ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

When employees' become change agents: Unfolding the mechanism promoting the change supportive behavior

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Abstract. *Purpose*. Organizational change does not always have just negative repercussions but also have positive implications. Drawing on job demands-resources (JD-R) model, this study aims to examine the effects of empowering leadership on employees' change supportive behavior through job crafting behavior, a relationship that is moderated by hope. *Study design*. Data was collected from bank staff of one of the leading banks in Pakistan that is going through major techno-structural change by cross-sectional means. We distributed 342 questionnaires and collected 211 in return; the final sample size was 203. In corresponding sample, 84% of the respondents were male; about 47% of them found in age between 26–35 years old, while 34% had experience of 5–10 years comprising the highest bracket. The questionnaire comprised of multi-dimensional facets of empowering leadership and job crafting, and one-dimensional aspect of hope and change supportive behavior. PLS-SEM approach was opted to make inferences and estimations of the proposed model. *Findings*. Consistent with our expectations, the result shows that empowering leadership positively predicts employees' change supportive behavior. It also reveals that the relationship between empowering leadership and change supportive behavior is mediated by job crafting. Furthermore, hope moderates the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting. *Value of the results*. The study offers fresh theoretical, empirical, and practical insights into the existing body of change literature. It contributes to the research on organizational change by addressing multiple perspectives in a single study by simultaneously examining the person and context factors and activation phenomenon to unfold one's behavioral support for change.

Keywords: empowering leadership, job crafting, hope, change supportive behavior, organizational change.

Introduction

Large-scale change has often been viewed as central to organizational performance and a critical factor that drives organizational growth and sustainability. Unfortunately, past research reveals that

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only one out of three change initiatives are successful (Beer, Nohria, 2000; Grover, 1999). Even the recent figures have not been showing any significant improvement with regards to successful implementation to change (Jansson, 2013; Jarrel, 2017; Vakola, Petrou, 2018). While change has been taken as a strategically imperative choice for organizations, it is also crucial to note that employees are the determinants of ultimate success of such initiatives (Fugate, Prussia, Kinicki, 2012). Employees' lack of support to change often considered as a reason for the failure of change initiatives (Haffar, Al-Karaghouli, Irani, Djebarni, Gbadamosi, 2019; Stouten, Rousseau, De Cremer, 2018). It is therefore has been a dominant focus in organizational change research particularly how employees react and behaviorally demonstrate the organizational change (Fugate, Soenen, 2018; Mehboob, Othman, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Oreg, Bartunek, Lee, 2018; Oreg, Vakola, Armenakis, 2011). Behavioral support to change refers to the extent to which change recipients are actively involved in change related activities and embrace it with its true sense (Herscovitch, Meyer, 2002; Kim, Hornung, Rousseau, 2011).

In view of the significance, organizations have started realizing that they should provide employees with the necessary conditions and context to encourage and promote change supportive behaviors. Empowering leadership in that sense provides such context whereby it increases the degree of motivation among followers by delegating authority, responsibility and autonomy in their work roles (Zhang, Bartol, 2010), encourages to take proactive actions (Jung, Kang, Choi, 2020), and involves them in change driven processes (Fachrunnisa, Siswanti, El Qadri, Harjito, 2019; Jung et al., 2020; Li, Liu, Han, Zhang, 2016). However, the afore-cited studies pointed out that empowering leadership alone is not sufficient to increase employees' positive orientation towards change. There must be certain mechanisms that are needed to be explored and examined which directly or indirectly inculcates one's positive response to change.

Keeping in view the process perspective to change, the study contributes to the literature on organizational change as follows. First, prior research examining leadership role and its influence on individuals' reactions to change, mainly focuses on the particular leadership styles such as authentic leadership (Bakari, Hunjra, Jaros, Khoso, 2018; Bakari, Hunjra, Niazi, 2017), transformational (Faupel, Süß, 2019; Harb, Sidani, 2019), transactional (Khan, Busari, Abdullah, Mughal, 2018) , visionary (Saher, 2018; Saher, Ayub, 2020), and charismatic leadership (Griffith et al., 2015; Men, Yue, Liu, 2020). The role of empowering leadership and its impact on followers' reaction toward change particularly in study's context and the conceptual mechanism has being least regarded (Fachrunnisa et al., 2019; Jung et al., 2020; Li et al., 2016). Although previous studies have examined the impact of leadership behavior on change-related outcomes as highlighted above, however afore-stated studies have largely emphasized leaders' behaviors that push individuals to involve in change-oriented behaviors. How leaders provide contexts that enable them to take initiatives and gain autonomy with regards to organizational change is still a less explored avenue of research that needs further attention.

Second, while examining individuals' reactions to change, the researchers pointed out that past studies pertaining to employees' behavioral reactions to change have been preoccupied with the valence aspect, the degree to which subsequent reactions are positive or negative, literally discounted their level of activation extent to which their reaction to change is active or passive (Oreg et al., 2018). They accentuated; change recipients' reactions should be examined and contemplated at valence as well as their level of activation. This study therefore addresses this call of advancement in research outside valence reaction to change by incorporating the activation propensity. Wherein the study proposes job crafting as one's bottom-up approach to job (re)design to improve our understanding about the activation phenomenon in response to change initiative (Bruning, Campion, 2018; Mäkikangas, 2018). Job crafting found instrumental in providing employees with opportunity to approach, incorporate and make necessary adjustments into their job, tasks, demands and

relationships via self-initiatives, particularly in face of organizational change (Petrou, Demerouti, Schaufeli, 2015, 2018; Vakola, Petrou, 2018; van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, 2014). Drawing on JD-R theory, job crafting is kind of proactive behaviors whereby employees make changes to the level of their job demands and resources to gain a better person-job fit during the emerging situations (Tims, Bakker, Derks, 2014).

Third, prior studies on organizational change have not yet fully explored the role of individual differences with regards to employees' reaction to change (as highlighted by: Fugate, Soenen, 2018; Oreg, Vakola, Armenakis, 2011, 2018; Rafferty et al., 2013; Walk, Handy, 2018). According to J. A. LePine with colleagues individual differences accounted for variance in ways they respond to stressful events (LePine, Podsakoff, LePine, 2005). In view of the significance, previous research has also revealed that individual differences such as personal resources can buffer the negative outcomes imposed by the high job demands (Kang, Jang, 2019; Kimura, Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, 2019; Yavas, Babakus, Karatepe, 2013). Given that the JD-R model provides sound theoretical foundation to examine the interaction patterns between the personal and contextual factors (Schaufeli, Taris, 2014), personal resources such as hope has been recognized as an essential resource that characterizes individuals' perceptions of and reactions to the working context and wellbeing (Alarcon, Bowling, Khazon, 2013). People with high hope hold beliefs regarding the extent to which they persevere towards goals and when needed likely to redirect their path to those goals to succeed (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Peterson, 2010). Highly hopeful individuals generally invest more effort into goal accomplishments, high in risk-taking, and act proactively while performing their work tasks (Yu, Li, Tsai, Wang, 2019), which have positive impact on performance, engagement, commitment, job satisfaction, and creativity (Bouckenooghe, De Clercq, Raja, 2019; Yu et al., 2019). Taken this into account, this study assumes hope as a moderator in the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

Empowering leadership and effects on change supportive behavior

It has been evident in prior literature that employees are more committed to change when leaders demonstrate participatory oriented style of leadership, which helps them to develop a strong mutual relationship with leaders that ultimately leads them to higher level of motivation and work autonomy (Fachrunnisa et al., 2019). Empowering leadership aims to foster employees self-confidence, development, autonomy and information sharing (Wang, De Pater, Yi, Zhang, Yang, 2020). Unlike other leadership approaches that mainly focus on influencing followers, empowering leadership attributes to delegate that influence to others, motivating them to enthusiastically engage at work and address task related issues autonomously (Sharma, Kirkman, 2015). Thus it has been noted that individuals work under the influence of empowering leadership develop more autonomy than those who work under transactional, transformational or directive style of leadership (Sims, Manz, 1996).

Leader's empowering style means that he / she is capable to act as an agent of change and can transform the organization towards its desire end (Zhang, Bartol, 2010). Prime function of a leader is to play role as a change agent during the times of organizational change by motivating individuals to behave in accordance with the organizational compliance to change to achieve long term success (Newman, Schwarz, Cooper, Sendjaya, 2017). Thus leader's confidence in his followers' capabilities is a source of motivation for them to build a sense of responsibilities, which in turn, encourages them to increase their commitment towards change (Li et al., 2016). Previous studies have also endorsed this view whereby they found a significantly positive influence of empowering leadership in promoting employees support to change (Fachrunnisa et al., 2019; Jung et al., 2020).

As through empowering leadership the work autonomy is delegated to employees, allowing them to perform job with due diligence and confidence and make their job more meaningful (Zhang, Bartol, 2010). Consequent upon, it makes them feel a sense of control over the tasks they need to perform and enthusiastically involve in the change implementation process. Hence the study proposes a positive impact of leadership on employees' change supportive behavior. Based on the afore-stated reasoning and empirical evidence the study hypothesizes that

H1: Empowering leadership is positively related to individuals' change supportive behavior.

Job crafting as explanatory mechanism to inculcate change supportive behavior

A. Wrzesniewski and J. E. Dutton defined job crafting as "physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work and the action employees take to shape, mold, and redefine their jobs" (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, 2001, p. 179). They further stated that job crafting is a kind of one's self-initiated behaviors that he or she utilizes to (re)appraise the task, change their identity at work and make it more meaningful to improve their fit with the job which in turn leads to greater satisfaction and improved performance. Parallel to that, M. Tims with colleagues conceptualized job crafting as the "changes that employees may make to balance their job demands and job resources with their personal abilities and needs" (Tims et al., 2012, p. 174). According to them, employees craft their job by regulating the extent of the job demands and resources accordingly to their needs. They referred job crafting as individuals self-initiated acts that are inclined to increase 'structural resources' (i.e. looking for task variety, developing capabilities and learning new things), 'social resources' (i.e. asking for supervisory and peer feedback), 'challenging job demands' (i.e. asking for additional tasks and responsibilities), and decreasing hindering job demands (i.e. by avoiding the difficult tasks). When employees optimize their job in such way, they create a person-job fit, which has a positive influence on their wellbeing and performance (Bakker, 2017; Hakanen, Peeters, Schaufeli, 2018; Tims et al., 2014; Wingerden van, Bakker, Derks, 2017).

Since empowering leaders provide employees the necessary resources, support, legitimate reasons and autonomy, thereby it is suggested to be a center of influence on followers' crafting actions (Kim, Beehr, 2017). Because of its emphasis on power sharing, motivation and autonomy in all, empowering leadership has been identified to be a strong driver in fostering employees crafting behaviors (Audenaert et al., 2020; Kim, Beehr, 2017; 2018; 2020). Empowering leaders give their followers the latitude and autonomy to decide by their own to perform tasks, the support needed to take charge on additional responsibilities effectively, thereby encourage self-development (Thun, Bakker, 2018; Zhang, Bartol, 2010). They inspire them to lead the tasks by themselves and induce self-leadership skills to contribute substantively to the organization (Zhang, Bartol, 2010). Previous studies have shown that increased autonomy has positive impact employees' personal initiatives and proactive behaviors (Hartog den, Belschak, 2012; Foss, Minbaeva, Pedersen, Reinholt, 2009), which leads to employees' customization practices at work (Leana, Appelbaum, Shevchuk, 2009). Moreover, discretion at work provides individuals the opportunities to try new ideas while performing the job because it gives them freedom and self-determination of what and how they perform the requisite tasks; a condition that represents both challenge demands and job resources in the JDR theory (Kim, Beehr, 2017; Tims et al., 2012).

In view of the arguments, empowering leadership is therefore reported as a strong predictor of job crafting behavior whereby it facilitates employees' to increase the extent of their repertoire of job resources that help them to stay engaged with their job (Kim, Beehr, 2017; 2020). In addition, several studies have attempted to understand and examine the role of job crafting as a mediator between the identified antecedents and organizational (job) outcomes. Especially, after inclusion of job crafting mechanism to the JD-R theorem (Tims, Bakker, 2010), which proposed job crafting as an integral component in shape of motivational (increasing structural, social resources and challenging demands)

and strain process (decreasing hindering demands) (Akkermans, Tims, 2017). The corresponding studies indicated job crafting significantly mediated the relationship to facilitate employees' positive job outcomes (e.g.: Cenciotti, Alessandri, Borgogni, 2017; Matsuo, 2019; Tims et al., 2014).

Past empirical studies have also showed job crafting as a useful tactic in face of an organizational change (Petrou et al., 2015; 2018; Walk, Handy, 2018; Wang, Demerouti, Blanc, Lu, 2018). By experience meaning (Berg, Dutton, Wrzesniewski, 2013), and by anticipating challenges (Ghitulescu, 2013), job crafters better deal with the change and can find their place in a new situation (Petrou et al., 2018). It helps employees to effectively respond to the uncertainty shocks imposed by the unexpected and major organizational changes (Kira, Balkin, San, 2012). For example, the study by P. Petrou with colleagues found job crafting as an effective strategy through which employees react to the change communicated by their higher-ups (Petrou et al., 2018). They also found that through self-initiated crafting tactics, job crafters may reshape the content and description of their jobs to deal more effectively with the change.

Although several studies have attempted to examine the mediating role of job crafting whereby empowering leadership has identified as an antecedent to the subsequent outcomes, however, its role in response to change oriented employees' reactions, behavioral support for change has literally been overlooked. In view of the significance and potential avenues to explore more regarding the proposed setting, the study hence hypothesizes that

H2: Job crafting mediates the positive relationship between empowering leadership and individuals' change supportive behavior.

Moderating role of hope

Hope refers to "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 287). C. R. Snyder argued that agency thinking (will-power) is reciprocally associated with pathway thinking (way-power), which reflects one's ability to take viable routes to reach their desired end or goals. It is one's ability to adopt specific pathways to accomplish a task or goal (Avey, Wernsing, Luthans, 2008). Agency thinking "takes on special significance when people encounter impediments. During such blockages, agency helps people to channel the requisite motivation to the best alternative pathway" (Snyder, 2002, p. 251). Hope, therefore, underpins individuals' attitudes and behaviors in their social life and workplace (Kenny, Walsh-Blair, Blustein, Bempechat, Seltzer, 2010), and plays a significant role in influencing their level of commitment, job performance, career growth and work engagement (Bouckenooghe et al., 2019; Kang, Jang, 2019; Lin, Kao, Chen, Lu, 2016).

Align with the importance, the study employed JD-R theory to explain the moderating role of hope on the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting behaviors. According to the JD-R model (Bakker, Demerouti, 2007), personal or job resources mitigate the negative impact of high job demands by enhancing the belief that employees have adequate abilities to deal with the increasing job demands successfully. In turn, this study proposes that individuals high at hope are more capable of seeking alternative ways to overcome obstacles and are motivated to exercise the most viable approach (Karatepe, 2014). Since hopeful people are goal-directed and proactively use alternative means to accomplish tasks and reach their goals (Paterson, Luthans, Jeung, 2014), they feel psychologically stronger and energetic to develop attitudes that promote learning (Nawaz, Abid, Arya, Bhatti, Farooqi, 2020). According to A. M. Carton, hope enhances one's job engagement because emotional energy enriches the psychological meaningfulness of the goal to pursue, which fosters job engagement (Carton, 2018). On the other side, employees with a low degree of hope cultivate a negative emotional state, leading them to avert their efforts and energy from task-based motivation to negative feelings such as "I'm not doing very well" (Snyder, 2002). It reduces one's work engagement and leads them to low task performance (Ozyilmaz, 2020).

In this vein, the study argues that one's higher level of hope may likely to motivate individuals to increase their repertoire of job crafting by increasing structural, social job resources, and challenging job demands as a suitable strategy to manage the adverse implications imposed in shape of organizational change. In that sense, the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting may strengthen further. The association may become more assertive if employees possess a high state of hope resources. Hence, we propose that

H3: Hope moderates the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting so that the positive relationship will be stronger for individuals high on hope than those with low hope.

Methodology

The data were collected from a leading banking staff in Pakistan, that has been going through major changes in its technology infrastructure and shifted his core banking system into a latest version of banking operations and solutions called AMBIT. The data used in this study were collected through a questionnaire distributed among banking staff of 25 pooled branches of the bank located across Pakistan. We distributed 342 questionnaires and collected 211 in return, constituting the response rate of 62%. After removing cases that were deemed either incomplete or invalid, the final sample size was 203. In corresponding sample, 84% of the respondents were male; about 47% of them found in age between 26–35 years old; while 34% had experience of 5–10 years comprising the highest bracket.

Measures

The questionnaire comprised of multi-dimensional facets of empowering leadership and job crafting, and one-dimensional aspect of hope and change supportive behavior.

Empowering leadership was measured using 12 items scale developed by X. Zhang and K. M. Bartol (2010). It includes four sub-dimensions; meaningfulness of work (e.g., "My supervisor helps me understand the importance of my work to the overall effectiveness of the bank"), participation in decision making (e.g., "My supervisor solicits my opinion on decisions that may affect me"), confidence in high performance (e.g., "My supervisor expresses confidence in my ability to perform at a high level"), and autonomy (e.g., "My supervisor allows me to do my job my way") rated on a 5-points Likert-scale ranged from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The scale's composite Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.92.

Job crafting was assessed with the "Job crafting scale" (JCS) developed by M. Tims with colleagues (2012). The measure consisted of three subscales i.e. increasing structural job resources, increasing social job resources and increasing challenging job demand as shown in Table 1. The JCS contained 15 items, five items each of 'increasing structural job resources', 'increasing social job resources' and 'increasing challenging job demands' subscales. Each item measured on 5-points frequency scale ranging from "1" = "never" to "5" = "very often". The reliability statistics for all three subscales were reported above the minimum acceptance level of α = 0.70 (Tims et al., 2012). Sample items are "I try to learn new things at work", "I ask my manager to coach me", and "I try to make my work more challenging by examining the underlying relationships between aspects of my job".

Hope was measured using a six-item scale developed by C. R. Snyder with colleagues (1996). Sample items include, "At present, I am energetically pursuing my work goals." The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86.

Change supportive behavior was measured using three items scale developed by T. G. Kim with colleagues (2011). The sample item is "I have discussed the issues with co-workers regarding the change initiative". The Cronbach's coefficient of the scale was = 0.85. A 5-points scale from '1 = not at all to 5 = to a very great extent' was used for each item.

Results

The first step in assessing the PLS-SEM results involves evaluating the measurement model. If the reflective measurement models meet all the pre-requisite criteria, researchers then can move ahead for the structural model assessment (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, Ringle, 2019; Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, 2016). Assessment of reflective measurement models in PLS-SEM includes composite reliability to evaluate internal consistency of the measures, indicator's reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) to establish convergent validity. The preliminary criterion to be assessed in reflective measurement model is internal consistency of the measuring constructs. Cronbach's a value of 0.70 or above considered as acceptable level for internal consistency as suggested by scholars (Hair et al., 2019; Hair Jr et al., 2016; Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchell, Gudergan, 2020). The composite reliability results indicated that the values of all measures were found above the threshold level of 0.70 (See Table 1).
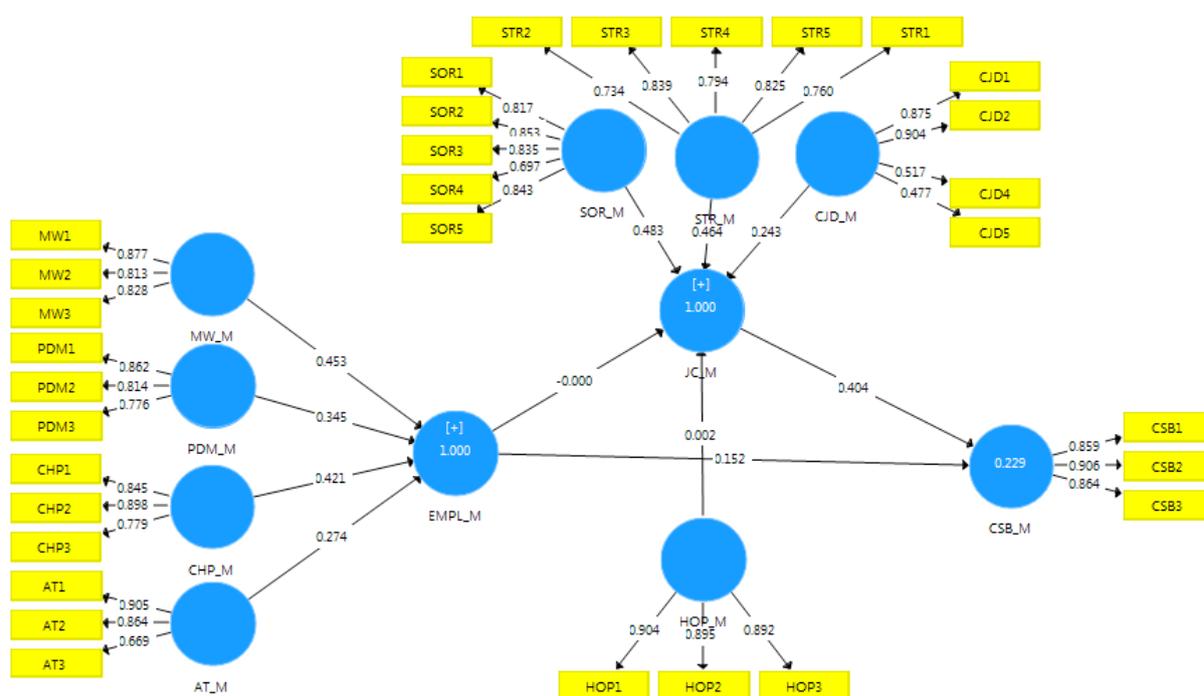

Figure 1. Measurement model

Table 1. Measurement model: item loadings, convergent validity and composite reliability of reflective constructs

Variables	Reflective constructs	Items	Loadings	Composite reliability	AVE
Empowering leadership	Meaningfulness of work	MW1	.877	.878	.705
		MW2	.813		
		MW3	.828		
	Participation in decision making	PDM1	.862	.858	.669
		PDM2	.814		
		PDM3	.776		
	Confidence in high performance	CHP1	.845	.880	.710
		CHP2	.898		
		CHP3	.779		
	Autonomy	AT1	.905	.858	.671
		AT2	.864		
		AT3	.669		

Job crafting	Increasing structural resources	STR1	.760	.893	.626
		STR2	.734		
		STR3	.839		
		STR4	.794		
		STR5	.825		
	Increasing social resources	SOR1	.817	.905	.658
		SOR2	.853		
		SOR3	.835		
		SOR4	.697		
		SOR5	.843		
	Increasing challenging job demands	CJD1	.875	.800	.520
		CJD2	.904		
		CJD4	.517		
		CJD5	.477		
Hope	Hope	HOP1	.904	.915	.805
		HOP2	.895		
		HOP3	.892		
Change supportive behavior	Change supportive behavior	CSB1	.859	.891	.768
		CSB2	.906		
		CSB3	.864		

Likewise, convergent validity of reflective constructs measured through (1) the outer loadings of indicators (≥ 0.70) and (2) the average variance extracted (AVE) (≥ 0.50). The corresponding values to establish convergent validity of reflective construct is found within acceptable range. Although, the outer loadings of CJD3, CJD4, CJD5 were found below par, however, after removing CJD3, the convergent validity has been established. According to J. F. Hair, researchers should keep those items whose indicator loading is as less as up to 0.40, if indicators inclusion support the overall reliability and validity values (Hair et al., 2016). Taking this suggestion, we kept CJD4, CJD5 to continue with the measurement model (see Table 1; Figure 1). Furthermore, the Fornell — Larcker criterion was used to assess the discriminant validity of the reflective measurement constructs, the result indicated that the measuring constructs are distinct from each other as shown in Table 2.

In addition, sub-dimensions of empowering leadership (i.e., AT and PDM) failed to significantly account for an adequate weight into their associated higher order construct (see Figure 2). However, their outer loadings found significant and thereby allow us to keep and continue with the model as suggested by J. F. Hair with colleagues (2016).

Table 2. Discriminant validity: Fornell — Larcker criterion

Variables	AT	CHP	CJD	CSB	HOP	MW	PDM	SOR	STR
AT	.82								
CHP	.31	.84							
CJD	.35	.36	.72						
CSB	.14	.28	.31	.88					
HOP	.08	.23	.25	.33	.90				
MW	.18	.27	.28	.24	.23	.84			
PDM	.03	.19	.23	.07	.07	.46	.82		
SOR	.08	.28	.41	.42	.43	.13	.04	.81	
STR	.12	.29	.46	.38	.37	.20	.08	.65	.79

Note: AT = Autonomy; CHP = Confidence in High Performance; CJD = Challenging Job Demands; CSB = Change Supportive Behavior; HOP = Hope; MW = Meaningfulness of Work; PDM = Participation in Decision Making; SOR = Social Resources; STR = Structural Resources.
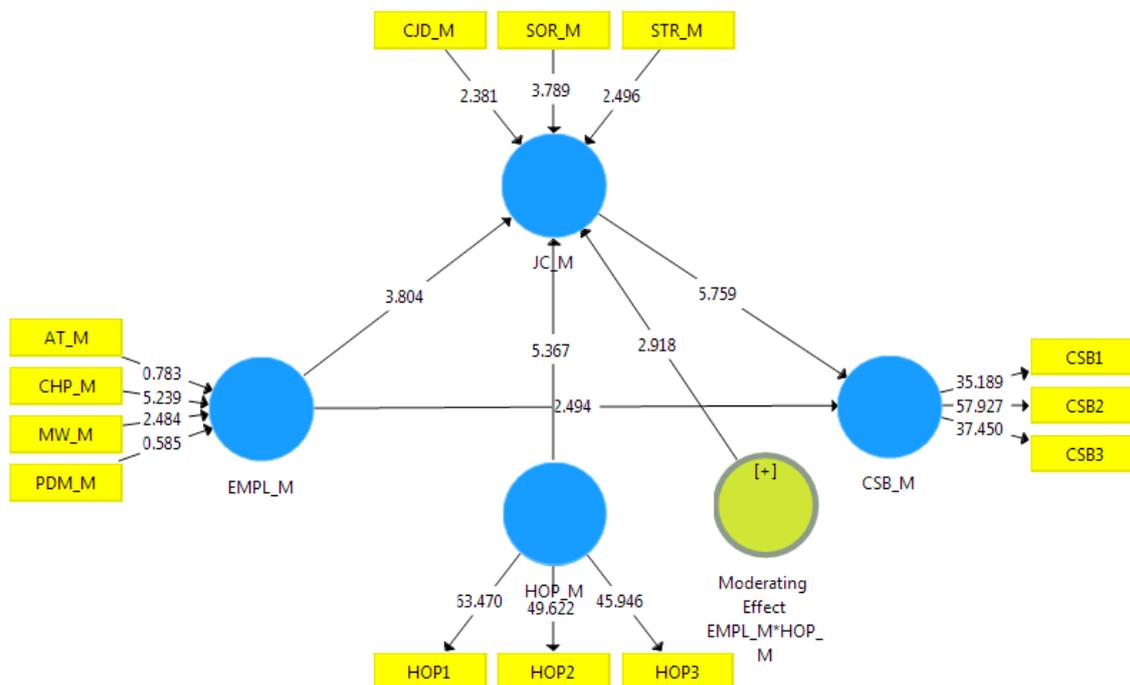
Figure 2. Structural model: Hypothesis testing

Table 3 provides the summary of means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlation of the proposed constructs. As expected and hypothesized the majority of the statistics found in line with our main model and accordingly in the direction as predicted. These results make us confident that the directionality of our proposed hypothesis is appropriate.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlation among latent constructs

No	Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1	EMPL	3.24	.61	1		
2	JC	3.50	.59	.32**	1	
3	HOP	3.48	.98	.15*	.45**	1
4	CSB	3.61	.87	.28**	.44**	.31*

Note: * — *p* < 0.05; ** — *p* < 0.01

Table 4 and Figure 2 show the structural model analysis. The results show that the relationship between empowerment leadership and change supportive behavior (EMPL –> CSB: *β* = 0.18; *p* < .05); job crafting as a mediator between empowering leadership and change supportive behavior (EMPL –> JC –> CSB: *β* = 0.11; *p* < .001) and moderating influence of hope on the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting EMPL * HOP –> JC; *β* = 0.25; *p* < .01; see Figure 3 for moderation graph), all found significant and consistent with the hypothesis *H1*, *H2* and *H3*.

Table 4. Structural model: test for relevance and significance of hypothesized paths

	Hypothesis	Hypothesized relationships	*β*	*t* statistics	*p*-values	Decision
H1		EMPL –> CSB	.182	2.493**	.013	Supported
H2		EMPL –> JC –> CSB	.109	3.179***	.000	Supported
H3		EMPL * HOP –> JC	.246	2.918**	.003	Supported

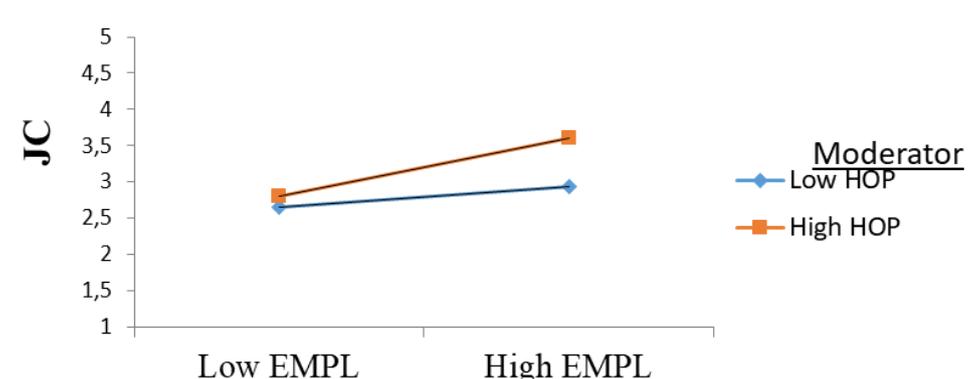**Note**: ** — *p* < 0.01; *** — *p* < 0.001

Figure 3. Moderation graph: Moderating effect of hope on the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to examine the role of empowering leadership as antecedent to bring about one's change supportive behavior and identifying the mechanisms through which empowering leadership translates into change supportive behavior. Specifically, the study posited the effect of empowering leadership on job crafting that facilitates the process to develop change supportive orientation in form of change supportive behavior among individuals. Our results extend previous theory and research on change supportive behavior and validated the paths empowering leadership, job crafting and hope as positive and lead to one's behavioral support to change. Drawing on JD-R, the study captures the change-specific context and individual differences factors to increase our understanding of employee's behavioral response to change. By establishing moderated-mediated mechanism, the findings of study highlight the reinforcement role that person and context factors play in connection to one's reaction to change (Fugate, Soenen, 2018; Oreg et al., 2018, 2011; Walk, Handy, 2018). First, our findings imply that work environment enriched with empowering leadership practices can be more responsive and appealing for individuals to pose change supportive behavior.

Second, job crafting captures more variance in explaining one's behavioral support to change. To be involved in these efforts could be more demanding for employees to sustain the implications of change. This diffusion of empowering leadership to organizational outcomes through approach taxonomy of job crafting extensively portrays by the JD-R's motivational dictum. A. Mäkikangas entitled such job crafters as 'active' who usually strive to increase their repertoire of job resources and challenging job demands under the stressful circumstances (Mäkikangas, 2018). As a result, such practices are likely to provide employees the opportunity for growth to be exploited. Because for them, openness to changing situation and embrace new experience is self-enhancing (Petrou et al., 2018) and individuals in response may likely consider job redesign strategy to enhance themselves and improve their performance. In brief, findings unveil that the empowering leadership practices are prone to unlock the 'enhancement' or active segment of job crafting and lead to positive outcomes in shape of change supportive behavior. The findings thereby are in line with the evidences of past research examining job crafting as an influential mechanism in face of organizational change (Petrou et al., 2015; Vakola, Petrou, 2018; Walk, Handy, 2018; Wang et al., 2018).

Third, consistent with the JD-R theory, the result found in favor of our moderation hypothesis. The study hypothesized that the relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting is contingent on individual differences concerning their degree of hope. Specifically, results suggest that

a high level of hope can strengthen the positive relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting. For individuals high in hope, the positive impact stimulated by their positive appraisal of empowering leadership becomes more salient in that regard. The finding indicates that employees' level of hope affects how employees' respond to leaders' empowering practices. According to JD-R theory, every working context encompasses diverse and unique demands and resources (Bakker, Demerouti, 2018), and result shows that hope is a unique personal resource which influences the ways empowering leaders can mobilize structural / social job resources and deal with the challenging job demands encountered during the times of organizational change. Taking this into account, moderating role of hope proposes a customized understanding of the work setting, as it indicates that leadership style needs to be interacted with individuals' personal resources to empower them to effectively utilize job crafting as a strategy to incorporate change successfully.

Furthermore, moderation results are somehow consistent with the assumptions postulated in conservation of resources theory (COR) which ascertains the preservation and attainment of resources as a prime human motivation to achieve the desired ends (Hobfoll, 2002). Resources are valuable to employees, who strives to acquire and keep them, even giving up or using some resources to gain or keep others (Hobfoll, 1989). This resource investment phenomenon has been termed as gain spiral in COR theory, wherein positive reciprocal association occur between positively oriented individual states (Hobfoll, Shirom, 2001). In that means of resource investment, the resources move together in 'resource caravans' and can be utilized to gain or build other resources (gain spirals). In light of COR (gain spiral), hope can function as a source of personal resource or positive individual state upon which the employees accrue further resources through job crafting (i.e. increasing structural, social and challenge resources). Putting differently, hope resource accumulated further resources through resource gain strategy in form of job crafting. Consequently, moderating effects of hope on subsequent positive gain spirals as predicted in hypothesis thereby further strengthen the examined relationship between empowering leadership and job crafting to substantiate its relevance. It is therefore, advocating the fact that organizations should have multiple mix of resources to effectively manage the high job demands (Hobfoll, 2011; Hobfoll 2014).

The study in all, contributed to the existing body of literature on organizational change by bringing together the diverse mechanism to better understand the complexity of change. It has adequately incorporated the avenues of research on organizational change by simultaneously examining both person and context factors and activation phenomenon to unfold behavioral support for change. Furthermore, the result also revealed an adequate level of CSB (Mean = 3.61) demonstrated by the banking staff. The support for change has found obvious in response to the technology infrastructure up-gradation (i.e. AMBIT) by the MCB. Consequently, since its implementation, the bank has experienced enormous growth both in terms of financial and non-financial performances. For instance, according to the bank's 2018 annual report, the bank has added over three million customers with an average compound annual growth rate of 10.93%. Deposits and market share have been twice as higher as it was in 2013 (MCB, 2018). It suggests that the subsequent change initiative (i.e. technology infrastructure up-gradation via AMBIT) has made successful implications and thus literally in agreement with the studies arguing change success depends on employees' manifestation of support towards change (Bakari et al., 2017; Oreg et al., 2018, 2011; Rafferty, Minbashian, 2019).

Practical implications

The findings also suggest practical implications in context of the study. Our results show the effectiveness and significance of empowering leadership in cultivating behavioral support for change. It discovered that employees' change supportive behavior is significantly linked to empowering

leadership. Therefore, it is the responsibility of banks' top managers to purposefully try to encourage employees' involvement in decision-making and show confidence in their abilities to make their job more meaningful and congenial. It may also enable employees' to be more optimistic about themselves because of such behavior, which will ultimately lead them to promote their support for change. Hence, top officials should capitalize on the benefits of building an empowering climate conducive to cultivate change across all organizational levels.

In addition, the finding in relation to the intervening role of job crafting between empowering leadership and change supportive behavior also offers valuable practical implications for top management. The result suggests that if managers adopt and allow empowering leadership to flourish, they will more likely enable bank staff to adjust their activities, interactions, and abilities in ways that best satisfy their needs at work. Consistent with, managers need to provide more support and space for their staff so they could redesign their job resources and demands by their own to make it more motivating, appealing, and meaningful. Job crafting thus in case, offers employees the impetus to reinvest and translate them into new work responsibilities, in shape of behavioral support for change.

Conclusion

The study has empirically validated the effects of empowering leadership on subsequent change supportive behaviors; underpinned through the JD-R model. The study in particular explains the possible effect of context (i.e. empowering leadership) and person factor (i.e. hope) on employees' behavioral activation and reaction to change via job crafting. Empowering leadership along with hope likely help to improve individuals' motivational state; thereby leads to desirable work behaviors. Our theoretical assimilation provides micro-foundations and dynamics during organizational change to ensure effective change management practices all over.

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Когда сотрудники становятся агентами изменений: развертывание механизма, способствующего поведению, поддерживающему организационные изменения

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Аннотация. *Цель*. Организационные изменения не всегда имеют только отрицательные последствия, но также имеют и положительные последствия. Опираясь на модель рабочих требований и ресурсов (*job-demands — resources, JD-R*), это исследование направлено на изучение влияния лидерства, наделяющего полномочиями, на поведения сотрудников, поддерживающего изменения, путём настройки работы (*job krafting*) и отношения, регулируемые надеждой. *Дизайн исследования*. Данные были получены с помощью кроссекционного метода от банковских служащих одного из ведущих банков Пакистана, который претерпевает серьезные структурно-технические изменения. Мы распространили 342 анкеты и получили обратно 211; окончательный размер выборки составил 203 респондента. В конечной выборке 84% респондентов были мужчинами; около 47% из них были в возрасте от 26 до 35 лет, а 34% имели опыт работы от 5 до 10 лет, занимая высшие посты. Анкета состояла из многомерных шкал лидерства, расширяющего возможности (*empowering leadership*) и настройки работы (*job crafting*), а также одномерных шкал надежды (*hope*) и поведения, поддерживающего изменения (*change supportive behavior*). Моделирование структурным уравнением методом частичных наименьших квадратов (*partial least squares path modeling, PLS-SEM*) было выбрано для получения выводов и оценок предлагаемой модели. *Выводы*. В соответствии с нашими ожиданиями, результат показывает, что лидерство, расширяющее права и возможности последователей, положительно влияет на поведение сотрудников, поддерживающее организационные изменения. Показано также, что эта взаимосвязь опосредована настройкой работы. Кроме того, надежда смягчает отношения между лидерством, наделяющим полномочиями, и настройкой работы. *Ценность результатов*. Исследование предлагает новый теоретический, эмпирический и практический взгляд на существующую литературу об организационных изменениях. Он вносит свой вклад в исследование организационных изменений, рассматривая несколько точек зрения в одном исследовании, одновременно исследуя личностные и контекстуальные факторы, а также феномен активации, чтобы раскрыть поведенческую поддержку организационных изменений.

Ключевые слова: лидерство, наделяющее полномочиями (расширяющее возможности); настройка работы; надежда; поведение, поддерживающее изменения; организационные изменения.