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How Does Authentic Leadership Influence Planned Organizational Change? The Role of Employees' Perceptions: Integration of Theory of Planned Behavior and Lewin's Three Step Model

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ABSTRACT

Kurt Lewin has been regarded as the father of planned change. His classical three-step model though has provided the basis for different models of change, yet has been criticized for its linearity, unsuitability for continuous change and inability to incorporate leader–follower relationship dynamics. This study has responded to various criticisms by introducing new three-step model as a replica of the three-step model while integrating it with the theory of planned behaviour. For leader–follower relationship dynamics, this study tested the impact of well-needed authentic leadership on employee perceptions during change. Following positivistic approach and deductive reasoning, this study used causal design to collect primary data through Questionnaire survey based on simple random sampling technique. The data were collected from 258 employees of three public sector hospitals of Pakistan undergoing restructuring and analysed through structural equation modelling using AMOS. The results suggest that for successful implementation of planned change, authentic leaders need to create employees' readiness for change (unfreezing) that will in turn develop their commitment to change (moving) and behavioural support for change (refreezing). This is the first study regarding the role of authentic leadership in the context of change. The findings will help change leaders to undertake better employee-accepted change initiatives by following Lewin's model as a tool that is still relevant to the organizational change.

KEYWORDS

Authentic leadership; readiness for organizational change; commitment to change; behavioural support for change; Pakistan

Introduction

The most difficult task leaders undertake is implementation of planned organizational change, as some authors suggest two-thirds of planned initiatives fail (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Burnes, 2015b; Černe, Jaklič, & Škerlavaj, 2013; Cinite, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2009). These failures may be due to either lack of efficiency and integrity of leaders or their failure to incorporate human side of organizational change. Recent times have witnessed

many scandals by business leaders that have been considerably talked about. As a number of financial institutions collapsed due to fraudulent practices by their leaders and managers, such conditions have garnered pressure on public and private organizations to pay immediate attention towards ethics and morality of leaders (Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014). On the other hand, leaders are required to be the ones who are true in sharing factual information, accept responsibility, avoid deceptive practices and lead by integrity and authenticity (Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012).

Last decade has witnessed a rising interest among scholars in the concept of Authentic Leadership (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). Authentic leaders take decisions with utmost transparency and openness; they involve followers in the decision-making process by encouraging their viewpoint and their decisions are based on true facts and figures after seeking information from all relevant quarters (Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumbwa, 2010). Given the need for moral and ethical climate in organizations, need has been felt by some researchers to investigate authentic leadership in the context of planned organizational change (Williams, Pillai, Deptula, & Lowe, 2012).

In the planned organizational change literature, Kurt Lewin is considered as the founding father (Ash, 1992; Burnes, 2015b; Burnes & Cooke, 2012; Freedman, 1999; Liebhart & Garcia-Lorenzo, 2010; Marrow, 1969; Schein, 1988). Lewin was a social scientist primarily concerned with the resolution of social conflicts through altering behaviours (Burnes, 2009), whether these conflicts were the subject of organization or a greater sphere of society. To achieve this goal, he developed four theories: Field theory and Group dynamics answer the questions related to formation of groups, their interdependence, motivation, and maintenance of enduring relationships. The other two theories, that is, Action Research and Three-Step Model of Change were primarily focused on getting behaviours changed to suit the new requirements of organization or society (Burnes, 2009). Of these, the three-step model, 'Unfreezing – Moving – Refreezing' (Lewin, 1947), is widely used in the change literature, as it provides strong support for leadership interventions and managing employee perceptions during organizational changes (Santhidran, Chandran, & Borromeo, 2013). It also supports that status quo is the main stage of driving and restraining forces where leaders and employees interact with each other as the former strives to break it and the latter to maintain it. Lewin proposed that the process of change starts with the process of unfreezing the current state of organization (Bailey & Raelin, 2015; Burnes, 2009; Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Lewin's model has also been criticized by some authors for its linearity and teleology (Palmer & Dunford, 1996, p. 709), unsuitability for continuous and unending change (Weick & Quinn, 1999), inability of the model to incorporate temporal aspects of change and leader–follower relationship dynamics (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015, p. 162).

In a very recent research article, Cummings, Bridgman, and Brown (2016) have argued that Change as Three Steps (CATS) model, which has been widely regarded as foundational work in change management literature, has never been proposed and developed by Lewin (1947, 1951) as it is mostly cited by academic writers. After a very deep review of literature and revisiting the original source, the authors concluded that Lewin had never proposed such a three step model, which starts with unfreezing. Lewin, as authors argue, believed change as being continuous and fluid (p. 41). Though the authors provide very valid reasons to believe that this three-step model was 'never developed' by Lewin, they do realize and cite the sources as regards how it has been widely

used by authors of change management textbooks like Robbins (1986, 1989, 1993), Wren and Bedeian (1994, 2009), and Burke (1982) and provided foundational basis for different change management models (e.g. Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992). Moreover, despite raising questions on how the model has been 'wrongly' linked to legendary Kurt Lewin, authors have not nullified the model itself, whereas they agree that the recent (unfreezing – moving – refreezing) model is only '33 per cent right' as Lewin only wrote about 'unfreeze' (p. 39). One may raise an eyebrow that if Lewin believed in *Unfreezing*, then how other two steps may be invalid, as unfreezing occurs where something is already 'frozen'. Therefore, this article is an effort to link Lewin's three-step model with practical constructs widely used in empirical studies, thus, contributing towards proving viability and relevance of the three-step model to the modern world (Burnes, 2004).

As noted above, despite criticism, Lewin's model has been widely used as the foundational model for different change models suggested by various authors (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 1999; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996; Luecke, 2003). In recent times, considerable work has been done by Armenakis and colleagues (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). In line with Lewin (1947), Armenakis et al. (1999) proposed a three-step model which also incorporates elements of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986); the first stage is named as Readiness, which refers to enhancing readiness and decreasing resistance. Two other elements are adoption and institutionalization (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Unfreezing may be achieved by creating the readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1999), providing incentives and implementing the desired change by applying appropriate 'leadership style' (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015) to refreeze the behaviours where organization has reached the desired state. What mechanism leaders apply to create a positive attitude by altering previous beliefs and to lead to enduring behaviours is best described by theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991). The central theme of TPB is that actual behaviour is the function of intention which is dependent on (a) *Attitude*, an individual's evaluation whether positive or negative to demonstrate particular behaviour (Jimmieson, Peach, & White, 2008) and (b) *Subjective Norm*, which is a form of pressure individuals perceive from the society, colleagues, co-workers and management, and so on that either enables or prevents to perform certain behaviour. It means in subjective norm that individuals are compelled by some outdoor force within their workgroup, organization or society as a whole with regard to particular behaviours. And the last is *Perceived Behavioural Control*, which reflects an individual's own inclination to perform certain behaviour based on the feeling of either capacity to perform it or having some personal benefits or losses for performing or not performing such behaviours (Ajzen, 1991; Straatmann, Kohnke, Hattrup, & Mueller, 2016).

This study has integrated the theory of authentic leadership, TPB, readiness for change model and incorporated Lewin's (1947) classical change model in it. This model includes the stage of readiness (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007) as surrogate to Lewin's first stage of 'unfreezing' (Armenakis et al., 1999; Castañeda et al., 2012). Then, we consider commitment to change as equivalent to the Adoption stage, which is again synonymous with Lewin's moving stage. As the third stage of Lewin (1947), Armenakis et al. (1999) introduced the stage of institutionalization and this study places behavioural support for change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) as surrogate to both concepts. Our conceptual model is explained in Figure 1.

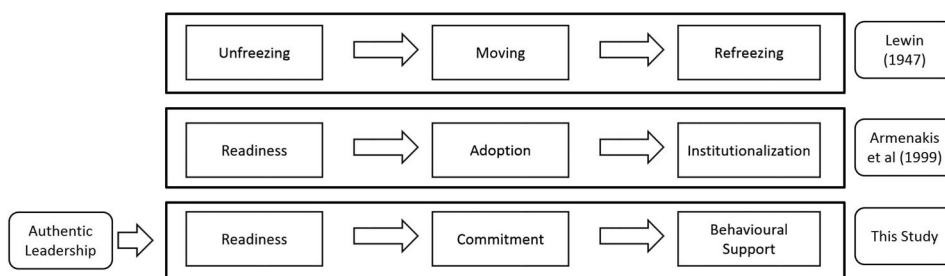


Figure 1. Integration of three models.

Conceptual Framework

The following sections describe how employee perceptions of their immediate bosses' authentic leadership influence employee perceptions of readiness for change and commitment to change to impact employees' behavioural support for planned change.

Authentic Leadership

Operationalization of Authentic leadership stems from Henderson and Hoy's (1983) work on authenticity and inauthenticity of leaders. Authentic leadership has been defined as 'a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates and fostering positive self-development' (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). This work laid the foundation for the development of authentic leadership construct, which triggered scholarly interest in it and received praises and criticisms as well (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009, p. 424).

This concept emanates from positive organizational behaviour which states that peoples' behaviours depend on their strengths and capacities which are developable and measurable. By strengthening the required capacities in human resources, their performance can be enhanced and managed for further improvements (Novicevic, Davis, Dorn, Buckley, & Brown, 2005).

From positive psychology perspective, authentic leadership means both being consistent in one's beliefs, actions as well as being accountable for it. Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) define authentic leadership as

a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development.

In line with Walumbwa et al. (2008),¹ this study posits that authentic leadership comprises four dimensions: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalized moral perspective.

Though authentic leadership has been developed in Western context (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005), its relevance to Pakistani culture has been proved in a recent study in which the authors applying a life story approach reviewed interviews of 14

leaders from South Asia including Pakistan (Khilji, Keilson, Shakir, & Shrestha, 2015). The authors further posit that keeping in view the problems faced by Pakistani organizations attributed to lack of leadership, the concept of authentic leadership may provide avenues to foster positive organizational behaviours in followers (p. 18).

In the recent years, a number of leadership studies related to popular leadership theories, that is, transformational leadership, spiritual leadership, ethical leadership, and authentic leadership have faced retraction from journals (Spoelstra, Butler, & Delaney, 2016). Most notable of these is the work of Florida-based scholar of authentic leadership who was the author/co-author in seven of the studies retracted. Fifteen other studies either received 'Expression of Concern' from journals or the author provided corrigendum, 'addendum', or 'erratum' mainly due to irregularities in data reporting, with unacceptable fit statistics (Atwater, Mumford, Schriesheim, & Yammarino, 2014; Palus, 2016). The authors like Spoelstra et al. (2016) think that 'leadership studies are in crisis' and need a thorough review of key assumptions, methods and objectives. Authentic leadership is a very recent concept and is under the process of development (Gardner et al., 2011). This study also has checked authentic leadership in the context of organizational change to answer the call for research by authors (Agote, Aramburu, & Lines, 2016, p. 2; Santhidran et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2012) incorporating important constructs that lead to employee support for planned organizational change (Choi, 2011).

Behavioural Support for Change

Organizations consistently strive to improve employees' abilities to enhance their support for organizational change (Choi, 2011). Employees support changes when they perceive that the goals of change initiative are met (Orth, 2002). Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) proposed two types of behaviours as a consequence of commitment to change; these behaviours are focal and discretionary. Focal behaviours are the employee actions that are aimed at maintaining employment relationship with organization. They named Compliance as the focal behaviour. Compliance behaviour shows employees' willingness to undertake actions that are needed by organizations to implement the change. Absence of compliance may be deemed as resistance to change (Johnson, 2016). On the other hand, discretionary behaviours are those actions which involve some extra effort beyond mere compliance or maintenance of employment; cooperation and championing behaviours fall in the category of discretionary behaviours. Cooperation refers to employees' behaviour in which they embrace the change with its true 'spirit' and take extra efforts to make that change successful (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Championing behaviour, surrogate to organizational citizenship behaviour (Kalyal, 2009), is taking efforts beyond expectations to ensure achievements of the change goals. It is not only to embrace the change but also to 'sell' it to co-workers and outsiders (Chou, 2014). Seo et al. (2012), in a multilevel longitudinal study by analysing responses from 906 employees and their 217 managers and supervisors, identified a psychological process in which leadership influences positive affect, then creates commitment to change, and then influences change-related behaviours (p. 152). They further argued that this phenomenon has received little empirical research and thus needs exploration (p. 154).

Role of Leadership in Behavioural Support for Planned Organizational Change

Leaders are held responsible for the success and failure of planned change initiative (Burnes, 2011; Kalyal, 2009). The role of leaders in creating meaningful environment for the success of planned change is crucial (By, 2005). Leaders through variety of ways develop adaptability of employees for new roles after the change is implemented. A study of 500 police officers facing reorganization in their department reveals that leader–member exchange was positively related to meaning making and organization-based self-esteem in employees before the change was implemented, and in turn meaning making and organization based self-esteem were positively related to adaptability (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Bakker, 2014). Positive impact of transformational leadership with behavioural support for change has also been confirmed in a study conducted in Taiwan (Chou, 2014).

Role of Employee Perceptions in the Influence of Authentic Leadership and Behavioural Support for Planned Organizational Change

Though there are no authentic statistics available, many authors argue that a majority of change initiatives fail (Burnes, 2015b). These failures are attributed to flaws in the implementation process (Choi, 2011; Georgalis, Samaratunge, Kimberley, & Lu, 2015). Armenakis, Harris, and Mossholder (1993) attribute these failures to the inability of leaders to realize the central role employees play in successful internalization of the change process. As managing human side of change is one of the core challenges organizational leaders face (Burke, 2002, 2008; Clegg & Walsh, 2004; Kondakci, Beycioglu, Sincar, & Ugurlu, 2015; Nelson et al., 2014; Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997), research has proved that individuals' perception and response to change are important indicators of either success or failure of planned organizational change (Lines, 2005). Employees can see organizational change as disturbing and distressing for themselves; their response is based on their perception of content, context and the process of organizational change (Holt, Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 2007), and such response may vary from excitement to resentment, relief to anxiety and so on (Oreg, 2006; Piderit, 2000). An organizational change can only be effective and successful as the old behaviours of employees are altered (Goodman & Kurke, 1982).

To operationalize which constructs are related to measure employee perceptions towards success of planned organizational change, Choi (2011), in his review of literature regarding employee attitude towards organizational change, identified four constructs as mostly used in the organizational change literature to measure employees' perceptions towards change initiative. Among these constructs, one of the most relevant and comprehensive constructs is readiness for organizational change developed by Armenakis and his colleagues (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Armenakis et al., 1993, 1999; Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al., 2007). Another important construct identified in the review was commitment to change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002), which represents employees' different intentions to either support or not support the change based on the analysis of associated costs, benefit and normative requirements with the change. Change-related cynicism and openness were next two key constructs identified in the review. Despite the underlying similarities, these constructs share distinctiveness and serve as key constructs that represent

employees' perceptions towards planned organizational change (Choi, 2011, p. 480). The author suggested to explore conceptual and operational similarities and distinctions among four constructs about organizational change. They also emphasized the need to investigate predictive validity of these constructs regarding behavioural support for change in empirical research from non-Western cultures (p. 495).

Readiness for Change (Unfreezing)

Conceptualization of the Readiness for Change stems from the work of Armenakis et al. (1993). The basic motive behind this concept was to 'create readiness as opposed to traditional view of 'reducing resistance' as a cognitive precursor to successful implementation of change. They defined readiness for change as 'organizational members' beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes were needed and the organization's capacity to make those changes' (p. 683). As discussed above, Lewin's (1947) three-step model of change starts with the stage of unfreezing, which suggests that change agents must initiate active efforts to unfreeze the status quo. Most authors including Self and Schraeder (2009, p. 171), Choi and Ruona (2011, p. 1) and Nordin (2012, p. 240) very explicitly mention readiness for organizational change as synonymous to the stage of unfreezing as in Lewin's model. Armenakis and Harris (2009) also argue that the stage of unfreezing is basically to create a readiness through delivering change messages which are directly related to five change beliefs (p. 132).

Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts, and Walker (2007) define change readiness as 'the extent to which an individual or individuals are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo' (p. 235). Weiner, Amick, and Lee (2008) have defined Organizational Readiness for change 'as the extent to which organizational members are psychologically and behaviorally prepared to implement organizational change'. Building on Lewin's famous three-step model, authors posit that change leaders must first create readiness through unfreezing. They must change the current mindset and motivate towards change. The stage of unfreezing requires disintegrating employees' contemplation of existing situation, creating dissatisfaction and disconfirmation with status quo, creating an appealing future vision, enhancing self-efficacy and optimism that future state will be more beneficial than the current state and will have long-term benefits (Armenakis et al., 1993). In case when readiness for change is greater, employees are said to be more committed towards change, put increased efforts towards change process and show enhanced stability and resilience regarding dealing with temporary problems and obstacles. All of this will further contribute towards increased behavioural support for change, which will warrant successful implementation of planned change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths, 2005).

Authentic Leadership and Readiness for Change

Successful implementation of the change is not limited to reallocation of resources and provision of sophisticated technology; rather, it is impossible unless employee behaviours are altered (Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996). Employees need to unlearn old ways of doing things and adopt new ways (Goodman & Kurke, 1982, pp. 32–33). Leaders' role in this

regard is key in framing employees' readiness for change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Kirrane, Lennon, O'Connor, & Fu, 2016), as lack of readiness may lead to resistance to change (Goksoy, 2012). Leaders' characteristics like credibility, trustworthiness and positive reputation based on these characteristics help in creating readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993, p. 690). A study carried out in the US military confirmed the positive influence of leadership on readiness for change (Lyons, Swindler, & Offner, 2009).

A recent study carried out in the Pakistani manufacturing sector found positive and significant impact of leaders' change promoting behaviour on readiness for change. The relationship was mediated by organizational culture (Adil, 2014, p. 140). The authors felt the need to test the relationship between readiness for change and commitment to change involving a sample from Pakistan (p. 138). A study carried out in the Indian banking sector involving 350 employees also reported a positive link between readiness for change and commitment to change (Anjani & Dhanapal, 2012).

Battilana, Gilmartin, Sengul, Pache, and Alexander (2010) found managers' leadership competencies crucial for successful implementation of planned organizational change. In line with Lewin's three-step model, Battilana et al. (2010) presented the model of change management (communicating the need, mobilizing support and evaluating implementation of planned organizational change). The first step of this model, that is, communicating the need does not cover the full scope of readiness as theorized by Armenakis et al. (1993), which offers rooms for employee self-evaluation of their capacities in the changed environment and the underlying benefits which the change intervention may offer. Therefore, the concept of readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Holt, Armenakis, Harris, et al., 2007) more suitably represents Lewin's (1947) stage of unfreezing than just communicating the need for change as in the study of Battilana et al. (2010).

Studies also suggest that leaders through motivational interviewing and high involvement in change process can influence readiness for change (Grimolizzi-Jensen, 2015; Lines, Sullivan, & Wiesel, 2016). A longitudinal study carried out in 40 clinics of USA undergoing an organizational change revealed that supportive leaders mitigated resistance to change over time (Jones & Van de Ven, 2016). Although to the best of our knowledge no study was found to investigate impact of authentic leadership on readiness for change, studies do suggest that leaders' reputation based on trustworthiness, integrity, fairness and justice fosters employee perception of readiness for change (Santhidran et al., 2013; Shah, 2011). A recent study in a Pakistani public sector hospital found a positive link between Ethical leadership and employee creativity (Caliskan & Isik, 2016). Two other studies from a Pakistani context also found support for the positive link of authentic leadership with organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Kurt, 2016; López-Domínguez, Enache, Sallan, & Simo, 2013). Thus, we infer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Authentic Leadership is positively and significantly related to change appropriateness (H1a), management support for change (H1b), change efficacy (H1c), and personal valence (H1d).

Commitment to Change (Moving)

Commitment conceived as a 'mindset that binds a person to a course of action' (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), has been the subject of discussion since years with regard to its

different targets or foci. Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested the concept of commitment to organization, Barling, Fullagar, and Kelloway (1992) presented the concept of commitment to Unions, Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993), suggested commitment to professions, Becker (1992) advocated the commitment to teams and leaders, and commitment to 'goals' was presented by Locke, Latham, and Erez (1988). Different forms of commitment can help researchers to predict the impact of these commitments on employees' behaviours in organizations (Meyer, Allen, & Allen, 1997).

In the context of organizational change where authors (e.g. Lewin, 1947, 1951) argue about moving from status quo to a new point of equilibrium, the target of commitment is very important. Based on these conceptualizations, Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) proposed a multidimensional construct to measure the commitment to change and it has been defined as 'a mindset that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative' (p. 475). This mindset that binds a person to target of change may reflect (a) supporting the change initiative based on the belief that this change will bring benefits (affective commitment to change), (b) the understanding that not supporting the change will incur the costs which are not affordable (continuous commitment to change), (c) supporting the change based on the sense of obligation and duty (normative commitment to change). Authors further argue that this three-component model of commitment to change is not only a measurable construct but also it is different from commitment to organization construct from both conceptual and empirical points of view (Bouckennooghe, Schwarz, & Minbashian, 2015; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Kalyal, 2009). In the same study, Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) revealed that commitment to change is a better predictor of change-related behaviours such as behavioural support of organizational change than organizational commitment ($R^2 = .21$ vs. $.04$; p. 480).

Readiness for Change and Commitment to Change (Integration of TPB)

Past decade has observed increased interest of authors to explore factors that influence employees' commitment to organizational change (Bouckennooghe, 2012). A study conducted by Hetkamp and Erwee (2015) in a European Steel industry introducing new IT systems identified significant positive impact of readiness on affective commitment to change. They also checked an alternative model investigating the reverse direction of relationship between commitment to change and readiness; results revealed that fit indices of alternative model were very poor relative to the original model. Thus, authors concluded that readiness has direct impact upon commitment to change. One limitation to this study was that they only measured the affective dimension of commitment to change.

Armenakis et al. (1999) proposed a three-step model, which starts with readiness that may lead to adoption and institutionalization. They further suggest that the adoption stage contributes towards commitment to change which in this process clearly links to Lewin's (1947) Moving stage (Stevens, 2013). In line with readiness, commitment to change is also a cognitive precursor to behavioural support for change. Commitment to change despite sharing similarities with the concept of readiness has also some distinct features. First, as defined by Herold, Fedor, and Caldwell (2007), commitment refers to 'positive, proactive behavioral intent toward the change' (p. 943), whereas, on the other

hand, the readiness is conceptualized as a belief, intention or positive attitude towards the need for change and the capacity of employees and leaders to implement it (Armenakis et al., 1999).

Jaros (2010) commented that before employees go for commitment to change, they may have commitment to status quo that needs to be 'unfrozen' (p. 102). This commitment to status quo may be a barrier to the development of commitment to change. He further suggested that the concept of readiness proposed by Armenakis and colleagues (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Armenakis et al., 1993, 1999; Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, & Walker, 2007) may have a motivational factor in predicting commitment to change (p. 103). Jaros (2010) further comments based on the conceptualization of Armenakis et al. (1993) and Coetsee (1999) that employee perception of personal valence based on costs associated with failure to support the change will lead to continuous commitment to change, and that positive feelings about appropriateness and change efficacy will lead to affective commitment to change, and a sense of obligation developed through the fact that managers and leaders are supporting the change (management support) will lead to development of Normative commitment to change (p. 81). Zayim and Kondakci (2015) argue that employee perception of readiness for change will foster their positive attitudes that will help them adjust to new situations (p. 1). Vakola (2016) found that supervisory support will lead to employees' positive reactions towards change initiative (p. 212). Wright, Christensen, and Isett (2013) also postulate that employees' confidence in their abilities to handle the change (change efficacy) will lead to their commitment to change (p. 742).

Four dimensions of readiness for change can be linked with TPB in three ways: First, employees' belief of change appropriateness (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al., 2007) based on felt discrepancy (Armenakis et al., 1999) can be linked with behavioural belief and subsequent attitude formation regarding the actual behaviour of either support or not support (Ajzen, 1991). Second, the management support which forms employee beliefs about the extent to which senior leaders are supporting the change initiative may represent normative belief with its subsequent relations with normative control of TPB. Third, change self-efficacy and personal valence are beliefs of employees to what extent they perceive they will be in charge of future situation based on their capacity to implement change and perceived valence may reflect control beliefs in terms of TPB and its subsequent relationship with perceived behavioural control. In short, four dimensions of the readiness for change scale (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al., 2007) can be linked with three beliefs and three factors of TPB to develop intentions and subsequent behaviours regarding support for organizational change. Thus, this study infers the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Readiness for change is positively and significantly related to commitment to change such that change appropriateness leads to affective commitment to change (H2a), management support leads to normative commitment to change (H2b), and personal valence and change efficacy lead to continuous commitment to change (H2c,d).

Commitment to Change and Behavioural Support for Change

Importance of commitment to change in prediction of behavioural support for change is well known (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002), but only a few studies

have provided the evidence for its generalizability outside North American context (Adil, 2016; Baraldi, Kalyal, Berntson, Näswall, & Sverke, 2010; Kalyal, Berntson, Baraldi, Näswall, & Sverke, 2010). Meyer, Srinivas, Lal, and Topolnytsky (2007), in their replication study comprising Canadian and Indian samples, found that commitment to change predicted behavioural support for change such that all three components were positively correlated to compliance behaviour; however, only affective and normative commitments to change were positively correlated to cooperation and championing, whereas continuous commitment to change was negatively related to cooperation and championing (p. 206).

A recent study of managerial-level employees of Pakistani public sector organizations undergoing restructuring reveals that commitment to change contributes towards behavioural support for change such that affective commitment to change predicts discretionary behaviours, that is, championing and cooperation, whereas continuous commitment to change had negative impact on discretionary behaviours of championing and cooperation. Results also found support for affective and normative commitment to change with focal behaviour of compliance, whereas relationship of continuous commitment to change with compliance was non-significant (Kalyal et al., 2010). Though this result contradicted the hypothesized relationships, it was in line with Meyer et al.'s (2007) study of an Indian sample which showed a negative relationship of continuous commitment to change with behavioural support for change. The study of Baraldi et al. (2010) made some recommendations based on its limitations. The study was conducted on four public sector organizations in Pakistan with low response rate; as the surveys are not frequent in Pakistani organizations and people are very disinclined to participate in surveys covering sensitive issues, the study collected responses from organizations where change has been implemented four years prior to the study. Authors recommended to conduct a study taking care of the proper timing of change initiative and taking response from all employees from different hierarchical levels in order to represent the whole organization (p. 363).

Authors have used TPB (Ajzen, 1991) as an explanatory mechanism to inform the change process (Jimmieson et al., 2008; Straatmann et al., 2016). It shows how employees' attitudes towards change and affective and cognitive processes are translated into behaviours to support the organizational change implementation (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015; Jimmieson et al., 2008). TPB implies that any behaviour can be predicted through intention to perform such behaviour which is dependent on certain attitude, subjective norm and behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991).

Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) model of commitment to change posits that people's intentions and behaviours to support the change are based on their beliefs about benefits to support the change (affective commitment to change), fear of loss related to failure in supporting the change (continuous commitment to change) and pressure to follow the norm (normative commitment to change), which are consistent with the basic conceptualization of TPB which classifies attitude based on 'affect, belief and strength' (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015, p. 5).

Therefore, based on the findings of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) and Meyer et al. (2007) and responding to call for research in non-North American/Asian/Pakistani context (Baraldi et al., 2010; Bouckennooghe et al., 2015; Kalyal et al., 2010; Santhidran et al., 2013) and linking TPB with commitment to change and behavioural support for

change (Bouckenoghe et al., 2015; Jimmieson et al., 2008), the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 3: All three forms of commitment to planned organizational change are positively and significantly related to behavioural support for change such that affective commitment to change is positively and significantly related to compliance (H3a), cooperation (H3b) and championing (H3c), normative commitment to change is positively and significantly related to compliance (H3d), cooperation (H3e) and championing (H3f) and continuous commitment to change will be positively and significantly related to compliance (H3g), cooperation (H3h) and championing (H3i). (Figure 2).

Research Setting, Sampling, and Data Collection

Based on the available information on the internet regarding recurring changes in organizations (Cunningham, 2006, p. 36), five health sector organizations of Sindh Province of Pakistan, undergoing restructuring changes as a part of public–private partnership project, were selected as a context for this study. Public sector hospitals were selected for this study as first, health sector is considered the most relevant context for authentic leadership (Islam, 2002; Kiersch & Byrne, 2015); Second, unionized organizations are more responsive to organizational change (Brown & Cregan, 2008); third, there were also calls for research to be undertaken in the context of privatization of public sector in Pakistan (Aslam, Arfeen, Mohti, & Rahman, 2015) with a strong focus on investigating the influence of authentic leadership in planned organizational change (p. 419).

For the collection of data, 350 employees were contacted to participate in the study across three hospitals, and out of them, 280 employees responded. Twenty-two responses were discarded as being incomplete as respondents were allowed to withdraw their participation at any time if they wished to do so (Shah, 2009). A total of 258 usable responses were retained for this study, yielding a response rate of 73%. The response rate is falling in health sector (Laschinger et al., 2016) due to professionals' high engagements in the job and due to lack of time. In Pakistan too, the response rate is low due to surveys being

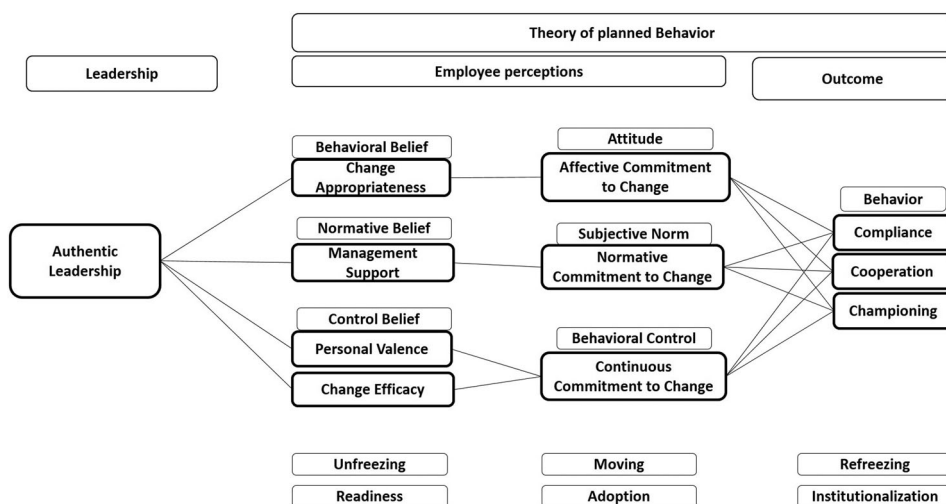


Figure 2. Conceptual framework for this study.

uncommon and employees' reluctance to comment on sensitive issues (Baraldi et al., 2010). This study achieved higher response rate because of frequent personal visits to respondents and because of using personal contacts (Bobbio, Van Dierendonck, & Manganeli, 2012).

Measures

This study used translated versions of all scales. The scales were translated, using translation and back-translation method (Brislin, 1970) and adapting to local culture (Chapman & Carter, 1979) because majority of para medical staff and nurses in rural Sindh, Pakistan have poor educational background, especially in English language proficiency (Bukhari, 2011); therefore, the hospital administration, doctors and union leaders suggested to translate scales into Urdu, the national language of Pakistan (Akhtar, Bal, & Long, 2016). All the responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

Authentic Leadership

To measure the employee perceptions of authentic leadership, a 16-item ALQ developed and validated by Walumbwa et al. (2008) was used in this study with the permission of copyright owners (www.mindgarden.com). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree (e.g. Černe et al., 2013; Hsieh & Wang, 2015; Joo & Nimon, 2014; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014).

Readiness for Organizational Change

Readiness for Change was measured using a four-dimensional scale developed by Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al. (2007). This scale is proved to be a highly reliable and valid instrument to measure individual readiness for change (Haffar, Al-Karaghoul, & Ghoneim, 2014; Weiner et al., 2008). Previous studies used uni-dimensional construct for readiness for change (e.g. Madsen, Miller, & John, 2005), which lacked predictive, convergent and discriminant validity (Weiner et al., 2008), whereas this measure fulfils all criteria of validity and reliability (p. 419). This instrument consisted of 25 items with four multifaceted dimensions: Change Appropriateness, Change Efficacy, Management Support and Personal Valence.

Commitment to Planned Organizational Change

To measure commitment to planned organizational change, an 18-item instrument of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) was used. The scale consists of three dimensions, that is, Affective commitment to change, Normative Commitment to Change, Continuous Commitment to Change and each consists of six items.

Behavioural Support for Planned Organizational Change

To assess the behavioural support for change, a three-dimension behavioural support for change scale of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) was used. This scale comprises two facets of behavioural support, that is, focal behaviour, which means that employees support the change in order to maintain employment relationship with the organization. The compliance dimension of behavioural support for change scale is considered as focal behaviour. The second facet of this scale is a measure of the discretionary behaviour which means that supporting the change is beyond mere compliance or maintenance of employment relationship; it is putting an extra effort to show greater commitment and support for change. These discretionary behaviours include Cooperation (adopting the spirit of change) and Championing (taking extraordinary efforts to involve others to embrace the change).

Analysis and Results

As discussed, the model of this study has not been tested earlier in a South Asian context; therefore, it was necessary to carry out factor analysis to confirm the structure and relationships among variables with regard to the underlying theory (Martin, Johnson, & Cullen, 2009, p. 26). For this purpose, exploratory factor analysis was carried out. Next, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used following a two-step approach (Nizar & Chagani, 2016). In the first step, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is presented to test the fitness of the model with data. In the second step, structural model is presented as per the theoretical framework, and hypotheses testing is carried out along with model fitness of the whole framework.

Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out using SPSS version 22 to test whether the items representing constructs of conceptual framework yield similar structure as it is reported in its initial development and validation studies (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). All items measured on the five-point Likert scale were entered in the exploratory factor analysis using principal component matrix with varimax factoring based on Eigen value greater than 1 (Hair et al., 2006).

Thirteen factors emerged which explained the variance of 70.85%. The value of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .899 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .000$), which revealed that the sample of data is appropriate for conducting factor analysis. Rotated factor matrix generated through varimax rotating excluding items having loadings less than 0.40 resulted in 13 factors in which two variables, that is, readiness and commitment to change, emerged with their original four and three factor structure, respectively, whereas authentic leadership and behavioural support for change were loaded on two factors each unlike their four and three latent factors, respectively. However, following the procedure adopted by Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al. (2007) in their initial validation study of readiness scale, separate EFA was carried out for each variable. Principal

axis factoring and varimax rotation method produced better results as the original factor structure was confirmed regarding readiness for change, commitment to change and behavioural support for change variables, whereas items of authentic leadership still emerged on two factors. The values of KMO for all variables were greater than 0.6 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .001$). Explained variance was 60%, 61%, 57% and 64% for authentic leadership, readiness, commitment to change and behavioural support for change, respectively, which is above the cut-off value of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2006).

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

This section reports the results of confirmatory factor analysis carried out using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 18.0 software (Arbuckle, 2009). This software is highly preferred by most of the researchers for undertaking confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modelling and path analysis (Byrne, 2013; Kline, 2015). In order to measure authentic leadership, a second-order model was used, as it fits best as compared to the first-order latent model and composite score of its 16 items grouped together (Gardner et al., 2011; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2007). For factor loadings, the criterion of .50 was set to retain the items for further analysis. Totally, seven items were excluded whose factor loadings were less than .50.

In order to measure the shared variance in common among variables, a test of convergent validity was applied. Table 1 shows the average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability (CR). Hair et al. (2006) suggested that a value of AVE greater than 0.5 and CR greater than 0.7 show that convergent validity is adequate. Analysis of Table 1 reveals that AVE for authentic leadership is 0.64 (>0.5), readiness for change 0.59 (>0.5), commitment to change 0.52 (>0.5) and behavioural support for change 0.64 (>0.5). AVE is greater than 0.5 for all variables and CR for all variables is also greater than 0.7, thus showing excellent convergent validity. Reliability of each construct in the instrument is represented by Cronbach's Alpha. Alphas for all constructs are higher than the minimum criterion of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), thus showing that these measures are error-free and yield results consistent with the literature (Figure 3).

Discriminant Validity, Nomological Validity and Model Fit Indices

Discriminant validity is a measure to test whether constructs of the study which are supposed to be unrelated are, in fact, not related to each other (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). For the assessment of discriminant validity, values of squared inter-construct correlations (SIC)

Table 1. Summary of AVE, CR, and alpha.

Construct	Results of factor loading		AVE	CR	Cronbach alpha
	Total items	After deletion			
Authentic leadership	16	15	.64	.96	.95
Readiness for organizational change	25	20	.59	.97	.92
Commitment to change	18	18	.53	.95	.91
Behavioural support for change	17	16	.64	.96	.96

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

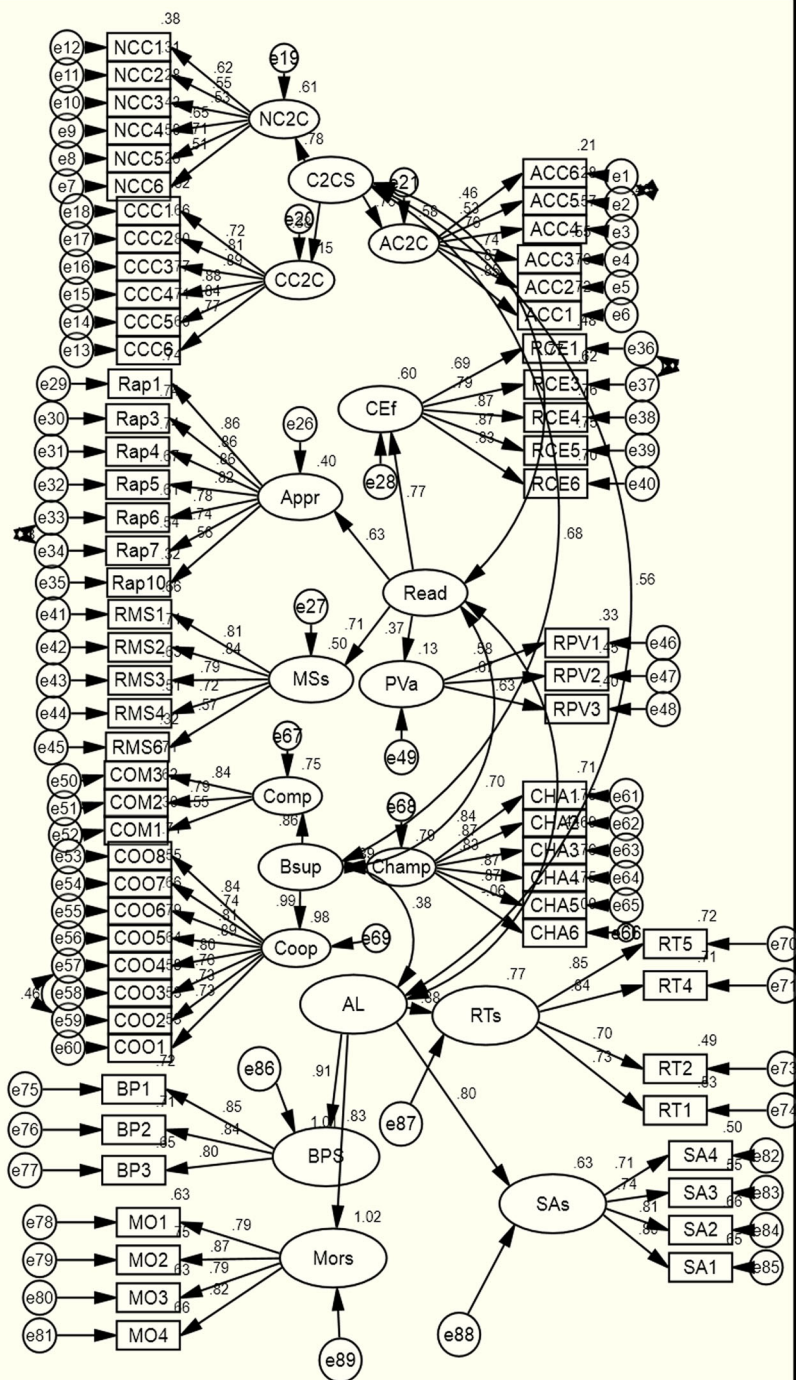


Figure 3. Discriminant validity.

were compared with the values of AVE for each variable. Results show that values of AVE for all variables are greater than those of SIC of all variables, thus indicating the discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2006). Nomological validity is a measure to investigate whether there is any natural link among indicators of the construct (Hair et al., 2006). The values of inter-construct correlation estimates are taken into consideration while measuring nomological validity. Positive inter-construct estimates having significance values less than 0.05 are said to be indicators of nomological validity. Analysis of Table 2 reveals that all inter-construct correlations are positive and significant. Overall, the model shows good nomological validity. Moreover, an analysis of model fit indices of overall model reveals acceptable fit of measurement model. The value of relative Chi square is 2.056 (i.e. less than 3) and that of RMSEA is 0.64 (i.e. less than .08) which are in an acceptable range (Byrne, 2013; Kline, 2015), whereas values of the comparative fit index, CFI = .82, the goodness of fit index, GFI = .70 and the Tucker-Lewis coefficient, TLI = .81 do not meet the cut-off range, that is, 0.90 (Hair et al., 2006).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 divides the data in terms of demographic variables. Results reveal that 42.1% male (186 respondents) participated in this study. The ratio of female respondents is slightly less than their counterparts because female respondents were found reluctant to participate in the study. Moreover, due to cultural limitations, fewer follow-ups were made to female respondents.

Analysis of age frequency reveals that a total of 157 employees (60%) are above the age of 30. Of the employees, 65.9% reported to be married. The ratio of para medical staff was the highest of the three participant groups (130; 50.4%), in which there were 50 Doctors (19.4%) and 62 Nurses (24.0%) who participated in this study. The lower participation from doctors may be attributed towards their high engagements, especially in public sector hospitals (Laschinger et al., 2016). From the education perspective, there are more employees whose education was up to graduate level (e.g. 114; 44.2%). Majority of the respondents, that is, 52% (136) have experience of less than 10 years which may be favourable, as senior employees are supposed to be more resistant than their juniors (Imran, Rehman, Aslam, & Bilal, 2016).

Table 2. Discriminant validity.

Construct	AVE	Correlations between variables			IC	SIC	SE	CR	P	Label
Read	0.59									
	0.53	Read	<-->	C2CS	0.766	0.59	0.043	4.196	***	par_69
	0.64	Read	<-->	Bsup	0.697	0.50	0.063	6.183	***	par_70
C2CS	0.64	Read	<-->	AL	0.443	0.20	0.049	4.833	***	par_71
	0.53									
	0.64	C2CS	<-->	Bsup	0.675	0.45	0.055	4.331	***	par_72
Bsup	0.64	C2CS	<-->	AL	0.56	0.31	0.046	4.123	***	par_73
	0.64									
	0.64	Bsup	<-->	AL	0.378	0.14	0.062	4.919	***	par_74

Note: Read = readiness for organizational change; C2CS = commitment to change; Bsup = behavioural support for change; AL = authentic leadership.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of demographic variables.

	Number	Per cent
Gender		
Male	186	42.1
Female	72	27.9
Age group		
less than 20	11	4.3
21–30 years	90	34.9
31–40 years	74	28.7
41–50 years	55	21.3
51–60 YEARS	28	10.9
Above 60 years	0	0
Employment status		
Doctor	50	19.4
Nurse	62	24.0
Para medical staff	130	50.4
Other	16	6.2
Education		
Below intermediate	13	5.0
Intermediate	83	32.2
Bachelor	114	44.2
Master	25	9.7
Other	23	8.9
Experience		
Less than 1 year	21	8.1
1–5 year	76	29.5
6–10 year	39	15.1
11–15 year	46	17.8
16–20 year	47	18.2
Above 20 year	29	11.2

Table 4 reports means and standard deviations of study variables. Results reveal that employees of health sector organizations under this study sample rated behavioural support 3.86 out of 5.0 ($SD = 1.00$) followed by readiness for change 3.707 ($SD = 0.725$). Minimum mean score was 3.3818 shown by commitment to change variable ($SD = 0.763$). The mean score of authentic leadership was 3.522 ($SD = 0.892$), which is higher than the mean reported by Laschinger, Borgogni, Consiglio, and Read (2015) in Canadian health sector sample. All the mean scores of variables under study are higher than the midpoint, thus showing that, overall, employees ‘agreed’ to readiness for change and their likely support for and commitment to change; these results are in line with the literature on employees tested on the same variables (Cunningham, 2006; van der Voet, Steijn, & Kuipers, 2016).

Structural Model

To test proposed relationships contained in the conceptual framework, a structural model was constructed. Following indices were taken into consideration to check

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for AL, readiness, commitment to change and behavioural support for change.

	Mean	SD
Authentic leadership	3.5227	.89252
Commitment to change	3.3818	.76352
Readiness	3.7074	.72501
Behavioural support for change	3.8602	1.00022

whether the structural model adequately fits the data: CMIN/DF = 5386.140/2252, Relative Chi Square = 2.39, CFI = .800, RMSEA = .074; all fit indices are within the acceptable range except CFI, thus indicating that structural model reasonably fits the data (Byrne, 2013). The values of standardized regression weights are presented in Table 5 (Figure 4).

The first four hypotheses were related to the direct effects of authentic leadership on readiness for change. Results reveal that authentic leadership was positively and significantly related to appropriateness ($\beta = .274$; $p < .001$), management support ($\beta = .348$; $p < .001$), change efficacy ($\beta = .434$; $p < .001$) and personal valence ($\beta = .197$; $p < .001$). Results also show positive and significant impact of the appropriateness on affective commitment to change ($\beta = .530$; $p < .001$), management support on normative commitment to change ($\beta = .402$; $p < .001$) and change efficacy on continuous commitment to change ($\beta = .191$, $p < .05$), whereas the impact of personal valence on the continuous commitment to change was not significant ($p > .05$). The affective commitment to change has shown positive and significant impact on all three behaviours of the behavioural support for change, that is, compliance ($\beta = .719$; $p < .001$), cooperation ($\beta = .658$; $p < 0.001$) and championing ($\beta = .586$; $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, the impact of normative commitment to change and continuous commitment to change was positive and significant with only compliance ($\beta = .128$; $p < 0.001$) and championing ($\beta = .135$; $p < 0.05$), respectively.

Discussion

This study formulated a model based on (Lewin, 1947) the classical three-step model using measurable and valid constructs, that is, readiness for change (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al., 2007), commitment to change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) and behavioural support for change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) frequently used in organizational change studies

Table 5. Summary of hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Structural path			β	p -Value	Result
H1a	AL	→	Appr	.274	***	Supported
H1b	AL	→	MSu	.348	***	Supported
H1c	AL	→	CEf	.434	***	Supported
H1d	AL	→	PVa	.197	.017	Supported
H2a	Appr	→	AC2C	.530	***	Supported
H2b	MSs	→	NC2C	.402	***	Supported
H2c	CEf	→	CC2C	.191	.005	Supported
H2d	PVa	→	CC2C	.038	.631	Not supported
H3a	AC2C	→	Comp	.719	***	Supported
H3b	AC2C	→	Coop	.658	***	Supported
H3c	AC2C	→	Champ	.586	***	Supported
H3d	NC2C	→	Comp	.128	.046	Supported
H3e	NC2C	→	Coop	.098	.093	Not supported
H3f	NC2C	→	Champ	.110	.074	Not supported
H3g	CC2C	→	Comp	.023	.690	Not supported
H3h	CC2C	→	Coop	.091	.088	Not supported
H3i	CC2C	→	Champ	.135	.016	Supported

Note: AL = authentic leadership; Appr = appropriateness; MSs = management support; CEf = change efficacy; PVa = personal valence; AC2C = affective commitment to change; NC2C = normative commitment to change; CC2C = continuous commitment to change; Com = compliance; Coop = cooperation; Champ = championing.

*** $p < .001$.

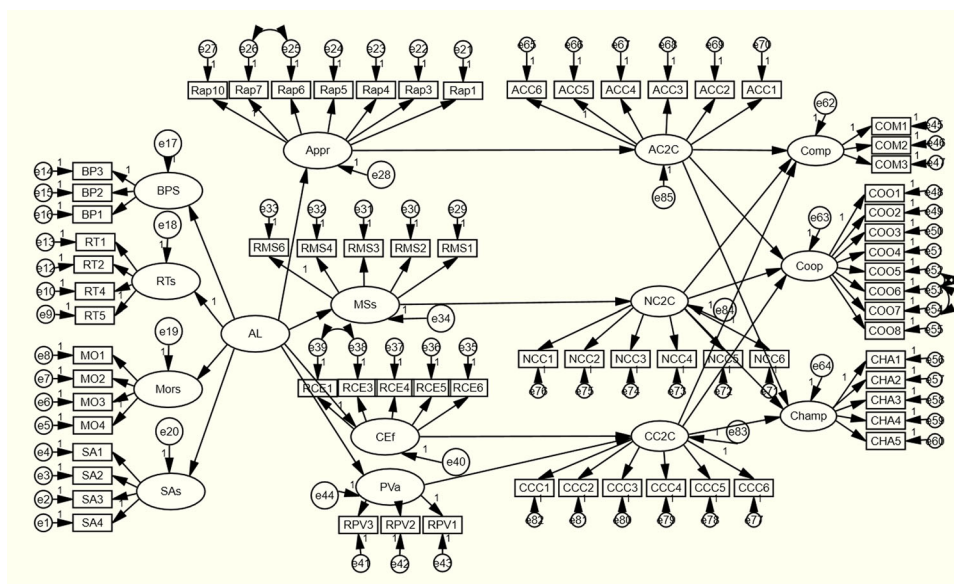


Figure 4. Structural model.

(Choi, 2011), to represent three steps of unfreezing, moving and refreezing, respectively. Lewin's model was criticized for lacking leader–follower relationship dynamics (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015); therefore, the model of this study incorporated authentic leadership to influence employee perceptions represented by the new three-step model. TPB (Ajzen, 1991) was also used to explain the mechanism of leader–member relationship dynamics (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015; Jimmieson et al., 2008). In a recent article, Straatmann et al. (2016) used TPB to check the impact of content, context and process variables on attitude, subjective norm and behavioural control and subsequently on change supportive intention using self-developed scales. This study, however, has taken a step ahead by investigating already-validated constructs, that is, readiness for change and commitment to change by linking them with TPB dimensions to check its impact on behavioural support for change.

Lewin's (1947) three-step model testifies that change can be implemented in three steps, that is, unfreezing, moving and refreezing. Unfreezing is breaking the status quo by overcoming the restraining forces, which are bent on maintaining the status quo. This stage is represented by the readiness for change in this model based on Armenakis et al. (1999) theorizing. Readiness for change is representation of employee beliefs that are results of interaction of driving and restraining forces (Burnes, 2015b; Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al., 2007) for and against the change. The second stage is the 'moving', which is represented by commitment to change in this model. Employee intentions to engage in change-related behaviours based on benefits, duty and cost-based perceptions are represented by commitment to change. The third stage is to reinforce the behaviour to be permanent which is called 'refreezing' by Lewin and the same is surrogated as behavioural support for change in this model.

Rise of interest in a decade-old relatively recent theory of the authentic leadership is mainly due to the fact that organizations are frequently experiencing ethical dilemmas

and monetary scams, for example, gamut of Axta, Enron, Worldcom and Martha Stewart that have led scholars to believe in developing a theory which emphasizes on moral person as well as moral manager (Andreoli & Lefkowitz, 2009; Peus et al., 2012; Treviño et al., 2014). Authentic leaders produce positive beliefs in the followers' minds which in turn foster their commitment, loyalty and involvement and foster behaviours which are not otherwise mandatory (Amunkete & Rothmann, 2015; Joo & Nimon, 2014, p. 575). This supports our results which indicate that authentic leaders by creating readiness for change and enhancing commitment to change may foster behaviours of compliance, cooperation and championing.

As stated earlier, there is no study which may have tested authentic leadership with the readiness for change scale. But the literature has some support regarding the role of authentic leadership in generating positive beliefs of hope and optimism (Amunkete & Rothmann, 2015) and positive work climate (Nelson et al., 2014). Therefore, results of Hypothesis 1a which suggest that authentic leadership predicts employee positive belief about appropriateness of change are consistent with the literature cited above. Authentic leadership has been investigated in the context of innovativeness and creativity. A multilevel study found positive impact of team leaders' authentic leadership on team innovativeness and individual creativity. Employee perceptions of management support for innovation mediated the relationship at the individual level. Thus, it provides support for our results of relationship between management support dimension and authentic leadership (Černe et al., 2013). The employee perception of management effectiveness positively influences change self-efficacy which in turn increases the likelihood of successful implementation of planned change (Haffar et al., 2014); results of this study also support the notion that authentic leadership enhances employee self-efficacy. One study found authentic leadership positively related to occupational coping self-efficacy (Laschinger et al., 2015). Elements of readiness for change represent positive beliefs of employees which are necessary to be strengthened before the expectation of successful implementation of organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1999). Therefore, there is a theoretical reasoning in the literature regarding the role of authentic leadership in creating positive climate which provides support for innovation and enhances self-efficacy (Alok, 2014). These hypotheses regarding the role of authentic leadership in creating readiness for change were in line with this reasoning and are supported by empirical results presented in this study. Joo, McLean, and Yang (2013), in their study, inferred that authentic leaders through their transparent and supportive behaviour will enhance workplace climate to embrace change and creativity in uncertain environment (p. 406). The evidence suggests that authentic leadership is positively related to trust in top management (Fox, Gong, & Attoh, 2015; Wong, Spence Laschinger, & Cummings, 2010) and trust in top management is positively and significantly related to readiness for change (Bouckennooghe & Devos, 2008). Thus, the findings of this study provide further evidence of a positive link between authentic leadership and readiness for change.

The second set of hypotheses was related to relationship between readiness for change and commitment to change. Readiness for change is an important factor in successful implementation of change initiative (By, 2007), as it mitigates resistance and increases the likelihood of adoption of change (Neves, 2009, p. 216). Results of the structural model of this study found positive relationship between the change appropriateness and affective commitment to change. This finding suggests that readiness can enhance

employee commitment to change by communicating message of favourableness of change (Battilana et al., 2010). Appelbaum, Degbe, MacDonald, and Nguyen-Quang (2015) proposed that leaders can impact employee behaviours to support the change by influencing their attitudes through enhancing employee-perceived benefits of change. A study carried out in Malaysian public sector organizations found positive impact of change appropriateness, management support and personal valence with commitment to change (Isa, Saleh, & Jusoh, 2011). Another study from Malaysian context found positive relationship between readiness for change and commitment to change (Santhidran et al., 2013). Applying social cognitive theory, Tu and Lu (2016) found that ethical leadership positively influences employee self-efficacy which in turn leads to their extra role performance (p. 141).

The third set of hypotheses was related to relationship of commitment to change with behavioural support for change. Only affective commitment to change was found positive and significant with all three behaviours, whereas normative commitment to change and continuous commitment to change were only positive and significant with compliance and championing, respectively. Insignificant relationships are in line with the literature, which suggests that continuous commitment to change dimension is related to employee intentions to support the change when they think that not supporting the change is not a viable option. Employees of public sector organizations in this study were unionized and they are high on voice behaviours and therefore they do not support the change on the costs associated with it; rather, they tend to support the change based on the perception of change being personally beneficial rather than a threat to collective goals (Reginato, Fadda, & Paglietti, 2016, p. 2). This point is supported by positive and significant relationship of affective commitment to change with all three behaviours of behavioural support for change.

A recent study in Pakistani private sector organizations which tested relationship of commitment to change with compliance, cooperation, and championing behaviours suggests that affective commitment to change was found positive and significant with only compliance behaviour and continuous and normative commitments to change were found positive and significant with only cooperation behaviour. None of the dimensions of the commitment to change was positive and significant with championing behaviour (Adil, 2016).

Limitations

Every research is subject to some limitations; therefore, this study is no exception. First limitation may be the use of translated version of the questionnaire. The scales were translated based on translation back-translation method with the support of scholars who were expert in both English and Urdu languages and had the information regarding general tendencies of the sample and culture as well as the relative information about organizational change literature (Brislin, 1970; Chapman & Carter, 1979). However, results must be interpreted keeping in view the fact that Urdu is a language which has multiple cultural backgrounds and terms used in the scales were tailored as per local needs. Reuse of these scales in some other Asian settings is encouraged with suggestion of efforts to refine it. The second limitation may be the small sample size, though response rate of this study, that is, 73%, was better in comparison to other studies during organizational change in general and from the perspectives of Pakistan in particular where surveys are uncommon and people are reluctant to participate in sensitive issues (Agote et al., 2016; Kalyal et al.,

2010; Laschinger et al., 2016). Another possible explanation of small sample size may be the fact that this study tried to fill the general limitation of change studies which take responses from multiple change contexts that inhibit attribution of specific leadership style to particular change context; therefore, an urgent need was felt by the authors to test the impact of ethical leadership in the context of change 'within single organizations with specific changes' (Bormann & Rowold, 2016, p. 240). Third, this study is cross-sectional in nature and therefore causal links cannot be established and confirmed in this study.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

This study implies that authentic leadership is relevant to the Asian public sector context and can boost employees' perceptions in the process of influencing mechanism to achieve organizational outcomes like behavioural support for change. Future research may continue to investigate the role of authentic leadership in development of other change-related behaviours like change-related OCB (López-Domínguez et al., 2013). Moreover, Urdu versions of validated scales of authentic leadership, readiness for change, commitment to change and behavioural support for change need to be replicated in Asian Urdu-speaking sample. Future research may also investigate feeling of job insecurity and cynicism about change to moderate the impact of authentic leadership on readiness for change or commitment to change (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015; Kurt, 2016).

Practical Recommendation

As it has been found that authentic leadership is relevant in Asian context and can produce positive intentions and behaviours in even difficult times of the organizations, one aspect of authentic leadership needs attention of organizational leaders, as authentic leadership can be developed and therefore training for the development of authentic leadership behaviours among supervisors, managers and organizational leadership should be the next subject of attention for executives of organizations (Peus et al., 2012).

Conclusion

The role of organizational leaders is very crucial in successful implementation of planned organizational change; this emphasizes the need that leaders must understand the human side of organizations which is an important factor as compared to resources and infrastructure. In the recent times where scams and frauds frequently surface on organizational and national levels, need for authentic and genuine leadership is felt to achieve organizational objectives in a befitting manner (Kiersch & Byrne, 2015, p. 1). The process of organizational change is subject to exposure to more corruption and frauds (Martin et al., 2009), as release of funds in emergencies like organizational changes is subject to less supervision and scrutiny. This situation is especially relevant in Pakistani health sector where corruption and lack of accountability are major issues (Nizar & Chagani, 2016). Government releases

funds when there is a felt emergency due to political pressure, and such situation warrants that leaders must be genuine and authentic.

Following the call for research on Lewin's contribution to organizational development, this study has endeavoured to provide evidence that Lewin's 'ideas, insights and theories' are still relevant to organizational change management (Burnes, 2015a). By linking the three-step model with measurable constructs of organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1999; Choi, 2011; Holt, Armenakis, Feild, et al., 2007), this study responds to the criticism levelled against Lewin's model as being not fit for continuous change (Weick & Quinn, 1999); use of authentic leadership with this model proves that it can be utilized as a practical tool by leaders to foster employees' positive beliefs to embrace the change (Armenakis et al., 1999) and this brings further evidence of the Lewin as being *The Practical Theorist* (Burnes, 2013, 2015a; Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Marrow, 1969). This study has also incorporated TPB (Ajzen, 1991) to explain the influencing mechanism between leader-follower interactions as suggested by some authors (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015; Straatmann et al., 2016; Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007); thus, this article concludes that Lewin's models, tools and techniques are also relevant to the organizational change (Burnes, 2015a).

Note

1. Authentic leadership has been investigated in a variety of contexts across the globe and Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) has been translated in different languages (Gardner et al., 2011, p. 1134). Concerns are raised among the scenarios when at least seven articles of Florida-based key author of Authentic Leadership have been retracted based on inaccurate reporting of fit statistics (Palus, 2016). In a reply to email from the author of this study, the concerned author of retracted articles declined to comment on the issue, saying further that the validity of ALQ has been confirmed in several studies.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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