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Unlocking the black box: Exploring the link between perceive organizational support and resistance to change

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ABSTRACT

Past studies have inferred an indirect relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change. Making clear the "black box" between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change is crucial to predict the success of organizational change. Drawing upon organizational support theory and conservation of resources theory, this research was conducted in an attempt to offer a systematic analysis on employees' positive psychology in organizational change. The total valid sample consisted of 288 employees from Taiwanese consumer electronics manufacturing which were undergoing organizational change. The theoretical framework was analyzed by LISREL model. Results showed that Readiness for Change had negatively direct effects on Resistance to Change, and indicated that Readiness for Change mediated the relationships between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change, and Readiness for Change also mediated the relationships between Positive Psychological Capital and Resistance to Change. Finally, this study proposes managerial implications and highlights future research suggestions.

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1. Introduction

In the turbulent business environment, enterprises execute organizational changes, intervention and reengineering frequently, and these practices are required to survive (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Wood, & Hawkins, 2005). As organizations attempt to deal with an increasingly turbulent economic future, they will increasingly depend on their employees to adapt to organizational change. Employees may feel supportive of, resistant to, or ambivalent toward organizational change (Deetz, 2008; Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Thus, managers must first confront and reduce employees' *Resistance to Change*, because this disposition is an obstacle to successful organizational change (Furst & Cable, 2008). In this circumstance, top management teams should help employees mentally prepare for change (Furst & Cable, 2008). Therefore, the enterprise needs long-term investment to achieve and form positive and supportive organizational climates. According to *organizational support theory*, organizations are willing to reward employee's work effort and will also pay attention to their socio-emotional needs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Szamosi & Duxbury, 2002). Organisational support theory also emphasises that psychological processes constitute the basis for producing *Perceived Organisational Support* (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Past studies have inferred an indirect relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change (Furst & Cable, 2008; Oreg & Sverdlik, 2011). Likewise, prior research has mentioned that the psychological status and perceptions of the impact of change have significant effects on employee reactions to change (Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004; Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012). Notably lacking from these literatures, however, are explicit attention to employees' psychological perceptions and transfers between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change. Hence, this is literature gap of our research question. The relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change is something of a "black box": clarifying it will be crucial to predict the success of organizational change.

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Employees' positive behavior, emotional capability and *Positive Psychological Capital* play critical roles in the organizational change process (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008; Huy, 1999). Positive Psychological Capital is a "state" that has scalability and plasticity, and can be developed through training (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006). Furthermore, according to *conservation of resources theory* (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2002), individuals will accumulate resources they can apply to overcome challenges and threats. They might accumulate personal resources (such as Positive Psychological Capital) and condition resources (such as organizational support) (Hobfoll & Vaux, 1993). Therefore, we need to develop and test a theoretical framework and explore that how firms can successfully and smoothly execute organizational change while managing the trade-offs in employees' psychological status and *Readiness for Change*.

The purpose of this paper is to uncover the dynamic between employees' positive psychology and organizational change, focusing on the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change. This study contributes to the research question by firstly discussing organizational support theory and the relationship among Perceived Organisational Support, Readiness for Change, and Resistance to Change. Secondly, based on conservation of resources theory, we will discuss the relationship among Positive Psychological Capital, Readiness for Change, and Resistance to Change. Finally, we establish a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical model among Perceived Organisational Support, Positive Psychological Capital, Readiness for Change and Resistance to Change in the context of organizational change, supported by human resource practices. We also suggest several implications for organizations and future research.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. The relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Positive Psychological Capital

Perceived Organisational Support is defined as the degree to which employees believe that their employing companies value their contributions, appreciate their efforts, and care for their well-being (Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Eisenberger, Hungtington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). According to relevant literatures, we have suggested that Perceived Organisational Support can be divided into five sub-dimensions in which organizations pay careful attentions to: employees' welfare, employees' personal objectives, employee contributions, assist employees in career/professional development, and proud of employees' efforts (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).

Positive Psychological Capital is a positive psychological state of individuals, which includes four dimensions (Luthans et al., 2006): (1) self-efficacy: when people, in the face of challenges, can confidently make the necessary efforts; (2) optimism: people can make a positive contribution to present and future achievements; (3) hope: people can consistently move towards goals and (4) resilience: when a person can withstand and recover from failures to fight on. When employees have more Positive Psychological Capital, their performance, satisfaction and commitment will be higher; absenteeism will be reduced (Avey, Patera, & West, 2006).

Perceived Organisational Support will make employees tend to have more Positive Psychological Capital and a positive work environment (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008). When employees have perceived organisational support, they can transform it into hope. By setting goals, employees can complete organizational tasks. Similarly, a supportive organizational climate can enhance employee resilience and enable individuals to rapidly recover from setbacks (Luthans et al., 2008). For example, when employees feel frustrated by their own mistakes in a relatively supportive organizational climate, they are more likely to quickly recuperate because they are less likely to worry about being punished. In addition, this supportive organizational climate also gives employees more optimism (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Therefore, we can propose that:

Hypothesis 1. *Perceived Organisational Support is positively related to Positive Psychological Capital.*

2.2. The relationship among Perceived Organisational Support, Readiness for Change, and Resistance to Change (based on organisational support theory)

Organisational support theory states that organizations are willing to reward employee's work effort and will also pay attention to their socio-emotional needs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Szamosi & Duxbury, 2002). Organisational support theory also emphasises that psychological processes constitute the basis for producing Perceived Organisational Support. Perceived Organisational Support will strengthen employees' beliefs, identities, rewards, and also enhances employees' performance. These processes should produce favorable outcomes for employees (Shore & Shore, 1995).

When employees have Perceived Organisational Support, they believe that organizations are concerned about them and have a higher sense of trust in them. The organization then promotes change: employees will support the organization if the change is legitimate and rational (Self, Armenakis, & Schraeder, 2007). Readiness for Change is reflected in organizational members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the implementation and necessary extent of changes, and the organization's capacity to successfully execute organizational changes (Armenakis & Bedian, 1999; French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2004). Eby, Adams, Russell, and Gaby (2000) found a significant relationship between Perceived Organisational Support, trust among peers and Readiness for Change. Weber and Weber (2001) also argued that the higher the degree of support in the work environment, the higher Readiness for Change becomes. Therefore, social support and interaction are the positive elements of organizational culture, and such a culture can enhance Readiness for Change (McNabb & Sepic, 1995). Madsen, Miller, and John (2005) have also argued that organizational support and trust can improve Readiness for Change.

Moreover, Resistance to Change means that organizational members may evoke considerable anxiety and resistance about putting down the known and moving to an uncertain future, including technical resistance, political resistance, and cultural resistance (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Oreg, 2003). If Readiness for Change exists, an organization is primed to embrace change and employee Resistance to Change is reduced, thereby promoting change (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Rafferty & Simons, 2006). Even so, those employees are willing to actively participate in and support organizational change. The reason why employees support change is they share the value embodied in change or believe that organizational change will bring success (Shapiro & Kirkman, 1999). In conclude, when members perceive organizational support, they will believe that firms are concerned about them (Self et al., 2007), and members' beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors regarding the organizational changes are needed (French et al., 2004). Finally, organizational members may reduce the anxiety and resistance about moving to an uncertain future (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Therefore, we can propose that:

Hypothesis 2. *Perceived Organisational Support is positively related to Readiness for Change*

Hypothesis 3. *Readiness for Change is negatively related to Resistance to Change*

Hypothesis 4. *Readiness for Change mediates the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change*

2.3. The relationship among Positive Psychological Capital, Readiness for Change, and Resistance to Change (based on conservation of resources theory)

According to conservation of resource theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2002), individuals will accumulate resources to adapt or overcome the threats and challenges. Employees will accumulate personal resources (such as self-esteem and optimism), material resources (such as money), and condition resources (such as status, social support and organizational support) in working place (Hobfoll, 2002; Hobfoll & Vaux, 1993). When employees face organizational change, they may lose their jobs or even be laid off. At that time, employees will experience a psychological state called anticipatory stress (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), and it may turn into the actual stress (Hobfoll, 2001).

Evasiveness, negative behavior, or pessimistic attitudes among employees behavior can hinder organizational change (Stanley, Meyer, & Topolntsky, 2005). In other words, a positive attitude from employees can promote organizational change. Prochaska, Redding, and Evers (1997) argued that the self-efficacy of employees is one of the conditions for successful change. Armenakis et al. (1993) mentioned that it is helpful for reengineering if employees have the confidence to confront change. Conversely, when employees believe that change is beyond what they can deal with, they will resist it. In addition, when employees possess positive emotions, self-efficacy, and optimism, they will feel more confidence to confront the challenge of organizational change, and will believe the organization's capacity can successfully make those changes (French et al., 2004; Luthans et al., 2008). Finally, members' anxiety and resistance about moving to the changeable future will be decreased (Cummings & Worley, 2009). From the results found above, we can propose Hypothesis 5 and 6.

Hypothesis 5. *Positive Psychological Capital is positively related to Readiness for Change*

Hypothesis 6. *Readiness for Change mediates the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital and Resistance to Change*

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

This research primarily focuses on the organisational change issues of Taiwanese consumer electronics manufacturing in grand China. Taiwanese computer, communication, and consumer electronics (3C) manufacturing is representative of Taiwanese economic power (Huang, Wu, & Rahman, 2012). However, Taiwanese companies have been affected tremendously and negatively by the global financial crisis and turbulent environment (Wu & Wu, 2011). Especially, Taiwanese companies invest heavily in China in recent years (Chiao, Lo, & Yu, 2010). Because the China government encourages and attracts foreign companies' investment in industries, Taiwanese companies face more violent competition and challenge (Dawar & Frost, 1999). Hence, it is appropriate for us to investigate employee's psychology in change context in emerging economies.

Before adopting the questionnaire survey, we execute pre-test of interview and confirm that our objects (sampling firms' employees) are ongoing organizational changes that include strategy change (ex. product strategy change), structure and process change (ex. reengineering), and human change (ex. expatriate or lay off) (Barnett & Carroll, 1995).

Furthermore, the Resistance to Change is a negative dimension and respondents might answer questions reluctantly or incorrectly to produce "answer bias" (Neuman, 2005). To reduce the errors that might occur, we adopted the multi-source data. The ratio of supervisors and subordinates is 1:4. Using the stratified sampling method, 500 questionnaires were sent to the firms. A total of 288 valid questionnaires were collected. The average age of respondents was 34 years and we surveyed 189 male and 99 female employees. The average length of service was five years.

3.2. Measures

After adopting confirmatory factor analysis, Positive Psychological Capital was assessed using 18 items developed by the psychological capital questionnaire (PCQ), and it included four subdimensions (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; Luthans et al., 2008). This scale includes 6 items for self-efficacy, 3 items for hope, 3 items for resilience, and 6 items for optimism, and these items were summed to arrive at a Positive Psychological Capital score. Responses are indicated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Examples of items include "I feel quite confident in discussing the company's strategy," for Self-Efficacy; and "I think I am quite successful in my occupation," for Optimism. Alpha reliabilities were 0.861 for Self-Efficacy; 0.798 for Optimism; 0.61 for Hope and 0.696 for Resilience. This part was finished by employees.

This study uses six items from the Survey of Perceived Organisational Support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Factor loading from 0.71 to 0.84 that we followed the recommendation of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) that items encompass the facets of the definition of Perceived Organisational Support. Responses are indicated on five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with such items as "The organization really cares about my well-being" and "The organization shows very little concern for me". Alpha reliabilities were 0.929 for POS and this part of questionnaire was finished by employees.

Readiness for Change was measured using 19 items developed by French et al., (2004), Clark (2003), and Armenakis and Bedian (1999), covering the following three dimensions: belief in benefit, attitude toward conveyance and intention of change. These dimensions were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with sample items such as "I believe that after organizational change, our organization will be a great benefit" for belief in benefit and "I am willing to convey information of organizational change" for attitude toward conveyance. Alpha reliabilities were 0.813 for Benefit; 0.828 for Conveyance and 0.83 for Intention. This part was finished by employees.

Resistance to Change was measured using 12 items developed by Bovey and Hede (2001) and Oreg (2003). We used items that covered the two dimensions of Resistance to Change: Active Resistance and Passive Resistance. These two indices were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with sample items such as "This employee always use some excuses to extend the process of the organizational change" for Active Resistance, and "This employee never concern about the organizational change and development" for Passive Resistance. Alpha reliabilities were 0.883 for Active Resistance and 0.921 for Passive Resistance. This part of questionnaire

was finished by managers. Higher scores indicate that managers believe the Resistance to Change of their employees is stronger.

3.3. Construct analysis

Table 1 presents the result of the confirmatory factor analysis. Chi-square difference tests indicated that the hypothesized four-factor model (i.e. Perceived Organisational Support, Positive Psychological Capital, Readiness for Change and Resistance to Change) provide a better fit for the data than did (a)the one-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(N = 288) = 505.23$, $p < .01$; (b) the two-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2 = 539.264$, $p < .01$; and (c) the three-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2 = 156.033$, $p < .01$. These results suggest that the present study's constructs were distinct.

This study also assessed each construct's reliability based on composite reliability and variance extracted measure (VE) (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The results (see Table 2) showing that all construct reliabilities and variance extracted measures were above the cut off values of .70 and .05 (Hair et al., 1998).

3.4. Results

Table 3 reports the means, standard deviations, and corrections observed from the survey. The correlations among the sub-dimensions of Perceived Organisational Support, Positive Psychological Capital and Readiness for Change (except the personal valance) range from 0.74 to 0.26, and all of these correlations are significant ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the correlations between two reverse variables (active resistance and passive resistance) and other 14 variables are negative. The negative correlations are from −0.03 to −0.44.

3.5. Assessment of model fit and path significance

This study examined the overall fit of the model using several fit indices. Our model has an adequate fit with the data, as indicated by the chi-square/d.f. value of 1.4. The GFI assesses how well the hypothesized model reproduces the sample data without the reference model. A good GFI should be 0.9 or higher. Our model's GFI of 0.919 thus shows a good fit. The AGFI of 0.887, Segars and Grover (1993) proposed that an adaptive standard 0.8 above displays an acceptable degree of overall adaptation. In addition, the comparative fit index (CFI = 0.98), normal fit index (NFI = 0.934), mean square residual (RMR = 0.019), and root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA = 0.046) all suggest that our model fits that data well.

Table 4 and Fig. 1 provide the maximum likelihood parameter estimates for this research model. Based on Table 4, we found that the Perceived Organisational Support had a significant positive influence on Positive Psychological Capital ($\gamma_{11} = 0.677$, $p < 0.001$), which supports H_1. It indicates that when employees perceive more concern and assistance from organization, employees' psychological status will be more positive. Then, the Perceived Organisational Support has a significant effect on Readiness for Change ($\gamma_{21} = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the more perception of organizational support, employees will do more readiness for organizational change, thus supporting H_2. Thus, employees will be more adequate on preparation of all aspects and more able to accept organizational change in perceiving more concern and assistance from organization. Meanwhile, Positive Psychological Capital appears to have a significant effect on RFC ($\beta_{21} = 0.386$, $p < 0.001$), which supports H_5. Employee will have more adequate preparation to face the challenge of organizational change with more positive psychological status. And Readiness for Change has a significant negative effect on Resistance to Change ($\beta_{32} = -0.417$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_3. We confirmed that if employees have better preparations for organizational change, their Resistance to Change will be decreased.

Furthermore, Fig. 1 depicts the results of the path analysis and demonstrates the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. As shown in the figure, this study assumes that Readiness for Change will mediate between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change. The results show that Perceived Organisational Support has direct effects on Readiness for Change ($\gamma_{21} = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$) and Readiness for Change has direct effects on Resistance to Change ($\beta_{32} = -0.417$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the Sobel-test shows that Perceived Organisational Support has a significant indirect effect on Resistance to Change ($t = 2.42$, $P < 0.01$), in which the indirect influence is −0.206 ($\gamma_{21}\beta_{32} = 0.494^{*}-0.417$). Thus, Readiness for Change has a full mediating effect on the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change, supporting H_4.

Equally, the results show that Positive Psychological Capital has direct effects on Readiness for Change and Readiness for Change has direct effects on Resistance to Change. After conducting the Sobel-test, this study has found that the Positive Psychological Capital has a significant indirect effect on Resistance to Change ($t = 2.256$, $P < 0.01$), in which the indirect influence is −0.161 ($\beta_{21}\beta_{32} = 0.386^{*}-0.417$). Obviously, the Positive Psychological Capital will affect Resistance to Change through the full mediating effects of Readiness for Change. Thus, H_6 was supported.

4. Conclusion

According to organizational support theory and change management strategy, Perceived Organisational Support can reduce the adverse consequences of loss of control when employees suffered

Table 2
Measurement properties.

Construct	Composite reliability	Variance extracted	No. of items
PPC	.900	.73	18
POS	.929	.76	6
RFC	.896	.75	19
RTC	.945	.71	12

Table 1
Results of confirmatory factor analysis of study variables (N = 288).

Model	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	GFI	NFI	SRMR
Null model	2059.45	120					
One-factor model	647.585	104	505.23**	.720	.693	.686	.054
Two-factor model	681.619	103	539.264**	.702	.621	.669	.110
Three-factor model	298.388	101	156.033**	.898	.828	.855	.066
Hypothesized four-factor model	142.355	98		.977	.912	.931	.018

Note. For the one-factor model, all items are combined into one factor; for the two-factor model, the PPC and POS are combined into one factor, RFC and RTC are combined into another factor; for the three-factor model, POS and PPC are combined into one factor. CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; NFI = normal fit index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual. **$p < .01$. $\Delta\chi^2$: compare with four-factor model.

Table 3
Mean, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables (N = 288).

Measured variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
PPC (1)	3.45	0.90	1.00													
PPC (2)	3.33	0.89	0.73**	1.00												
PPC (3)	3.59	0.75	0.72**	0.70**	1.00											
PPC (4)	3.28	0.79	0.71**	0.74**	0.68**	1.00										
POS (5)	3.42	0.73	0.61**	0.70**	0.60**	0.71**	1.00									
POS (6)	3.44	0.80	0.72**	0.68**	0.68**	0.67**	0.71**	1.00								
POS (7)	3.73	0.53	0.44**	0.48**	0.45**	0.51**	0.50**	0.47**	1.00							
POS (8)	3.95	0.42	0.26**	0.38**	0.29**	0.39**	0.35**	0.29**	0.51**	1.00						
POS (9)	3.50	0.55	0.42**	0.54**	0.45**	0.56**	0.55**	0.46**	0.69**	0.62**	1.00					
POS (10)	3.70	0.52	0.37**	0.51**	0.37**	0.51**	0.46**	0.43**	0.59**	0.63**	0.70**	1.00				
RFC (11)	3.76	0.57	0.40**	0.50**	0.35**	0.41**	0.40**	0.36**	0.38**	0.28**	0.39**	0.40**	1.00			
RFC (12)	3.46	0.62	0.48**	0.57**	0.43**	0.52**	0.53**	0.55**	0.48**	0.34**	0.48**	0.44**	0.51**	1.00		
RFC (13)	3.29	0.70	0.48**	0.54**	0.46**	0.54**	0.53**	0.52**	0.52**	0.45**	0.52**	0.47**	0.52**	0.72**	1.00	
RTC (14)	2.12	0.71	−.15*	−.16**	−.18*	−.11	−.18*	−.16*	−.10	−.12	−.13	−.10	−.20**	−.20**	−.27**	1.00
RTC (15)	2.01	0.73	−.17*	−.11**	−.17*	−.14	−.16*	−.14	−.11	−.06	−.10	−.03	−.23**	−.16**	−.21**	.85*

Note: **p(two-tailed) < 0.01; *p(two-tailed) < 0.05; 1.Hope; 2.Resilience; 3.Optimism; 4.Self-efficiency; 5.Welfare; 6.Objective; 7.Assist; 8.Proud; 9.Contribution; 10.Concern; 11.Belief; 12.Attitude; 13.Intention; 14.Active resistance; 15.Passive resistance.

Table 4
Results of the SEM testing.

Key parameter estimates					
Hypothesized paths	Direct effect	Indirect effect	C.R.	Hypothesis	Result
POS → PPC (γ11)	0.677		8.699***	H1	Support
POS → RFC (γ21)	0.494		7.527***	H2	Support
RFC → RTC (β32)	−0.417		−2.259*	H3	Support
PPC → RFC (β21)	0.386		3.911***	H5	Support
POS → RFC → RTC		−0.206		H4	Support
PPC → RFC → RTC		−0.161		H6	Support
Fit indices for the structural model					
CMIN/DF = 1.4	GFI = 0.919		AGFI = 0.887		RMR = 0.019
RMSEA = 0.046	CFI = 0.98		NFI = 0.934		

Note: *C.R.>1.96; using a significance level of 0.05, critical rations that exceed 1.96 are significant.
*C.R.>1.96; **C.R.>2.58; ***C.R.>3.29.

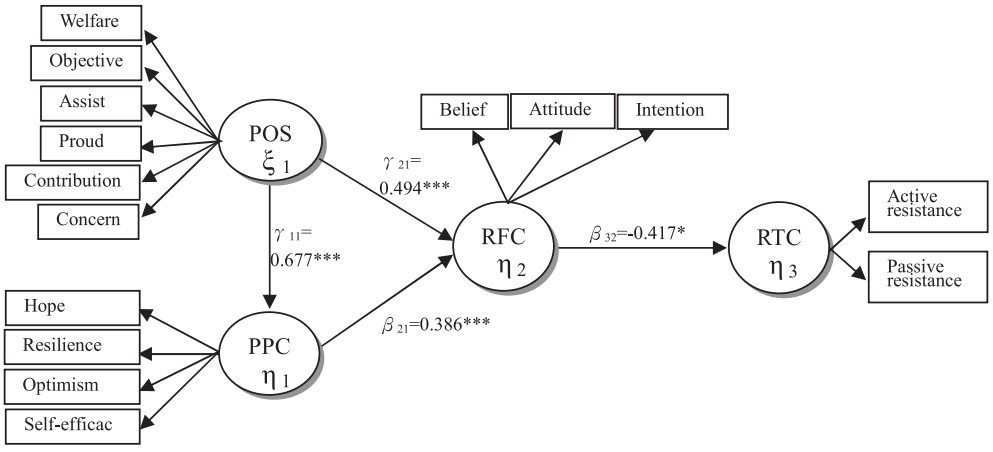

Fig. 1. Structural equation model. Note: (1) *p(two-tailed) < .05; p**(two-tailed) < .01; p***(two-tailed) < .001. (2) β is the coefficient matrix between the endogenous latent variables, and γ is the coefficient matrix between the endogenous latent variable and exogenous latent variable. (3) ξ is the exogenous latent variables, and η is the endogenous latent variables. (4) POS: Perceived Organizational Support; PPC: Positive Psychological Capital; RFC: Readiness for Change; RTC: Resistance to Change.

during major organizational change (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Ferlie et al., 2005; van Emmerik, Bakker, & Euwema, 2009). This study has opened the box and made clear the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change: there is a significant negative correlation between Readiness for Change and Resistance to Change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Holt, Armenakis, Harris, & Field, 2007; Rafferty & Simons, 2006); Readiness for Change mediates the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital and Resistance to Change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Prochaska et al., 1997); and Readiness for Change also mediates the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Rafferty & Simons, 2006). Therefore, this study provides empirical evidences and integrative framework on

employee's psychological transformation in organizational change context.

Furthermore, according to conservation of resources theory, Chen, Westman, and Eden (2009) argued that employees' acquisition of resources could prevent or alleviate stress. Employees' acquisition and accumulation of resources tends to increase personal resources (like Positive Psychological Capital) and condition resources (like Perceived Organisational Support) in the organizational restructuring or change (Hobfoll, 1989; 2001; 2002) in order to reduce the pressure and resistance (Shaw, Fields, Thacker, & Fisher, 1993). If individuals effort to accumulate resources, they will reduce stress and resistance (Hobfoll, 2001). In this case, individuals do not perceive the loss of existing resources. Instead, they will be more likely to extend their resources that may enhance the resilience subsequently (Hobfoll, 2002).

Next, the deductions regarding Positive Psychological Capital and organizational change (Luthans et al., 2008) suggest that employees with Positive Psychological Capital will induce a positive mood, thereby triggering and creating positive organizational change (Avey et al., 2006). However, the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital and Resistance to Change is a neglected area of research. This study found that Readiness for Change mediates the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital and Resistance to Change (Armenakis et al. 1993; Luthans et al., 2008; Prochaska et al., 1997). Therefore, this study provides academic contributions regarding to the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital and organizational change (Avey et al., 2008), especially through employees' readiness for organizational change.

Finally, when employees perceive organizational support, especially recognize the communication and feedback model, they will support organizational change (Self et al., 2007; Williams & Gibson, 1990). Several studies have pointed out how organizational support, such as employee involvement and open communications during change, can reduce resistance (Ferlie et al., 2005; Spicer & Fleming, 2007). The results of this study further show that Readiness for Change mediates the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and Resistance to Change. It means that if employees perceive organizational support and also have adequate readiness for organizational change, the employees' Resistance to Change will be reduced significantly.

4.1. Practical implications

Employee support is considered a necessary condition for successful organizational change (Piderit, 2000; Stanley et al., 2005). In the organizational change process, employees often resist change behavior. Relevant management skills and a good system can effectively reduce Resistance to Change. We will put forward some suggestions below.

Firstly, this study confirmed that Readiness for Change has a considerable impetus. We suggest that companies should consider how to enhance employees' Readiness for Change (Ferlie et al., 2005). When employees have the clear and correct understanding of the purpose and content of changes, they will build positive attitude toward conveyance of changes. Furthermore, if employees consider that changes are beneficial, they will lower the sense of exclusion and enhance the intention of change. This encourages innovation and creates an environment that has a positive effect on the promotion of organizational change. Furthermore, managers should incorporate the concept of organizational change into employees' daily lives, so that employees can translate it into personal values. This should also be rewarded so that employees are always ready to participate in organizational change. In this way, when a company needs to change, employee resistance will be reduced.

This study also demonstrates that Positive Psychological Capital helps to improve Readiness for Change. Positive Psychological Capital can also improve employee job satisfaction, improve the staff attitudes, and reduce absenteeism (Luthans et al., 2006). Therefore, we suggest that companies set Positive Psychological Capital as an indicator of how well the company is functioning. These values will gradually become part of the corporate culture in people's minds. In practice, Positive Psychological Capital can be combined with recruitment, selection and training. For example, a company should recruit self-confidence individuals with the ability to set goals, attain experience and recover from failure. Indicators such as an optimistic attitude could also be included in personality tests, or uncovered in interviews or test situations, to understand a candidate's Positive Psychological Capital. Organizations should nurture Positive Psychological Capital and use training courses to upgrade their employees' Positive Psychological Capital. Managers should promote the goal enhancing employee's hope. They should also be authorized to increase employee participation, raise staff's sense of their own competence and resilience, and develop optimism among subordinates at work.

Finally, this study has shown that Perceived Organisational Support enhances Positive Psychological Capital and Readiness for Change and, indirectly, reduces employee resistance to change. In addition, high Perceived Organisational Support can improve employees' organizational commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Therefore, we believe that Perceived Organisational Support relates to how employees feel company values reflect their personal goals, values, welfare, opinion, contributions and experience. Enterprises are implementing “work-life benefits” to help employees achieve a work-life balance (Casper & Buffardi, 2004). Therefore, this study suggests that companies introduce similar programs to understand the needs of employees, and thereby enhance Perceived Organisational Support.

4.2. Limitations and suggestions

Although our findings provide strong support to theoretical framework, there still certain limitations in this study. This study adopts cross-sectional study to investigate the causal relationship of employees' psychological status in organizational change. A longitudinal research design is suggested to explore the psychological transition in change processes for future studies. Moreover, the majority of our samples are Taiwanese consumer electronics manufacturing' employees in new industrialized economics may limit the generalization. Further research can sample the developed economics and different industries, such as service and financial industry. Finally, although we adopted organizational support theory and conservation of resources theory as a basic framework to explain how employees' psychological perceptions and readiness affect their resistance in organizational change process. Other alternative theories may be worth to clarify this research framework. Thus, based on alternative theoretical perspectives, we encourage researchers to consider other contextual factors or moderators may affect the employees' psychological transfer and reactions to organizational change.

Conflict of interest

All contributing authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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