

## 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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*Date of Award:*  
2018

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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.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	128
LIST OF FIGURES.....	140
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>- 1 -</b>
1.1 Background of the Study.....	- 1 -
1.2 Research Objectives.....	- 8 -
1.3 Structure of this Paper.....	- 11 -
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review.....</b>	<b>- 12 -</b>
2.1 Leadership.....	- 12 -
2.1.1 Empowering Leadership.....	- 15 -
2.2 Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 19 -
2.3 Regulatory Focus.....	- 23 -
2.4 Risk Taking.....	- 29 -
2.5 Perceived Organizational Support.....	- 35 -
2.6 Research Gap.....	- 38 -
<b>Chapter 3 Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development.....</b>	<b>- 41 -</b>
3.1 Theoretical Background.....	- 41 -
3.2 Development of Conceptual Model.....	- 45 -
3.3 Hypotheses Development.....	- 46 -
3.3.1 Empowering Leadership and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 46 -
3.3.2 The Predicative Role and Mediating Role of Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 47 -
3.3.2.1 The Direct Effect of Willingness to Take Risk on Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship.....	- 47 -
3.3.2.2 The Mediating Role of Willingness to Take Risk on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship.....	- 49 -
3.3.3 The Predictive Role and Moderating Role of Regulatory Focus.....	- 51 -
3.3.3.1 The Predictive Role of Regulatory Focus on Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 51 -
3.3.3.2 The Predictive Role of Regulatory Focus on Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 54 -
3.3.3.3 The Moderating Role of Regulatory Focus on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 56 -
3.3.4 The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 59 -
<b>Chapter 4 Method.....</b>	<b>- 63 -</b>
4.1 Research Design.....	- 63 -

4.2	Sampling and Procedure.....	- 64 -
4.3	Measures.....	- 67 -
4.4	Data Analysis.....	- 75 -
4.5	Data Cleaning.....	- 75 -
4.6	Reliability Analysis.....	- 76 -
<b>Chapter 5 Results.....</b>		<b>- 77 -</b>
5.1	Analytical Strategy.....	- 77 -
5.2	Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	- 78 -
5.3	Descriptive statistics.....	- 80 -
5.4	Hypotheses Testing.....	- 81 -
5.4.1	The Direct Effect of Empowering Leadership on Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 81 -
5.4.2	The Direct Effect of Willingness to Take Risk on Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 81 -
5.4.3	The Mediating Effect of Willingness to Take Risk on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 82 -
5.4.4	The Direct Effect of Regulatory Focus on Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 83 -
5.4.5	The Direct Effect of Regulatory Focus on Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 84 -
5.4.6	Post Hoc Data Analysis - Mediating Effect of Willingness To Take Risk on the Relationship between Regulatory Focus and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....	- 84 -
5.4.7	The Moderating Effect of Regulatory Focus on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 85 -
5.4.8	The Moderating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Willingness to Take Risk.....	- 88 -
<b>Chapter 6 Discussion.....</b>		<b>- 89 -</b>
6.1	Theoretical Contributions.....	- 90 -
6.2	Practical Significance.....	- 97 -
6.3	Limitation and Future Research.....	- 100 -
<b>Chapter 7 Conclusion.....</b>		<b>- 104 -</b>
<b>References.....</b>		<b>- 106 -</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>		<b>- 128 -</b>
Table 1 - Summary of Empowering Leadership Effects on Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....		- 128 -
Table 2 - Review of Some Empirical Studies on Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior.....		- 129 -
Table 3 - Definition of Variables and Other Terminology.....		- 132 -
Table 4 – Demographic Information of Participants.....		- 133 -
Table 5 – Reliability Analysis.....		- 134 -
Table 6 – Aggregation Statistics.....		- 134 -
Table 7 - Comparison of Measurement Models for Study Variables.....		- 135 -
Table 8 - Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Variables.....		- 136 -

Table 9 – Hierarchical Linear Modelling Results on Individual-Level.....	137 -
Table 9 - Hierarchical Linear Modelling Results on Individual-Level (Continue).....	138 -
Table 10 – Summary of Hypotheses.....	139 -
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	140 -
Figure 1 – Triadic Reciprocal Casual Model of Social Cognitive Theory.....	140 -
Figure 2 – An illustration of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2000b) .....	140 -
Figure 3 - Research Model - Interactive Effects between Empowering Leadership, Regulatory Focus, Perceived Organizational Support and Willingness to Take Risk.....	141 -
Figure 4– Diagrammatic Illustration of Mediation.....	141 -
Figure 5a - The Effects of Empowering Leadership on Willingness to Take Risk at Low and High Levels of Promotion Focus.....	142 -
Figure 5b - The Effects of Empowering Leadership on Willingness to Take Risk at Low and High Levels of Prevention Focus .....	143 -
Figure 6 - The Effects of Empowering Leadership on Willingness to Take Risk at Low and High Levels of Perceived Organizational Support.....	144 -
Figure 7 – Results of the Hypothesized Model.....	145 -
<b>Appendices</b> .....	146 -
Appendix A – Summary of the Measurement Items .....	146 -
Appendix B – Sample Questionnaires.....	149 -
<b>CURRICULUM VITAE</b> .....	163 -