stressors) has been offered by Cavanaugh *et al.*'s (2000) challenge-hindrance model. These authors suggest that job demands can be split into two categories, namely: hindrance stressors, the "negative" demands that are likely to obstruct performance, and personally valued goals; and challenge stressors, the "positive" demands that provide opportunities for performance, growth and personal development. The differentiation between the two types of stressors explains why they exert different effects on work-related outcomes. In an early meta-analysis (LePine *et al.*, 2005), the hindrance stressors were found to impair psychological health and undermine performance, while the challenge stressors, despite negatively affecting health, were found to boost motivation and performance.

However, the challenge-hindrance model of stress has not always been supported by empirical evidence (e.g. Liu *et al.*, 2013; Mazzola and Disselhorst, 2019). For example, in their meta-analysis, Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019) found that, except for a few outcomes, challenge and hindrance stressors have similar detrimental effects on work-related variables (e.g. counterproductive work behaviors, psychological and physical health). As suggested by these authors, one key limitation of the challenge-hindrance model is its fundamental discordance with the appraisal theory of stress (e.g. Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), according to which, whether job demands are perceived as challenging vs hindering depends on how they are cognitively appraised by individuals. Thus, these authors called for shifting the focus from the characteristics of work stressors to how individuals *appraise* stressors to accurately understand the responses to these encounters.

Among the multiple kinds of reactions to appraisals, coping – the thoughts and behaviors used by the person to manage and overcome demands that can challenge, threaten, harm or even lead to significant loss to the self and one's functioning (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Reuter and Schwarzer, 2012) – is particularly relevant since it represents a key process linking appraisals with critical work-related outcomes. Appraisal theory of stress distinguishes between two types of appraisal: primary appraisal, which refers to the judgment concerning the significance of an event as threatening or challenging; and secondary appraisal, which refers to the individual's evaluation of his or her own resources and options for coping with the stressful situation. According to appraisal theory of stress, primary appraisal of the situation as more or less challenging versus hindering determines the type of coping response produced by the individual, and, the degree of effectiveness of the subsequent coping strategy ultimately influence key individual and organizational outcomes, such as job performance and psychological and physical wellbeing (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Consistent with the above reasoning, we posit that the real challenge for the success of change implementation lies in how employees effectively cope with the change as a result of their primary appraisal of the change-related demands, which determines their extent of participation in the change. While there seems to be an agreement in the literature about the negative impact of stress on change processes, there is little understanding of the coping strategies that individuals can employ in response to appraisals during organizational change. To our knowledge, only Fugate *et al.* (2008) attempted to partially address this issue by empirically examining the role of coping strategies (i.e. control vs escape) by linking negative appraisals of the change process to work outcomes (i.e. sick time used, intention to quit and voluntary turnover). Nonetheless, these authors did not explore the role of challenge appraisals on coping strategies, thereby leaving current knowledge of change-related coping incomplete.

In line with appraisal theories of stress, we propose that the coping process starts before the stressors related to organizational change really hit. This proposition echoes recent advances in the stress literature, which highlight that coping responses depend on the timeliness of the adverse events faced by individuals and their subjective certainty (Reuter and Schwarzer, 2012). For example, future-oriented coping may help employees face the potentially stressful change experience *in advance*, deal with the prospective change and eventually contribute to its implementation. In this respect, departing from earlier attempts to categorize coping dimensions (e.g. Lazarus, 1991; Locke, 2005), Reuter and Schwarzer (2012) developed a time-dependent comprehensive model of stress coping comprising of two future-oriented coping strategies, namely *preventive coping* and *proactive coping*. These forms of coping refer to strategies that are undertaken when a stressful event (e.g. an organizational change) is expected to occur in the future.

Preventive and proactive coping imply planning for the occurrence of the future event, and building up resources to either minimize the severity of its impact – as in the case of preventive coping – vs facilitate the achievement of challenging goals and personal growth – as in the case of proactive coping. Preventive coping stems from harmful evaluations of a stressful event and is characterized by high levels of worry, whereas proactive coping emanates from challenging evaluations and is associated with a low level of worry (Schwarzer and Taubert, 2002). Moreover, individuals who engage in preventive coping tend to enact general and defensive strategies, while those who engage in proactive coping take more purposeful and constructive actions. Thus, while preventive coping is focused on "risk management", proactive coping is focused on "goal management" (Schwarzer and Taubert, 2002).

These coping mechanisms may be particularly salient during organizational change, because when a change initiative is planned (but not yet implemented) change recipients have the possibility to build resources in advance to support the future change process. For instance, in the context of a change involving the future establishment of a new virtual work team, an employee might adopt a preventive coping strategy by focusing on acquiring the general skills needed to reduce the stress induced by her future work responsibilities. Alternatively, the same employee might take a proactive approach by conceiving new ways of arranging virtual work meetings to optimize future team effectiveness and her own performance.

Dual pathway from change-related appraisals to commitment to change through coping strategies
Following an appraisal perspective, we posit that proactive coping strategies are more likely to emerge in response to challenge appraisals, while preventive coping strategies are more likely to ensue in response to hindrance appraisals. When the demands associated with a change process are appraised as an opportunity for the achievement of valued outcomes,

individuals might feel stimulated to put additional efforts to achieve these goals. Conversely, when the same demands are appraised as a threat to the pursuit of desired work-related end states, individuals might be less motivated to take the risk of investing energies to achieve valued goals, and inclined to act in advance to ensure that change-related hindrances do not harm their functioning (i.e. a preventive coping) when change initiatives are implemented.

Coping strategies used in reaction to change appraisals helps understand how employees will ultimately contribute to the change initiative. Research suggests that coping strategies play a key role in influencing employee attitudes, which are proximal determinants of behaviors. In their review of research on change recipients' reactions to organizational change, Oreg *et al.* (2011) noted that there is a consensus in the literature that employees' attitudes, like commitment to change, are vital for the success of change initiatives. Change-related consequences of commitment to change can be grouped into two categories: compliance with the organization's change requirements and discretionary behavior that implies going beyond the explicit demands made by the organization for the change (e.g. promoting or making personal sacrifices for the change success) (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002).

The commitment to change construct comprises of three components: (a) affective commitment to change, defined as the desire to provide support for the change owing to inherent belief in its benefits, (b) normative commitment to change, which is support based on the employee's sense of obligation to the company, and (c) continuance commitment, based on employees' perception of the cost associated with failure to support the change (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). Although these three components are related to successful change implementation, only a few studies have examined the three components altogether (for exceptions, see Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002; Meyer *et al.*, 2007). Based on the organizational change literature, only affective and normative commitment to change are considered in this paper, as continuance commitment to change does not lead to behavioral support to change initiatives (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002; Seo *et al.*, 2012). Employees who are affectively committed to change expect inherent benefits from the change process and are thus likely to invest their efforts in change-supportive actions. Likewise, those who are normatively committed, due to their sense of duty to work toward the change, believe it is not right to resist the change process (Seo *et al.*, 2012) and are therefore motivated to provide support for change.

Based on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, we contend that proactive and preventive coping strategies may activate specific components of commitment to change. According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 2001), when encountering stressful situations, individuals not only harness their extant resources but also proactively act to gain resources and "position themselves so that they are less vulnerable to future resource loss" (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 317). We suggest that proactive coping strategies enhance employees' affective commitment to change through an affective pathway. Proactive coping helps build resources that are useful for creating opportunities for personal development. For example, prior research has suggested that proactive coping is associated with increased positive affect (Greenglass and Fiksenbaum, 2009). In the context of organizational change, positive affective states encourage individuals to explore novel and creative thoughts and actions, and experience increased mastery and control over their work, which leads to favorable affect-based attitudes toward the organization. Since positive affect drives employees' attitudes and behaviors (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), it may contribute to fostering a commitment mindset (i.e. affective commitment to change) that allows them to support the change initiative.

In contrast, preventive coping strategies are expected to enhance normative commitment to change via a cognitive consistency pathway. According to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), individuals seek to align their attitudes with prior behavior, which reinforces

behavior-attitude cycle. Based on this logic, preventive coping behaviors may foster a sense of guilt for not supporting the change, since employees feel an obligation to support the change (i.e. normative commitment to change) as a way to align their attitude with their preventive coping efforts. The feeling of anticipated blame for not supporting the change would make employees experience an internal pressure to be consistent with the preventive coping efforts they have exerted in the adoption stage of the change initiative, thus reflecting a sense of duty to support the implementation of the change, which is at the heart of normative commitment to change. The above arguments point to a dual pathway linking challenge and hindrance appraisals to affective and normative commitment to change via proactive and preventive coping strategies, respectively, leading to the following propositions.

Proposition 1a. Change-related challenge appraisals are positively related to affective commitment to change through the mediation of proactive coping strategies.

Proposition 1b. Change-related hindrance appraisals are positively related to normative commitment to change through the mediation of preventive coping strategies.

Moderators of the appraisal–coping relationships: resilience and POS

An important aspect of appraisal theory which has not been integrated in theorizing about employee reactions to change is that coping responses are influenced by individuals' secondary appraisal – i.e. the assessment of resources that are available to deal with the stressors (Lazarus, 1966). The perception of the availability of resources may interact with challenge and hindrance appraisals to shape coping strategies and subsequent outcomes (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). COR theory is particularly relevant to determine the role of resources in the appraisal and coping process. The primary resources proposed by COR theory are material resources (e.g. any object of value), conditions (e.g. tenure, seniority), energies (e.g. time, knowledge, money) and personal resources (e.g. personal traits). In addition, COR theory proposes that there are secondary resources that help gain and/or protect the primary resources. Resources enhance individuals' ability to cope with stressful events, thus protecting them from psychological dysfunctions caused by stress like anxiety and burnout (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014).

According to COR theory, when not confronted with stressors, people develop resource surpluses in order to protect themselves against resource loss in times of stress such that those with more resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of instrumenting resource gain (Hobfoll, 2011). This allows them to cope effectively with adversities and preserve a positive psychological functioning. This approach is consistent with a positive psychology perspective, which argues that people possessing personal resources are more likely to practice habits that enhance their healthy functioning (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Translating this to the context of organizational change, we could say that individuals personally rich in resources would be more capable of coping with the stress of the change context in response to primary appraisals of change stressors and, thereby, exhibit willingness to participate in the change implementation. In the following section, we provide a rationale on why resilience and POS would act as key resources moderating the ability of change recipients to engage in proactive and preventive coping strategies to deal with the perceived challenge and threat appraisals of change initiatives.

Resilience

The positive organizational behavior (POB) literature, concerned with individuals' psychological states and strengths that positively influence their attitudes and

performance in organizations (Luthans, 2002), provides insights into those personal resources that facilitate effective coping. POB researchers have proposed the construct of psychological capital (PsychCap), comprising of resilience, optimism, self-efficacy and hope, as a state that fosters health, motivation, commitment and performance (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Although related, the four PsyCap components are not identical, as each of them make a unique contribution to people's attitudes, behavior and well-being. We posit that resilience is a personal resource favorable to proactive and preventive coping in response to change-related challenge and hindrance appraisals. Although variously defined in the literature, we define resilience as the ability to maintain positive adjustment under challenging conditions (Weick et al., 1999).

There are certain distinct characteristics of resilience, distinguishing it from hope, optimism and self-efficacy that warrant its greater suitability in the context of a model for commitment to change. Firstly, unlike the other PsychCap components, the main antecedent to resilience is adversity (Luthar et al., 2000). Challenge and disruption are aspects of adversity that precede the process of individual resilience. Secondly, resilience recognizes the need to take both proactive and reactive measures in the face of adversity. Reactively, a resilient individual recognizes and acknowledges the impact of adversity, rebounds and returns to the equilibrium point. Proactively, resilience allows the individual to use setbacks as opportunities for growth beyond the equilibrium point (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Thirdly, resilience calls for flexibility, adaptation and even improvisation in situations that cannot be planned, rationalized or logically interpreted. During organizational change, despite all conceited efforts in planning, there is always a demand on the employees to be flexible. The above-mentioned unique characteristics of resilience make it a logical choice as an individual resource among the four components of the Psyccap construct, since organizational change can be stressful, challenges existing conditions and demands adaptability to both planned and unplanned situations.

Support for the suitability of resilience as a necessary resource in a context of change can also be found in the extant literature (Shin et al., 2012). Research indicates that resilience makes people open and inclined to accept, embrace and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo in organizations (Wanberg and Banas, 2000). According to COR theory, the importance of resources is linked to the specific task or demand it helps to achieve. Since organizational change often poses a challenge or threat to the existing system/ practice and demands employees to not only cope with its associated stress but bounce back to pre-existing level of functioning, we argue that resilience is an important resource that can facilitate commitment to change.

When the organizational change is being planned but yet to be implemented, resilience may facilitate preventive and proactive coping in response to change-related challenge and hindrance appraisals, respectively. Resilient individuals are more flexible and less vulnerable to potentially harmful experiences (Waugh et al., 2011); heightened flexibility is essential to stay prepared for adverse events and save resources for future needs – which is the key ingredient of preventive coping (Major and Morganson, 2011). Resilience also provides individuals with the necessary skills to engage in self-development activities that enable them to recognize and take advantage of opportunities. Thus, resilient employees are more likely to proactively build the resources that will allow them to derive personal, growth-promoting gains from the future organizational change. Moreover, resilient people tend to feel in control of their lives and find solutions to anticipatorily deal with potential problems and seize opportunities associated with the future change. Resilience facilitates the reappraisal of future change events as less threatening or even benign, which is a key function of effective preventive and proactive coping. Based on the above reasoning, we propose that resilience will benefit the adoption of proactive and preventive coping in response to change-related challenge and hindrance appraisals, and, ultimately, the emergence of commitment to change.

Proposition 3. Employee resilience moderates the relationships between change-related appraisals (challenge and hindrance appraisals) and coping strategies (proactive and preventive coping) and the indirect relationships between change-related appraisals and commitment to change (affective and normative commitment to change) such that these relationships will be stronger (vs weaker) among employees with high (vs low) levels of resilience.

POS

Besides personal resources, there are also resources available within the organizational ecology that can help individuals to cope with job demands appraised as stressful. POS – individual's perception of the extent to which she perceives her employer to value her contribution and care about her well-being (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986) – is one such resource. POS helps meet employees' needs for approval and praise and heightens the expectation that increased effort will be rewarded by the organization. POS has been positively related to a wide range of employee behaviors and attitudes (Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017), including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job performance attendance and intention to stay (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Byrne and Hochwarter, 2008).

We view POS as an organizational resource that enables employees to face the challenges of an organizational change and to commit to it. From a COR theory perspective, POS is also more relevant to our model than more granular constructs as leader–member exchange (LMX) and perceived supervisor support (PSS). LMX has received significant importance in the literature because leaders are instrumental in determining salary increases and bonuses, and in offering training and development opportunities. However, exchange relationships between leaders and subordinates are likely to influence POS because leaders represent the organization in the subordinate's eyes. As Sparrowe and Liden (1997) pointed out, high-quality LMX leads to an expansion of subordinates' social network, which increases support from and visibility in the organization, thereby indirectly enhancing POS. Thus, POS encompasses certain elements of LMX. Similarly, PSS has been found to be an antecedent of POS (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002), indicating that support received from supervisors creates perceptions of support from the organization. Thus, POS is an umbrella construct that accounts for the support that the employee perceives to obtain from the organization and its representatives and is consistent with the definition of resources from the perspective of COR theory (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014).

POS as a resource is expected to lead to effective coping in response to change-related appraisals as perception of support and care from the organization is likely to lead to efficient task strategies and information search processes among employees (Wood *et al.*, 2001) that typically underlie effective preventive coping. Moreover, a high level of POS conveys the message that the organization values employees' contributions. During organizational change, such information would lead change recipients to feel secure in their work environment and encourage them to proactively initiate actions that allow them to seek out opportunities for personal growth.

Moreover, perception of support from the surrounding environment boosts feelings of personal control and self-confidence, which can enable people to face the difficulties associated with organizational changes and instill more optimistic views of the change process (Seo *et al.*, 2012). We can thus contend that employees who feel valued by their organization engage in effective coping strategies in response to change-related challenge and hindrance appraisals, thereby having greater odds of being committed to the change initiative.

Proposition 4. POS moderates the relationships between change-related appraisals (challenge and hindrance appraisals) and coping strategies (proactive and preventive coping) and the indirect relationships between change-related appraisals and commitment to change (affective and normative commitment to change) such that these relationships will be stronger (vs weaker) among employees with high (vs low) levels of POS.

Regulatory focus as a moderator of coping-commitment to change relationships
Finally, we contend that the relationships between coping strategies and components of commitment to change might vary according to individual differences. Research on COR theory has shown that there are individual differences in the motivation to gain, protect or restore resources (e.g. Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 2001). We contend that, due to their unique function in affecting the way individuals approach resource gains and losses, self-regulatory processes may alter how employees derive commitment to change from different coping strategies. According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997; Higgins and Pinelli, 2020) people engage in self-regulation to remain aligned with their standards and goals. Regulatory focus theory distinguishes between a promotion focus orientation, concerned with gains and accomplishments and driven by a need for growth and development, and a prevention focus orientation, concerned with obligations, duties and security and driven by a need for protection from failure, harm and risks (Lanaj *et al.*, 2012). Self-regulation through promotion focus implies that people experience growth and advancement needs, which heightens the salience of potential gains to be attained (i.e. felt presence of positive outcomes). However, people who self-regulate through prevention focus are driven by security and safety needs and pursue "ought" goals such as duties and obligations, which increases the salience of potential losses to be avoided (i.e. felt absence of negative outcomes) (Higgins, 1998; Petrou *et al.*, 2020).

Following this perspective, we argue that proactive coping strategies are more likely to lead to affective commitment to change among employees with a promotion focus. Such employees might be particularly motivated to achieve change-related valued gains (i.e. growth and development) via proactive coping. The accomplishment of such desired goals would be a source of increased positive emotional states, which underlie stronger affective commitment to change. In contrast, the contribution of preventive coping strategies to normative commitment to change might be enhanced by a prevention focus. The sense of duty and responsibility to support the change process that stems from preventive coping is likely to be salient among employees with a prevention focus as it involves being concentrated on self-protection and safety (Lanaj *et al.*, 2012). Accordingly, employees with a prevention focus would be motivated to protect valued resources from loss following anticipatory (preventive) coping strategies, experience a sense of obligation and responsibility to engage in the change process, resulting in increased normative commitment to change (Johnson *et al.*, 2010). This leads to the following propositions.

Proposition 7a. Employees' promotion focus moderates the relationship between proactive coping strategies and affective commitment to change such that this relationship is stronger (vs weaker) among employees with high (vs low) promotion focus.

Proposition 7b. Employees' prevention focus moderates the relationship between preventive coping strategies and normative commitment to change such that this relationship is stronger (vs weaker) among employees with high (vs low) prevention focus.

However, due to individual differences at the level of prevention regulatory focus, not all employees who engage in proactive coping strategies during the readiness stage would be

motivated to gain resources. Specifically, for those with high levels of prevention focus, the risk of experiencing stressful, change-related situations in the future may be particularly threatening as it is associated with increased odds of losing valued resources. Thus, proactive coping strategies are unlikely to lead such individuals to experience positive affective states and result in affective commitment to change. Thus, a prevention focus may curb the relationship between proactive coping and affective commitment to change. Likewise, inter-individual differences at the levels of promotion regulatory focus may influence the extent to which employees involved in preventive coping strategies will be motivated to minimize resource loss. Change recipients with high levels of promotion focus may be sensitive to the potential gains associated with preventive coping, find meaning in the impending change-related adversities as well as in those that are occurring or have just occurred, thereby being more likely to experience a sense of growth following the successful enactment of preventive coping strategies. The induced positive feelings may shape employees' attitudes toward the whole change process that leads them to appraise it as a personally valuable and meaningful change; such an appraisal lies at the heart of affective commitment to change. The above discussion leads to the following propositions.

Proposition 8a. Employees' prevention focus moderates the relationship between proactive coping strategies and affective commitment to change such that this relationship is weaker (vs stronger) among employees with high (vs low) prevention focus.

Proposition 8b. Employees' promotion focus moderates the relationship between preventive coping strategies and affective commitment to change such that this relationship is stronger (vs weaker) among employees with high (vs low) promotion focus.

Implications and further research avenues
The current paper proposes a model describing the different strategies that can be used to cope with diverse appraisals of change-related demands, and eventually commit to the change initiatives. While change can be emergent, the current paper takes the perspective of organizational change that is planned in response to perceived opportunity and is, thereby, future-oriented. While such organizational change is rampant and often essential for the short-term competitiveness and the long-term survival of companies (Van der Ven, 2011), initiating and imposing a change is one thing, while making it successful is a challenge. Change is a stressful and often long process, for which coping is fundamental to both seize the opportunities offered by the change process to achieve personally valued goals and reduce its potentially health-depleting effect. Along with coping with the stress of change, a positive attitude toward the change initiative is necessary for the change to succeed. This paper builds on the theory of stress appraisal (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) and COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001) to present a model that helps understand *how* and *when* individuals effectively cope with the stress of organizational change to ultimately commit to it. Instead of providing an exhaustive list of resources that can possibly lead to commitment to change, this paper argues that the secondary appraisal of two resources – POS (an organizational resource) and resilience (a personal resource) – amplifies the effects of change-related primary appraisals on coping responses. We use self-regulation theory (Higgins, 1998) to identify promotion vs prevention focus as moderators of the effects of coping strategies on affective and normative commitment to change.

The current paper makes several theoretical and practical contributions. First, while the literature on organizational change has underlined the ubiquity of stress during change, and the psychology literature has emphasized the value of coping strategies in stressful situations, this paper combines the stress-coping and organizational change literatures to

propose an integrative model of the antecedents, processes and boundary conditions associated with individuals' coping strategies and commitment to change. Such an integrated model adds to prior literature on stress and organizational change by emphasizing that the use of coping strategies to effectively deal with change initiatives is contingent on the type of change-related appraisal and the type of attitudinal outcome that the change recipient exhibits. In doing so, our approach contributes to current theorizing on stress appraisal by suggesting that, in the context of organizational change, differentiating the way employees appraise the stressful aspects of change is potentially critical to determine the kind of coping strategies they employ to commit to change initiatives. Our perspective highlights how inter-individual differences in the importance attributed to achieving gains vs preventing losses can explain variation in the emergence of commitment to change responses to coping strategies.

Second, this paper contributes to COR theory by illustrating the specificity of two distinct resources in the context of organizational change. While a raft of other individual and organizational resources could be included, the claim of this paper lies in substantiating that employees' resilience and POS are the necessary resources without which commitment to organizational change would be unforthcoming. The idea of "resource fit", that is which specific resource would meet the appraised stressful aspects of an event, has been delineated as a major future direction of research related to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). A contribution of this paper lies in theorizing how the target resources (i.e. resilience and POS) intervene in the process linking change-related appraisals to employees' commitment to change through coping strategies. Resilience and POS act as important resources that guide how employees can develop effective coping strategies based on how they appraise change-related demands. Our model suggests these resources represent boundary conditions within which coping strategies and commitment to change unfold.

The primary assumption of COR theory is that resources are needed to cope with stressful situations. However, having a stock of resources is necessary but not enough for ensuing positive outcomes (e.g. commitment to change) during a stressful change situation. The positive outcomes of resource harnessing in the face of appraised change-related demands occur through the intermediation of coping strategies, which are the drivers of employees' commitment to change. This notion contributes to the COR and organizational change literatures by emphasizing the need to consider the perception of the resources potentially available in the emergence of coping strategies – i.e. a central element of COR theory that has been overlooked by both stress and organizational change scholars (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

Fourth, POS has been traditionally viewed as reflecting a social exchange relationship between employees and the organization. This paper conceptualizes POS as an organizational resource for employees and provides reasons as to why it qualifies as a parsimonious construct, summarizing resources available to employees in the context of change. This view offers a novel approach to organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). As POS takes time to build and cannot be simply "turned on" by management when change is implemented, a clear message to practitioners would be that resource building for successful organizational change starts much before change is implemented. Moreover, how the employees perceive their organization over a long period of time impacts their commitment to organizational change. In other words, during change, organizations are likely to reap fruits from the seed they have sown in times of stability. Also, given the role of employees' individual resilience in their commitment to change, managers should pay attention to this individual characteristic during employee selection and recruitment. Planned intervention to develop/enhance employees' resilience should be included in the organization's agenda for resource building (Cornum et al., 2011).

Although organizational change has the potential to provide a wealth of possibilities for employees' growth and development, it may also cause chronic occupational stress, which

has a negative spillover effect on employees' physical health, psychological health, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Muhonen and Torkelson, 2003; Schweiger and Denisi, 1991). The dual pathways through which commitment to change can emerge has been overlooked in prior research on organizational change. This has resulted in a limited understanding of how employees effectively deal with stressful change-related demands and can therefore avoid the deleterious consequences of stress, such as reduced well-being, increased burnout and higher likelihood of turnover. Thus, offering resources to employees that lead to effective stress coping in response to change-related appraisals is crucial – not only in a change context but also for improving employees' health in the long run. Moreover, understanding whether employees appraise organizational change as challenging vs threatening is necessary to implement tailored training programs that would enable change recipients to identify and enact appropriate change-supportive coping strategies.

An interesting implication for future research would be to examine if POS and resilience are resources that can be developed together. COR theory has introduced the concept of resource caravans according to which personal resources as well as the collective pool of resources from the organization "run in pack" (Hobfoll, 2012). Organizational success and employee well-being depend on the extent to which resource caravans in the organizational ecology can be accessed, imbibed and shared. Further research in this direction could provide a nuanced understanding of how employees' organizational and personal resources influence and interact with each other. Such work could also extend the model presented in this paper by incorporating the antecedents that induce these resources to develop in groups. Theoretical and practical implications of such an extension of the conceptual model could be substantial.

From an empirical perspective, the processual nature of our conceptual model highlights the importance of conducting longitudinal research to examine the effects of primary change appraisals on commitment to change via change-related coping, as well as to rule out potential reciprocal relationships among these variables. Moreover, as change appraisals (Kaltiainen et al., 2019), coping responses (Daniels and Harris, 2005) and organizational commitment (Vandenberghe et al., 2019) have been shown to vary across time within individuals, the adoption of longitudinal designs is suitable to detect within-person trajectories of change in these constructs. Such method of investigation is particularly relevant in the context of an ongoing organizational change, where individual psychological states are likely to vary significantly over time (Schreurs et al., 2012).

However, while the purpose of this paper was to unravel new and relevant lines of inquiry for coping and commitment to change research, it also has limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, we exclusively focused on the forms of commitment to change that are beneficial to the successful achievement of change outcomes – affective and normative commitment – but did not consider the dysfunctional form of commitment to change – continuance commitment. Further work is needed to explore how and under what conditions different types of change appraisals could foster vs reduce continuance commitment to change. Such theorizing has the potential to produce a more integrative and nuanced understanding of the antecedents of the various forms of commitment to change; and it is also relevant to organizations, because continuance commitment to change has been found to increase turnover intention (Cunningham, 2006), which tends to be frequent during organizational changes (Fugate et al., 2008).

Moreover, our conceptual model did not consider how different change appraisals could emerge in response to change-related stressors. This issue warrants attention because previous studies on the change appraisal process have shown that individuals may appraise the same stressor as being both a challenge and a hindrance at the same time (Webster et al., 2011). Finally, our theorizing was centered around challenge and hindrance appraisals, two forms of appraisals that have been largely documented in the work stress literature

(Cavanaugh *et al.*, 2000). Nonetheless, in line with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress, recent research has empirically identified a third category of primary appraisals, namely threat appraisals (Smith *et al.*, 2020; Tuckey *et al.*, 2015). Threat appraisals differ from hindrance appraisals in that while the latter refer to perceptions of stressors as impediments to one's accomplishments or growth, the former refer to perceptions of stressors as causing personal harm or loss to the individual. Consistent with these insights, our conceptual model could be enriched by introducing change-related threat appraisals as shaping coping responses and commitment to change.

In conclusion, this paper presents a conceptual model that helps understand the dual effects of challenge and hindrance change-related appraisals on the components of commitment to change. This model provides a framework highlighting how and under what conditions employees can experience affective and normative commitment to organizational change while being exposed to the demands associated with the change process.

Note

1. The psychological resilience under consideration in this paper is a state-like characteristic (not trait-like), hence malleable to change and development (Luthans and Youssef, 2007).

References

Armstrong-Stassen, M. (1994), "Coping with transition: a study of layoff survivors", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 15, pp. 597-621.

Bamberger, S.G., Vinding, A.L., Larsen, A., Nielsen, P., Fonager, K., Nielsen, R.N., Ryom, P. and Omland, Ø. (2012), "Impact of organisational change on mental health: a systematic review", *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 69, pp. 592-598.

Byrne, Z.S. and Hochwarter, W.A. (2008), "Perceived organizational support and performance: relationships across levels of organizational cynicism", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 23, pp. 54-72.

Callan, V.J. (1993), "Individual and organizational strategies for coping with organizational change", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 7, pp. 63-75.

Cavanaugh, M.A., Boswell, W.R., Roehling, M.V. and Boudreau, J.W. (2000), "An empirical examination of self-reported work stress among U.S. managers", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 85, pp. 65-74.

Chauvin, B., Rohmer, O., Spitzenstetter, F., Raffin, D., Schimchowitsch, S. and Louvet, E. (2014), "Assessment of job stress factors in a context of organizational change", *European Review of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 64, pp. 299-306.

Conner, D.R. and Patterson, R.B. (1982), "Building commitment to organizational change", *Training and Development Journal*, Vol. 36, pp. 18-30.

Cornum, R., Mathews, M.D. and Seligman, M.E.P. (2011), "Comprehensive soldier fitness: building resilience in a challenging institutional context", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 66, pp. 4-9.

Cunningham, G.B. (2006), "The relationships among commitment to change, coping with change, and turnover intentions", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 15, pp. 29-45.

Dahl, M.S. (2011), "Organizational change and employee stress", *Management Science*, Vol. 57, pp. 240-256.

Daniels, K. and Harris, C. (2005), "A daily diary study of coping in the context of the job demands–control–support model", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 66, pp. 219-237.

Day, A., Crown, S.N. and Ivany, M. (2017), "Organizational change and employee burnout: the moderating effects of support and job control", *Safety Science*, Vol. 100, pp. 4-12.

De Jong, T., Wiezer, N., de Weerd, M., Nielsen, K., Mattila-Holappa, P. and Mockałło, Z. (2016), "The impact of restructuring on employee well-being: a systematic review of longitudinal studies", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 30, pp. 91-114.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S. and Sowa, D. (1986), "Perceived organizational support", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 71, pp. 500-507.

Eisenberger, R., Stinglhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, I. and Rhoades, L. (2002), "Perceived supervisor support: contributions to perceived organizational support and employee retention", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87, pp. 565-573.

Elrod, P.D. and Tippett, D.D. (2002), "The "death valley" of change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 15, pp. 273-291.

Festinger, L. (1957), *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Fugate, M. and Soenen, G. (2018), "Predictors and processes related to employees' change-related compliance and championing", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 71, pp. 109-132.

Fugate, M., Kinicki, A.J. and Prussia, G.P. (2008), "Employee coping with organizational change: an examination of alternative theoretical perspectives and models", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 61, pp. 1-36.

Greenglass, E.R. and Fiksenbaum, L. (2009), "Proactive coping, positive affect, and well-being: testing for mediation using path analysis considerations", *European Psychologist*, Vol. 14, pp. 29-39.

Greubel, J. and Kecklund, G. (2011), "The impact of organizational changes on work stress, sleep, recovery and health", *Industrial Health*, Vol. 49, pp. 353-364.

Halbesleben, J.R., Neveu, J.P., Paustian-Underdahl, S.C. and Westman, M. (2014), "Getting to the "COR": understanding the role of resources in conservation of resources theory", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 40, pp. 1334-1364.

Herscovitch, L. and Meyer, J.P. (2002), "Commitment to organizational change: extension of a three-component model", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87, pp. 474-487.

Higgins, E.T. (1997), "Beyond pleasure and pain", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 52, pp. 1280-1300.

Higgins, E.T. (1998), "Promotion and prevention: regulatory focus as a motivational principle", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 30, pp. 1-46.

Higgins, E.T. and Pinelli, F. (2020), "Regulatory focus and fit effects in organizations", *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 7, pp. 25-48.

Hobfoll, S.E. (1988), *The Ecology of Stress*, Hemisphere, New York, NY.

Hobfoll, S.E. (1989), "Conservation of resources: a new attempt at conceptualizing stress", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 44, pp. 513-524.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2001), "The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: advancing conservation of resources theory", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 50, pp. 337-421.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2002), "Social and psychological resources and adaptation", *Review of General Psychology*, Vol. 6, pp. 307-324.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2011), "Conservation of resources theory: its implication for stress, health, and resilience", in Folkman, S. (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Stress, Health, and Coping*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 127-147.

Hobfoll, S.E. (2012), "Conservation of resources and disaster in cultural context: the caravans and passageways for resources. Commentary on "A conceptual framework for understanding the mental health impacts of oil spills: lessons from the Exxon Valdez oil spill", *Psychiatry*, Vol. 75, pp. 227-232.

Iverson, R.D. (1996), "Employee acceptance of organizational change: the role of organizational commitment", *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 7, pp. 122-149.

Johnson, R.E., Chang, C.-H. and Yang, L. (2010), "Commitment and motivation at work: the relevance of employee identity and regulatory focus", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 35, pp. 226-245.

Kaltiainen, J., Lipponen, J., Fugate, M. and Vakola, M. (2019), "Spiraling work engagement and change appraisals: a three-wave longitudinal study during organizational change", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 25, pp. 244-258.

Kurtessis, J.N., Eisenberger, R., Ford, M.T., Buffardi, L.C., Stewart, K.A. and Adis, C.S. (2017), "Perceived organizational support: a meta-analytic evaluation of organizational support theory", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 43, pp. 1854-1884.

Lanaj, K., Chang, C. and Johnson, R.E. (2012), "Regulatory focus and work-related outcomes: a review and meta-analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 138, pp. 998-1034.

Lazarus, R.S. (1966), *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Lazarus, R.S. (1991), *Emotion and Adaptation*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Lazarus, R.S. and Folkman, S. (1984), *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*, Springer, New York, NY.

LePine, J.A., Podsakoff, N.P. and LePine, M.A. (2005), "A meta-analytic test of the challenge stressor-hindrance stressor framework: an explanation for inconsistent relationships among stressors and performance", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 48, pp. 764-775.

Ling, B., Guo, Y. and Chen, D. (2018), "Change leadership and employees' commitment to change", *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 17, pp. 83-93.

Liu, Y. and Perrewé, P.L. (2005), "Another look at the role of emotion in the organizational change: a process model", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 15, pp. 263-280.

Liu, C., Liu, Y., Mills, M.J. and Fan, J. (2013), "Job stressors, job performance, job dedication, and the moderating effect of conscientiousness: a mixed-method approach", *International Journal of Stress Management*, Vol. 20, pp. 336-363.

Locke, E.A. (2005), "Coping with stress through reason", in Antoniou, A.-S.G. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds), *Research Companion to Organizational Health Psychology*, Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 188-197.

Luthans, F. (2002), "The need for and meaning of positive organizational behavior", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 6, pp. 695-706.

Luthans, F. and Youssef, C.M. (2007), "Emerging positive organizational behavior", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 33, pp. 321-349.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D. and Becker, B. (2000), "The construct of resilience: a critical evaluation and guidelines for future work", *Child Development*, Vol. 71, pp. 543-562.

Mäkikangas, A., Mauno, S., Selenko, E. and Kinnunen, U. (2019), "Toward an understanding of a healthy organizational change process: a three-wave longitudinal study among university employees", *International Journal of Stress Management*, Vol. 26, pp. 204-212.

Major, D.A. and Morganson, V.J. (2011), "Coping with work-family conflict: a leader-member exchange perspective", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 16, pp. 126-138.

Marinova, S.V., Peng, C., Lorinkova, N., Van Dyne, L. and Chiaburu, D. (2015), "Change-oriented behavior: a meta-analysis of individual and job design predictors", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 88, pp. 104-120.

Mazzola, J.J. and Disselhorst, R. (2019), "Should we be "challenging" employees? A critical review and meta-analysis of the challenge-hindrance model of stress", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 40, pp. 949-961.

Meyer, J.P., Srinivas, E.S., Lal, J.B. and Topolnytsky, L. (2007), "Employee commitment and support for an organizational change: test of the three-component model in two cultures", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 80, pp. 185-211.

Morin, A.J., Meyer, J.P., Bélanger, É., Boudrias, J.-S., Gagné, M. and Parker, P.D. (2016), "Longitudinal associations between employees' beliefs about the quality of the change management process, affective commitment to change and psychological empowerment", *Human Relations*, Vol. 69, pp. 839-867.

Muhonen, T. and Torkelson, E. (2003), "The demand-control-support model and health among women and men in similar occupations", *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, Vol. 26, pp. 601-613.

Oreg, S., Vakola, M. and Armenakis, A. (2011), "Change recipients' reactions to organizational change: a 60-year review of quantitative studies", *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 47, pp. 461-524.

Oreg, S., Bartunek, J., Lee, G. and Do, B. (2018), "An affect-based model of recipient's responses to organizational change events", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 43, pp. 65-86.

Petrou, P., Baas, M. and Roskes, M. (2020), "From prevention focus to adaptivity and creativity: the role of unfulfilled goals and work engagement", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 29, pp. 36-48.

Pollard, T.M. (2001), "Changes in mental well-being, blood pressure, and total cholesterol levels during workplace reorganization: the impact of uncertainty", *Work and Stress*, Vol. 15, pp. 14-28.

Rafferty, A.E. and Griffin, M.A. (2006), "Perceptions of organizational change: a stress and coping perspective", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 91, pp. 1154-1162.

Rafferty, A.E. and Jimmieson, N.L. (2017), "Subjective perceptions of organizational change and employee resistance to change: direct and mediated relationships with employee well-being", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 28, pp. 248-264.

Rafferty, A.E. and Restubog, S.L.D. (2017), "Why do employees' perceptions of their organization's change history matter? The role of change appraisals", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 56, pp. 533-550.

Reuter, T. and Schwarzer, R. (2012), "Manage stress at work through preventive and proactive coping", in Locke, E.A. (Ed.), *Handbook of Principles of Organizational Behavior*, 2nd ed., John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 419-515.

Rhoades, L. and Eisenberger, R. (2002), "Perceived organizational support: a review of the literature", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87, pp. 698-714.

Schaufeli, W.B. and Bakker, A.B. (2004), "Job demands, job resources and their relationship with burnout, and engagement: a multi-sample study", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 25, pp. 293-315.

Schreurs, B.H., Hetty van Emmerik, I.J., Guenter, H. and Germeys, F. (2012), "A weekly diary study on the buffering role of social support in the relationship between job insecurity and employee performance", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 51, pp. 259-279.

Schwarzer, R. and Taubert, S. (2002), "Tenacious goal pursuits and striving toward personal growth: proactive coping", in Frydenberg, E. (Ed.), *Beyond Coping: Meeting Goals, Visions and Challenges*, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 19-35.

Schweiger, D. and Denisi, A. (1991), "Communication with employees following a merger: a longitudinal field experiment", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 34, pp. 110-135.

Seligman, M.E.P. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000), "Positive psychology: an introduction", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 55, pp. 5-1.

Seo, M.-G., Taylor, M.S., Hill, N.S., Zhang, X., Tesluk, P.E. and Lorinkova, N.M. (2012), "The role of affect and leadership during organizational change", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 65, pp. 121-165.

Shin, J., Taylor, M.S. and Seo, M.G. (2012), "Resources for change: the relationships of organizational inducements and psychological resilience to employees' attitudes and behaviors toward organizational change", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55, pp. 727-748.

Smith, R.W., DeNunzio, M.M., Haynes, N.J. and Thiele, A. (2020), "The importance of appraisal in stressor–well-being relationships and the examination of personality traits as boundary conditions", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. doi: 10.1108/JMP-11-2019-0649.

Sparrowe, R.T. and Liden, R.C. (1997), "Process and structure in leader member exchange", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22, pp. 522-552.

Terry, D. and Jimmieson, N. (2003), "A stress and coping approach to organizational change: evidence from three field studies", *Australian Psychologist*, Vol. 38, pp. 92-101.

Tuckey, M.R., Searle, B., Boyd, C.M., Winefield, A.H. and Winefield, H.R. (2015), "Hindrances are not threats: advancing the multidimensionality of work stress", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 20, pp. 131-147.

Vakola, M. and Petrou, P. (2018a), *Organizational Change: Psychological Effects and Strategies for Coping*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Vakola, M. and Petrou, P. (2018b), "An overview of the impact of organizational change on individual and organizations: an introductory note", in Vakola, M. and Petrou, P. (Eds), *Organizational Change*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 1-11.

Vandenberghe, C., Panaccio, A., Bentein, K., Mignonac, K., Roussel, P. and Ayed, A.K.B. (2019), "Time-based differences in the effects of positive and negative affectivity on perceived supervisor support and organizational commitment among newcomers", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 40, pp. 264-281.

Van der Ven, N. (2011), *The Shame of Reason in Organizational Change: A Levinassian Perspective*, D. Bevan, Trans., Springer, Dordrecht.

Wanberg, C.R. and Banas, J.T. (2000), "Predictors and outcomes of openness to changes in a reorganizing workplace", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 85, pp. 132-142.

Waugh, C.E., Thompson, R.J. and Gotlib, I.H. (2011), "Flexible emotional responsiveness in trait resilience", *Emotion*, Vol. 11, pp. 1059-1067.

Webster, J.R., Beehr, T.A. and Love, K. (2011), "Extending the challenge-hindrance model of occupational stress: the role of appraisal", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 79, pp. 505-516.

Weick, K.E., Sutcliffe, K.M. and Obstfeld, D. (1999), "Organizing for high reliability: processes of collective mindfulness", *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 21, pp. 81-124.

Weiss, H.M. and Cropanzano, R. (1996), "Affective events theory: a theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work", *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 18, pp. 1-74.

Wood, R.E., George-Falvy, J. and Debowski, S. (2001), "Motivation and information search on complex tasks", in Erez, M., Klienbeck, U. and Thierry, H. (Eds), *Work Motivation in the Context of a Globalizing Economy*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, pp. 27-48.

Youssef, C.M. and Luthans, F. (2007), "Positive organizational behavior in the workplace: the impact of hope, optimism, and resilience", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 33, pp. 774-800.

Further reading

Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P. and Davis-LaMastro, V. (1990), "Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 75, pp. 51-59.

Hobfoll, S.E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P. and Westman, M. (2018), "Conservation of resources in the organizational context: the reality of resources and their consequences", *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 5, pp. 103-128.

Scholer, A.A., Cornwell, J.F. and Higgins, E.T. (2019), "Regulatory focus theory and research", in Ryan, R.M. (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Human Motivation*, Oxford University Publications, Oxford, pp. 47-66.

Corresponding author
Francesco Montani can be contacted at: francesco.montani@unibo.it