



Locus of control and the three components of commitment to change

Jingqiu Chen, Lei Wang *

Department of Psychology, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China

Received 24 March 2006; received in revised form 5 July 2006; accepted 13 July 2006

Available online 17 October 2006

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of locus of control on psychological reactions to change. It examines the relationship between locus of control and the three components of commitment to a change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) that have been found to exhibit different behavioral implications. A total of 215 Chinese customs service staff participated in the present study. The results show that locus of control can significantly predict participants' commitment to a specific change. In particular, the relationship between locus of control and the three different components of commitment to change are differentiative: participants with more internal locus of control were more likely to have high affective and normative commitment to change, whereas participants with more external locus of control were more likely to have high continuance commitment to change. The implications for theoretical research and organizational practice are also discussed.

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Psychological reaction to change; Commitment to change; Locus of control

1. Introduction

As organizations change more frequently, understanding and predicting employees' psychological reactions to change are becoming more critical factors in terms of change management. This is

* Corresponding author. Tel./fax: +86 10 62757551.

E-mail address: leiwang@pku.edu.cn (L. Wang).

the case because psychological reactions to a specific change influence employees' behavioral tendency toward the change (i.e., support or resistance to the change) and are key issues in successfully implementing change (Jiang, Muhanna, & Klein, 2000; Klein, Conn, & Sorra, 2001; Klein & Sorra, 1996). Therefore, psychological reaction to change has become an important topic in organizational change literature.

There are two main areas of focus in the literature on psychological reactions to change: One is to identify and explore the possible psychological reactions when facing change. Examples of such reactions include the following: attitude toward change (Dunham, Grube, Gardner, Cummings, & Pierce, 1989), openness to change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), coping with change (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999), and readiness to change (Cunningham et al., 2002). In particular, a new insight is found in Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) model that specifically distinguishes three components of commitment to a specific change, which provides a new framework for further theoretical and empirical study on the psychological reactions to a change. The second focus is to investigate the individual differences that may influence psychological reactions to change. Such individual differences may include the following: locus of control (Dunham et al., 1989; Judge et al., 1999; Lau & Woodman, 1995; Oreg, 2003), self-esteem (Judge et al., 1999; Oreg, 2003; Wanberg & Banas, 2000), tolerance for ambiguity (Dunham et al., 1989; Judge et al., 1999; Oreg, 2003), optimism (Wanberg & Banas, 2000) and openness to experience (Judge et al., 1999; Oreg, 2003). It is noteworthy that locus of control (LOC) has drawn much attention in uncovering the relationship between individual differences and psychological reactions to a change (Dunham et al., 1989; Judge et al., 1999; Lau & Woodman, 1995; Oreg, 2003) for its uniqueness addressing personal control over environment.

To date no study has investigated the relationship between LOC and commitment to a specific change. It is an important issue, given that both of the two psychological constructs are crucial for understanding an individual's reactions to change. Commitment to a change is understood to account for employees' psychological reactions to a specific change on the basis of a three-component model distinguishing affective, continuance, and normative commitment to change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). This distinction would help reveal the diversification of commitment to a change as well as the complexity of psychological reactions to a given change. Furthermore, LOC captures one of the most important individual characters underlying the psychological reactions to a change by measuring personal beliefs of behavioral control that is useful for coping with the change.

In the present study we explore the role of LOC in predicting different aspects of commitment to a change. Through clarifying how the individual differences in LOC relate to the different components of commitment to a change, not only are we able to determine whether those with internal LOC (internals) commit better than those with external LOC (externals) with regard to a specific change, we also reveal how internals commit to a change differently from externals. Such findings contribute to the literature of psychological reactions to change and extend both the theoretical scope and practical foundation of managing changes.

1.1. Locus of control

Rotter (1966) initially proposed the concept of LOC, which refers to an individual's perception of his or her ability to exercise control over the environment. Internals believe that they have con-

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات