

Employee commitment in times of change: management journal flashcard



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Employee Commitment in Times of Change: Assessing the Importance of Attitudes Toward Organizational Change† Steven M.

Elias* Department of Psychology, Auburn University Montgomery, Montgomery, AL Organizations are dynamic and changing entities. Variables associated with organizational change have been shown to serve as mediators of several individual difference variable/workrelated outcome relationships. This study examines three potential antecedents of 258 police officers' attitudes toward organizational change (ATOC), and whether ATOC mediates the relationships between these antecedents and affective organizational commitment (AOC). At the time of data collection, the officers' police department was restructuring its organizational design. Structural equation modeling indicates the growth need strength/AOC relationship is fully mediated, whereas the focus of control/AOC and internal work motivation/AOC relationships are partially mediated by ATOC. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: attitudes toward change; organizational change; organizational commitment The body of literature dedicated to the understanding of organizational change is impressive, and given that organizations continue to make adjustments and modifications at amazing rates, we are sure to see much more research in this area. Noteworthy is the fact that until recently much of the research focusing on issues relevant to organizational change has focused on organizational-level concerns rather than individual-level concerns (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, 1 The author gratefully acknowledges the thoughtful comments of Russell Cropanzano and the manuscript's

anonymous reviewers. *Corresponding Author: Tel. : 334-244-3349; Fax: 334-244-3826 E-mail:

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All rights reserved. Journal of Management OnlineFirst, published on October 26, 2007 as doi: 10. 1177/0149206307308910 Copyright 2007 by Southern Management Association. Welbourne, 1999; Vakola, Tsaousis, & Nikolaou, 2003; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Indeed, of the four articles dedicated to organizational change that have appeared in the Journal of Management's Yearly Review series (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Pasmore & Fagans, 1992; Sashkin & Burke, 1987; Woodman, 1989), each has placed somewhat greater emphasis on macro-, rather than microlevel, issues. Although it is true that researchers have made advances in the understanding of microlevel issues, there is still much to be learned.

For example, though we have gained some insight into how organizational change affects organizational commitment, we are still lacking in information regarding how these variables may function together (Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006). However, because organizational change serves as an antecedent of organizational commitment, and commitment is important to organizational functioning, further research in this area is warranted (Coleman, Irving, & Cooper, 1999). Of great importance is that organizational change strains not only the organization as a whole but also individual employees within the organization (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). In fact, if an organization is to successfully implement change, a change strategy must be

developed that takes the employees' psychological processes into account. A failure to take such processes into account may very well result in the change initiative failing (Deloitte & Touche, 2005).

Furthermore, implementing a change initiative without attending to such processes can result in employees experiencing stress and cynicism, each of which has the potential to reduce organizational commitment, job satisfaction, trust in the organization, and motivation (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997; Rush, Schoel, & Barnard, 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). At this point, the key question becomes, "What psychological processes should be taken into account to determine if an employee will successfully cope with organizational change? Although this list is far from exhaustive, Kouzes and Posner (2002) indicated successful change requires employees to be intrinsically motivated, able to see change as a learning opportunity, and feel as though they have control over the change process. A review of the psychological and organizational behavior literature points out that (a) intrinsic motivation can be thought of as internal work motivation, (b) the ability to see change as a learning opportunity can be thought of as growth need strength, and (c) having control over the change process can be thought of as an internal locus of control. With this in mind, these individual difference variables should be of importance to how employees cope with organizational change.

In a related line of research, Wanberg and Banas (2000) obtained partial support for their conceptual model that individual difference variables (e. g. , personal resilience) affect one's openness toward organizational change, which in turn affects work-related outcomes (e. g.

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, job satisfaction and intention to quit). The purpose of the current study is to extend the work of Wanberg and Banas by examining whether attitudes toward organizational change mediate the relationships that exist between the psychological variables mentioned above (i. e. , growth need strength, locus of control, and internal work motivation) and affective organizational commitment.

The focus of this study is the Madison, Wisconsin, Police Department (MPD). In general, the police profession sees minor changes on a somewhat regular basis (Metcalf & Dick, 2000); however, at the time the data for the current study was collected, the MPD was about to undergo change on a large scale. Specifically, the department's organizational design was 2 Journal of Management / Month XXXX being modified so as to implement a more community- and problem-oriented police department that would emphasize quality of services provided, quality of life in the community, and quality of life within the MPD. The main goal of implementing this Quality-Productivity Project was to change the MPD management style so as to provide better services to the public (Wyckoff & Skogan, 1994b).

In essence, the change addressed in the current study can be operationally defined as proactive, department-wide organizational development that is meant to occur over several years rather than indefinitely. As such, focusing on the MPD provided the opportunity to study organizational change within the context of an organization that was, in fact, experiencing a large amount of change. Theory and Hypotheses Attitudes Toward Organizational Change Attitude toward organizational change is defined as an employee's overall

positive or negative evaluative judgment of a change initiative implemented
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by his or her organization (Lines, 2005). Employees' attitudes toward change are a key component to whether an organization's change efforts are either successful or fail.

When employees possess a strong, positive attitude toward change, they are likely to behave in focused, persistent, and effortful ways that support and facilitate the change initiative being implemented. However, when employees possess a strong, negative attitude toward change, they are more likely to resist, oppose, scorn, thwart, and attempt to sabotage the change initiative (Lines, 2005). It is not enough for managers to simply overcome employee resistance to change. Rather, successful organizational change depends on managers generating employee support and enthusiasm for the proposed change initiative (Piderit, 2000). Porras and Robertson (1992) indicated behavioral change at the individual employee level is essential to organizational change, whereas Antoni (2004: 198) reported, "one has to change the beliefs of the organizational members, which shape their behaviour, in order to support sustainable organizational change."

Organizational Commitment Organizational commitment is difficult to define, and there is little consensus among the definitions found in the commitment literature.

However, Meyer and Allen (1991) put forward a three-component model of commitment that has received much empirical support (see Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002, for a review). Specifically, this model comprises affective commitment (one's emotional attachment to his or her organization), continuance commitment (being cognizant of the costs

associated with leaving one's organization), and normative commitment
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(feeling obligated to remain with an organization). In terms of remaining with an organization, affective commitment can be thought of as wanting to stay, continuance commitment can be thought of as needing to stay, and normative commitment can be thought of as feeling though one ought to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Pertinent to the current study is the belief that commitment is an important criterion variable in assessing the ways in which organizational change affects the organization–employee relationship (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). Elias / Attitudes Toward Organizational Change 3 The current study focuses on affective commitment because it is a psychological and individual-level variable that primarily hinges on the fulfillment of personal needs (e.

g. , growth need strength), as opposed to normative and continuance commitment, each of which relies to some extent on factors external to the individual (e. g. , social norms and job market quality; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Furthermore, affective commitment tends to correlate strongly and consistently with organizational-relevant and employee-relevant outcomes, whereas the relationships that exist between such outcomes and normative and continuance commitment tend to be inconsistent and not as strong (Mathieu, & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al. , 2002). It is for these reasons that other investigators (e. g. , Chen, Goddard, & Casper, 2004) have also focused their research on affective commitment, rather than all three forms of commitment. In fact, according to Eby, Freeman, Rush, and Lance (1999), of the more than 500 studies published on organizational commitment between the mid-1970s and late 1990s, the majority focused on affective organizational commitment.

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Growth Need Strength An understanding of psychological needs, such as growth need strength, is important because such an understanding allows for predictions to be made about the consequences of environmental forces (e. g. , organizational change) on psychological well-being. When such needs are satisfied, psychological health and satisfaction ensue.

However, when such needs are thwarted, the results will likely include negative consequences (Deci & Moller, 2005). Based on this, one can conclude that whether or not an employee's needs are being met at the workplace will have an impact on numerous organizational and psychological variables. Growth need strength, a key component of the job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), is a personality variable that affects the extent to which an employee has a strong need for personal growth and development within the workplace. It is believed that strong growth needs are essential if an employee is to be motivated to complete complex, challenging jobs (Graen, Scandura, & Graen, 1986).

According to Houkes, Janssen, de Jong, and Nijhuis (2001: 261), " Individuals with a high level of GNS should respond eagerly to the opportunities provided by enriched work, whereas individuals scoring low on GNS may not value these opportunities or may even consider them as threatening. With this in mind, one could envision how an individual with weak growth needs would have negative attitudes toward organizational change because such change would require development, growth, and effort expenditure that go beyond the typical call of duty. In fact, this contention is bolstered by research demonstrating an inverse relationship between resistance to

organizational change and growth need strength (Fok, Hartman, Patti, & Razek, 1999). Specifically, Fok et al.

reported that when organizations attempt to introduce and implement total quality management programs, employees low in growth need strength are resistant to such implementation. With regard to affective organizational commitment, people with a high need for growth should be committed to their jobs, if the jobs provide them opportunities to develop. However, because employees with low growth needs are not as concerned with professional development, they are not as likely to be committed to their places of employment, when such places require change and development from their employees. As alluded to above, 4 Journal of Management / Month XXXX such individuals may be not only disinterested in organizational change but also may find such change to be aversive (Houkes et al. , 2001), thus decreasing their sense of affective organizational commitment. Indeed, empirical research does indicate a relationship exists between need satisfaction and organizational commitment.

When summarizing this relationship, Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982: 31) reported, “ It would appear that commitment to the organization can be bolstered to the extent that employees see the organization as a source of need satisfaction. Hypothesis 1: Growth need strength will serve as an antecedent of attitudes toward organizational change. Hypothesis 2: Attitudes toward organizational change will mediate the growth need strength/affective organizational commitment relationship. Locus of Control Locus of control, an important core self-evaluation trait (see Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003), refers to whether individuals believe they have <https://assignbuster.com/employee-commitment-in-times-of-change-management-journal-flashcard/>

control over their environment and outcomes (internal locus) or whether they believe events are due more to luck and fate than their own control (external locus; Rotter, 1966). Relevant to the current research are the findings that an internal locus of control is associated with organizational commitment in general (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998) and affective organizational commitment in particular (Coleman et al. , 1999).

Furthermore, an internal locus of control has been linked to positive attitudes toward organizational change, assuming the change is for the better (Lau & Woodman, 1995). When examining the issue of control in the workplace, Judge et al. 1998) reported that locus of control has direct and indirect effects on job satisfaction. That there are direct and indirect effects stipulates there are mediating variables that come between the locus of control/jobs satisfaction relationship. Based on the mediational findings of Judge et al. , as well as the belief that locus of control serves as an antecedent of attitudes toward change, it is believed that attitudes toward organizational change will mediate the locus of control/affective organizational commitment relationship.

Hypothesis 3: Locus of control will serve as an antecedent of attitudes toward organizational change. Hypothesis 4: Attitudes toward organizational change will mediate the locus of control/affective commitment relationship.

Internal Work Motivation According to Eccles (2005), when individuals are internally motivated, they engage in activities for their own sake and because they are interested in the activity itself. Contrarily, when individuals are externally motivated, they engage in activities for instrumental purposes (e.

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g. , obtaining a pay check). When focusing on the workplace, an individual's internal work motivation refers to the extent that he or she is internally or externally motivated to perform his or her occupation. Employees who are intrinsically motivated tend to enjoy jobs that allow for the setting of personal goals and the development of personal skills, whereas extrinsically motivated employees tend to avoid jobs that require a great deal of involvement, uncertainty, and knowledge acquisition (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994).

Ryan and Deci (2000) reported that when an individual is internally motivated to perform a task, he or she will seek out new experiences and set new goals for himself or herself that are relevant to that task. Such experiences, and the ability to set new goals, will lead to an employee experiencing a rewarding sense of intrinsic satisfaction (Houkes et al. , 2001). Based on these findings, it is believed that when an individual is intrinsically motivated, he or she will possess positive attitudes toward organizational change because organizational change, assuming the change is for the better, will likely allow for new experiences and goals. In addition, his or her affective organizational commitment should benefit because of his or her place of work allowing for new experiences that would be considered rewarding.

Consistent with this belief, Eby et al. (1999) indicated that internal work motivation is a key component to the development of affective organizational commitment, and Houkes et al. (2001) obtained significant negative correlations between internal work motivation and turnover intention. Although, Eby et al. were able to demonstrate a direct effect of <https://assignbuster.com/employee-commitment-in-times-of-change-management-journal-flashcard/>

internal work motivation on affective commitment, they did not examine potential mediators (e. .

, attitudes toward organizational change) that may be a part of the relationship. The current study extends the work of Eby et al. by including attitudes toward organizational change as a mediator variable for the internal work motivation/affective commitment relationship. However, because of a lack of prior research demonstrating an empirical relationship between internal work motivation and attitudes toward organizational change, this analysis should be thought of as exploratory.

Hypothesis 5: Internal work motivation will serve as an antecedent of attitudes toward organizational change. Hypothesis 6: Attitudes toward organizational change will mediate the internal work motivation/affective commitment relationship. Assessment of Hypotheses All hypotheses are tested through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM), which will employ maximum likelihood estimates. Of importance is that SEM offers the ability to examine full and partial mediation models. This flexibility is significant because if theory and prior research are not sufficient to allow one to definitively hypothesize full or partial mediation, one should first test for complete mediation because such analysis would provide the most parsimonious mediation model (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 2006).

Nevertheless, because partial, rather than full, mediation is much more likely among psychological variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002), a priori alternative models assessing partial mediation can be examined if the full mediation model provides a poor fit to

the observed data. Joreskog (1993) referred to this analytic technique as the alternative models approach, and Hoyle and Panter (1995) stated this technique represents the strongest usage of SEM analysis, provided the alternative model is proposed a priori. 6 Journal of Management / Month XXXX The theoretical model used to assess full mediation is based on the model proposed by James and Brett (1984) and is presented in Figure 1. In this model, all of the antecedents' effect on the criterion variable is transferred through the mediator variable. If this model provides a good fit to the data, support is obtained for the presence of full mediation because of the hypothesized lack of a direct effect of the antecedent on the criterion.

The theoretical model used to assess partial mediation is based on the model presented in James et al. 's (2006) writing on mediation and is presented in Figure 2. This model is similar to the full mediation model with two exceptions. First, partial mediation is addressed through the addition of a direct effect from the antecedent to the consequence.

Second, because the model is just identified (i. e. has no degrees of freedom), though it is possible to obtain parameter estimates, it is not possible to assess the model with traditional fit indexes (Chou & Bentler, 1995). Rather, the unstandardized path coefficients, the standard errors for these coefficients, and the standard error of the indirect effect (see Holmbeck, 2002, or Sobel, 1988) are used to determine whether there is significant partial mediation.

Method Participants The data used for the current study was obtained from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research and was

originally collected by Wycoff and Skogan (1994a). Participants were 97% ($n = 258$) of the police officers employed by the Madison, Wisconsin, Police Department (MPD). The typical employee was male ($n = 209$), White ($n = 236$), age

Figure 1
Theoretical Model Used to Assess Full Mediation
Growth Need Strength
Locus of Control
Internal Work Motivation
Affective Commitment
Attitudes Toward Change
39.78 years ($SD = 7.50$), had been employed by the MPD for 15.

26 years ($SD = 8.34$), and possessed the rank of either police officer ($n = 154$) or investigator ($n = 49$). In terms of education, most employees had attempted technical school ($n = 21$), attempted college ($n = 67$), or completed a college degree ($n = 67$). Measure Growth need strength. Growth need strength was assessed via six items (see Hackman & Oldham, 1980), each of which was scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all to 5 = extremely). Respondents would rate the degree to which they would like to have each characteristic (e.

g., “stimulating and challenging work”) present in their jobs. Scale scores are obtained by calculating the average of the six responses, such that higher scores indicate stronger growth need strength. In terms of the measures reliability, Tieg, Tetrick, and Fried (1992) reported a coefficient alpha of .69. All of the measures used in the current study have their reliability coefficients reported in Table 1.

Locus of control. Locus of control was assessed via Rotter’s (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. This is a 23-item forced-choice inventory that requires respondents to select which of two statements best represents

their personal beliefs. For example, respondents would indicate whether they agree with the statement, “ Sometimes I can’t understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give” or “ There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get. ” A respondent’s score is calculated by adding up the total number of internal items endorsed, such that high scores indicate an internal locus of control. In terms of the scales reliability, Lau and Woodman (1995) reported a coefficient alpha of .

69, and Rotter (1966) reports an internal consistency coefficient of . 70. 8
Journal of Management / Month XXXX Figure 2
Theoretical Model Used to Assess Partial Mediation
Attitudes Toward Change Growth Need Strength
Internal Work Motivation Locus of Control Affective Commitment Internal
work motivation. Internal work motivation was assessed via four items, each of which was scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Sample items include, “ I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well” and “ I feel bad and unhappy when I discover I have performed poorly in my job. ” Scale scores are obtained by calculating the average of the four responses, such that higher cores indicate greater internal work motivation.

Attitudes toward organizational change. Attitudes toward organizational change was assessed via Dunham, Grube, Gardner, Cummings, and Pierce’s (1989) 18-item instrument. Respondents use a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to rate their agreement with statements such as, “ I look forward to changes at work. ” Scale scores are obtained by calculating the average of the 18 responses, such that higher scores indicate a more positive attitude toward organizational change. In <https://assignbuster.com/employee-commitment-in-times-of-change-management-journal-flashcard/>

terms of the measures reliability, Yousef (2000) reported a coefficient alpha for the scale of . 77.

Affective commitment. Affective commitment was assessed via the eight affective commitment scale items published by Meyer and Allen (1997). Respondents use a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to rate their agreement with statements such as, “ I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization. ” A respondent’s scale score is obtained by calculating the average of the eight responses, such that higher scores indicate greater affective commitment. The internal reliability of the affective commitment scale is well documented in many studies. In fact, Allen and Meyer (1996) reported more than 30 reliability coefficients obtained for the affective commitment scale with coefficients ranging from .

74 to . 89 and a median reliability of . 85. Procedure Data was collected via written surveys completed in the same order by MPD employees in small group settings, during normal working hours. All respondents were informed of their rights as participants and were assured their responses would be strictly confidential.

Furthermore, once the data for the study was collected, a debriefing session took place, during which participants were able to ask any questions or express any concerns regarding the survey, confidentiality, and/or the future use of the information obtained during the data collection session.

Participants were also given the opportunity to provide the experimenter with feedback about the questionnaire. Results Descriptive Statistics and

Preliminary Analyses An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. Consistent with the SEM literature (e.

. , Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hatcher, 1994; Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Kline, 1998), a nonsignificant goodness-of-fit χ^2 statistic, a root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) below .08, and adjunct fit indexes above .90 will serve as the criteria for a model to achieve *Elias / Attitudes Toward Organizational Change* a desirable fit to the observed data. The χ^2 difference (χ^2) will be used as a measure of a modified model's fit, where a significant χ^2 would suggest the modified model offers a better fit to the observed data. Each variable's descriptive statistics, reliability coefficients, and correlation coefficients can be seen in Table 1.

The correlation coefficients are important because they not only offer insight into the bivariate relationships among the variables of interest and allow readers to assess further models by retrieving the covariance matrix (Hoyle & Panter, 1995) but also indicate a lack of multicollinearity and common method variance (CMV). Multicollinearity is said to occur when a study's predictor variables are highly correlated. According to Vogt (2007), researchers should be concerned about multicollinearity when two predictors correlate more strongly than .70, a criterion that was not met for the current study.

CMV is a typical concern that cross-sectional, self-report survey research results in artificially inflated relationships because of shared biases influencing the measurement of the variables of interest (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, for a review). However, according to

Spector (2006: 224), if CMV is in fact a problem, “ we should find a baseline level of correlation among all variables. Furthermore, these correlations should be statistically significant, unless the CMV is so small that it is meaningless. When examining the correlations among the current study’s variables, no baseline level of correlation is observed, nor are all of the coefficients significant, indicating a lack of CMV. Test of the Proposed Model Results of the SEM analysis indicate the full mediation model offers a poor fit to the data, $\chi^2(3) = 41.04, p < .$

$.001$, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) = .94, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .26, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .78, RMSEA = .22. Based on the theoretical contentions that partial mediation is more common in social science research in general (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon et al.

, 2002) and work-related research in particular (Eby et al. , 1999), as well as the modification indexes accompanying the full mediation model, a variant of the 10 Journal of Management / Month XXXX Table 1 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Coefficients, and Correlations Among the Variables of Interest (N = 258) Variable M SD 1 2 3 4 5 1. Growth need strength 4.43 .

50 (.90) 2. Locus of control 35.20 5.56 .

12 (.79) 3. Internal work motivation 4.08 .

63 .1* .08 (.77) 4.

Attitudes toward change 3.33 .51 .41* .

20* .30* (.92) 5. Affective commitment 3.03 .71 .

17* . 28* . 37* . 32* (.

84) Note: Reliability coefficients are in parentheses. *Correlation coefficients are significant with $p < .01$. partial mediation model presented in Figure 2 was assessed. Specifically, the partial mediation model was modified in that the direct path from growth need strength to affective commitment was eliminated, indicating attitudes toward change fully mediate the growth need strength/affective commitment relationship while partially mediating all other relationships. The modified model did provide a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(1) = 1.41$, $p = .24$, GFI = 1.00, TLI = .98, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .04. Because the direct path from growth need strength to affective commitment was eliminated, this model is not just identified, and in addition to being able to obtain traditional fit indexes, it is possible to calculate the χ^2 difference statistic. Given the χ^2 difference is significant, $\chi^2(2) = 39.63$, $p < .001$, support is obtained for adding the direct paths from locus of control and internal work motivation to affective commitment.

41, $p = .24$, GFI = 1.00, TLI = .98, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .04.

00, RMSEA = .04. Because the direct path from growth need strength to affective commitment was eliminated, this model is not just identified, and in addition to being able to obtain traditional fit indexes, it is possible to calculate the χ^2 difference statistic. Given the χ^2 difference is significant, $\chi^2(2) = 39.63$, $p < .001$, support is obtained for adding the direct paths from locus of control and internal work motivation to affective commitment.

Figure 3 shows the standardized path coefficients, each of which is statistically significant ($p < .01$). Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported in that the path from growth need strength to attitudes toward organizational change is significant ($\beta = .33$, $p < .01$) and the growth need strength/affective commitment relationship is fully mediated by attitudes toward organizational change. Hypotheses 3 and 4 are supported in that the path from locus of control to attitudes toward organizational change is significant ($\beta = .33$, $p < .01$).

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15, $p < .1$) and the locus of control/affective commitment relationship is partially mediated by attitudes toward organizational change. Hypotheses 5 and 6 are supported in that the path from internal work motivation to attitudes toward organizational change is significant ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$) and the internal work motivation/affective commitment relationship is partially mediated by attitudes toward organizational change.

Elias / Attitudes Toward Organizational Change 11 Figure 3 Standardized Parameter Estimates Obtained for the Modified Model Attitudes Toward Change? Growth NeedStrength? Internal Work Motivation? .08 .12 .41 .

15 .30 .15 .33 .22 .

19 Locus of Control? Affective Commitment? *Coefficients are significant at $p < .01$. To determine if the mediated effects on affective commitment were statistically significant, the post hoc probing technique recommended by Holmbeck (2002) was performed. To perform this test, one needs four pieces of information, each of which is readily available from most statistical program outputs. First, one needs the unstandardized regression coefficient for the path going from the distal variable to the mediator.

Second, one needs the standard error for this path coefficient. Third, one needs the unstandardized regression coefficient for the path going from the mediator to the outcome variable. Last, one needs the standard error for this path coefficient. These numbers are used to calculate a ratio of indirect effect to error, which is interpreted like a z test. A significant z score is indicative of significant mediation. Preacher and Leonardelli (2006) have a

Web site that will calculate this ratio, assuming one has access to the numbers described above (see [http://www.](http://www.psych.u.edu/preacher/sobel/sobel.htm)

[psych . u. edu/preacher/sobel/sobel. htm](http://www.psych.u.edu/preacher/sobel/sobel.htm)). In each instance, the mediated effects of locus of control ($z = 2.13$, $p < .$

$.05$), growth need strength ($z = 2.80$, $p < .01$), and internal work motivation ($z = 1.98$, $p < .05$) were statistically significant. Assessing an Alternative Model Because this research is correlational rather than experimental, it is important that issues pertaining to reverse causality be taken into consideration.

Such issues arise when it is unclear as to whether one variable (e. g. , attitudes toward organizational change) causes another (e. . , affective organizational commitment), or vice versa.

To ensure the causal ordering of the variables in the model presented here is correct, the model was respecified with commitment serving as the mediating variable and attitudes toward change serving as the outcome variable. This model offered a poor fit to the data, $\chi^2(1) = 29.50$, $p < .001$, $GFI = .96$, $TLI = -.66$, $CFI = .$

$.83$, $RMSEA = .33$, offering further support to the causal ordering of the variables presented in Figure 3. Discussion Theoretical

Implications Organizations change on a fairly regular basis, and these changes have the potential to take a toll on the organization, as well as the organizations individual employees. Given the diversity found among

employees' personalities, it is not surprising that various people will respond to organizational changes in various ways.

Some individuals will welcome change because it provides them opportunities to broaden their professional horizons and fulfills their growth needs, whereas others will dread change because implementing such change may require them to exert extra effort and runs counter to their external motives for employment. When a manager sets out to implement a change initiative, prior research indicates that his or her employees' attitudes toward organizational change will play a large role in whether the initiative succeeds or fails (Lines, 2005). When working with employees who do not possess positive attitudes toward organizational change, managers must be able to bolster these beliefs and generate support for the proposed changes if they wish to avoid resistance to the 12 Journal of Management / Month XXXX hange initiative (Antoni, 2004; Porras & Robertson, 1992). Contrarily, when employees possess positive attitudes toward organizational change, they are likely to support and facilitate the implementation of the initiative (Lines, 2005). The current study empirically investigated three potential antecedents of attitudes toward organizational change, as well as, whether attitudes toward organizational change would mediate the relationships that exist between these antecedents and affective organizational commitment. The supportive results of the study indicate growth need strength, locus of control, and internal work motivation each serve as antecedents to attitudes toward organizational change.

Furthermore, attitudes toward organizational change fully mediated the growth need strength/affective commitment relationship, and partially
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mediated the locus of control/affective commitment and internal work motivation/affective commitment relationships. These mediational findings demonstrate that attitudes toward organizational change are more proximal to affective organizational commitment than are the other individual difference variables. Therefore, it is likely that many other individual difference variables, either wholly or partially, have their effect on affective commitment transmitted through attitudes toward organizational change. Perhaps more important to future research and theory development is that the current study indicates growth need strength, locus of control, and internal work motivation are important core psychological variables in relation to how one copes with organizational change. That growth need strength serves as an antecedent of attitudes toward organizational change supports prior research indicating such needs are important to one's ability to work in an enriching environment (Houkes et al. , 2001), as well as being enthusiastic about the implementation of a change initiative (Fok et al.

, 1999). Furthermore, that growth need strength has a mediated effect on affective organizational commitment would indicate that when employees with strong needs for growth are given the opportunity to develop through the implementation of a growth initiative, such an opportunity is thought to be rewarding and thus increases affective organizational commitment through enhanced attitudes toward organizational change. One caveat to this contention is that the employees must perceive the change initiative as an opportunity for growth and development, rather than an initiative that only benefits the organization. Because locus of control serves as an antecedent of attitudes toward organizational change support is garnered for

prior research indicating such control beliefs are important to whether an employee views a change initiative in either a positive or negative light (Lau & Woodman, 1995). Recall that Judge et al. (1998) obtained evidence that locus of control has direct and indirect effects on job satisfaction.

The current study extends this finding by demonstrating locus of control has direct and indirect effects on affective organizational commitment. In essence, an employee with an internal locus of control will likely have a strong sense of affective organizational commitment because of his or her control beliefs, and to a lesser extent, the impact of those control beliefs on attitudes toward organizational change. An employee with an external locus of control will likely have a weak sense of organizational commitment because of a lack of control beliefs, and to a lesser extent, the impact of those control beliefs on attitudes toward organizational change. Taken as a whole, these mediational findings allow for one to conclude that locus of control is a fairly distal variable in relation to organizational outcomes. However, it is important to note that the direct effect of locus of control on Elias / Attitudes Toward Organizational Change 13 commitment is much stronger than its mediated effect through attitudes toward change.

This finding lends credence to prior research demonstrating a direct link between locus of control and organizational commitment (Coleman et al. , 1999; Judge et al. , 1998). That internal work motivation serves as an antecedent of attitudes toward organizational change supports prior research indicating internally motivated individuals seek out new experiences and set new goals for themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Given that internally motivated individuals want to develop their skills rather than
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maintain the status quo (Houkes et al. , 2001), it is not surprising that they would possess positive attitudes toward such opportunities, with the caveat mentioned above that the change initiative must be viewed as an opportunity for growth and development.

The direct effect and indirect effect (through attitudes toward organizational change) of internal work motivation on affective organizational commitment bolsters the belief that such motivation is key to the development of affective commitment (Eby et al. , 1999) and supports the negative correlation obtained between internal work motivation and turnover intentions (Houkes et al. , 2001). However, as was the case with locus of control, the direct effect of internal work motivation on commitment is much stronger than its mediated effect through attitudes toward change. Practical Implications Given how important employees' attitudes toward organizational change are to affective organizational commitment, as well as the successful implementation of change initiatives, managers would be well served by selecting employees who possess strong, positive attitudes toward organizational change. As noted above, an employee with such an attitude toward change will work to ensure that a change initiative is successful, whereas an employee with a strong, weak attitude toward change will resist and potentially sabotage a change initiative (Line, 2005).

Furthermore, the current study attempted to shed light on the question, "What psychological processes should be taken into account in order to determine if an employee will successfully cope with organizational change?

" The results of this investigation suggest several core psychological processes managers should look for in employees, particularly if
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organizational change is expected to occur on a relatively frequent basis. Growth need strength is essential if an employee is going to be opened to the sort of development and growth that frequently accompanies organizational change. Managers should ascertain whether potential employees possess strong growth needs with the understanding that a lack of such needs will likely lead to complacency and a negative attitude toward change. As previously stated, a negative attitude toward organizational change frequently leads to resistance and decreased affective organizational commitment. Contrarily, selecting an employee who possesses a strong need for growth will increase the odds that the employee will view change initiatives in a positive light and potentially experience increased affective commitment because the opportunity for development will be considered rewarding. Spector (1982) suggested using locus of control as a selection variable based on the belief that internals are well suited to work independently, whereas externals are well suited to work under strict rules and direction.

In addition to Spector's rationale, the current research indicates locus of control would serve as an appropriate selection variable because of its 14 Journal of Management / Month XXXX strong, direct effect on affective organizational commitment. In the context of organizational change, an external locus of control has been associated with a lack of psychological hardiness when it comes to an individual believing he or she will be able to control how the change plays out. Therefore, when change is initiated, an external individual will feel powerless and experience a decrease in affective commitment because of the anxiety experienced in association with his or

her job (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Contrarily, when change is initiated, an internal individual will believe that he or she has control over the change event and will not experience the negative consequences associated with an external locus of control (Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Lau & Woodman, 1995). The current research supports these prior findings and extends them by demonstrating a mediated effect of locus of control on organizational commitment, thus bolstering the contention that locus of control can serve as an appropriate selection criterion.

Managers working in organizations that experience a fair amount of change would do well to select employees with an intrinsic or internal work motive. Research indicates internally motivated employees seek out change because it commonly allows them to develop their personal skills (Amabile et al. , 1994), leading to a sense of intrinsic satisfaction (Houkes et al. , 2001). The current research would indicate this intrinsic satisfaction leads to intrinsically motivated employees developing a strong sense of affective organizational commitment directly and through enhanced attitudes toward organizational change. With this in mind, managers may find that intrinsically motivated employees not only do well in change situations but also actually thrive in such situations.

Given that extrinsically motivated employees find jobs that require a great deal of change aversive (Amabile et al. , 1994), have decreased attitudes toward organizational change, and have decreased affective organizational commitment, managers should avoid placing such employees in positions where they will have to deal with frequent change initiatives. One caveat to these findings managers should attend to is that the direct effect of internal

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work motivation on commitment is much stronger than its mediated effect.

Limitations and Future Research Although the current study examined several personality and organizational variables, these variables were assessed in the context of a police department. As a result, there may be organizational culture and power dynamic differences between this sample and a more traditional employee sample, resulting in decreased confidence when it comes to making generalizations.

Therefore, future research might want to replicate and extend the current study in a more typical work environment with a more typical supervisor-subordinate relationship. At the time of data collection, the MPD was experiencing a specific form of organizational change, and readers should be aware that the motives behind this change might be different from those of other change initiatives. One facet of the MPD change initiative involved enhancing the quality of life within the police department. As a result, employees may have viewed this change initiative in a more positive light than they would have if a similar proposal was implemented that did not purport to benefit the employees, as well as the organization. Similarly, the change addressed in the current study revolved around the Elias / Attitudes Toward Organizational Change 15 implementation of a Quality-Productivity Project over several years.

Some organizations go through episodes of change, whereas other organizations experience change on a continuous basis (Weick & Quinn, 1999). The external validity of the model addressed in this research would be enhanced should it be replicated in organizations that experience diverse forms of change. From a statistical standpoint, though it is a common

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practice to use SEM to assess mediation, we must be careful when discussing issues of causality. Kline (2005) was clear that SEM alone does not typically warrant making causal statements. Rather, to infer causality from such analytic techniques, a researcher needs to be clear as to why a specific distal variable precedes a specific proximal variable instead of the reverse.

One technique for bolstering confidence in SEM results is to replicate the study's findings with another sample, and if possible perform a longitudinal examination of the variables of interest. Another benefit of replicating the current study with a longitudinal investigation would be to determine if attitudes toward organizational change, and its antecedents, have long-term effects on such organizational variables as absenteeism, turnover, performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and promotion. The current study did make use of a cross-sectional design, with self-report data being collected at one point in time. As such, some readers may be concerned that common method variance has inflated the relationships between the variables being investigated.

However, as mentioned above, and in accord with Spector's (2006) recommendation on the issue, the correlation matrix (see Table 1) was examined to determine if a baseline of significant correlations was obtained. Such findings were not obtained, indicating a lack of common method variance. Last, the current study utilized archival data, potentially opening the door to the argument that the data is now dated. However, when discussing methods of assessing affective and behavioral reactions to

organizational change, Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) indicated archival records are an appropriate means of investigation. References Allen, N.

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