

DOCTORAL THESIS

To take or not to take the risk? Toward a greater understanding of employees' cognitive decision process in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

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ABSTRACT

The importance of leadership style and the organizational citizenship behavior have been recognized in many research studies. However, the influence of empowering leadership on employee's change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and employees' cognitive mechanism to engage in such behavior have received little attention. Drawing on social cognitive theory, the present study explores the effects of empowering leadership on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior directly and indirectly through employees' willingness to take risk. The study also examines the boundary conditions that employees would make the decision to engage in such behavior with the effects of two moderators - regulatory focus and perceived organizational support.

A nested data model of empowering leadership, willingness to take risk, regulatory focus, perceived organizational support and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior were tested using a 3-wave sample of 173 matched dyad relationships from nine financial institutions in Hong Kong. The research model rests with individual-level as unit of analysis while controlling the variances from the teams using hierarchical linear modeling. The results show that willingness to take risk can partially mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. In addition, promotion focus, prevention focus and perceived organizational support can moderate the relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk when they are of low level while promotion focus and willingness to take risk are proved to be predictors of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Implications from the findings for future research and management practice will be discussed.

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