Revealing Relationships between Personal Resources and Coping with Organizational Change

Ozlem Senvar[1], Coskun Ozavnik[2], Bahar Sennaroglu[1]

[1]Marmara University, Department of Industrial Engineering, Istanbul – Turkey
Fahrettin Kerim Gökay Cad. 34722 Kadikoy, İstanbul – Turkey
[2]Yeditepe University, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul - Turkey
Inonu Cad. Kayisdagi Cad.No.326/A 34755 Atasehir, İstanbul – Turkey

Abstract
Organizational change consists of three factors; content, process, and context. Change recipients' characteristics with these factors provide data for employee reactions and change consequences. This study focuses on employees in terms of their dispositional traits and their coping mechanisms on coping with organizational change (COC). The study aims to examine relationships between personal resources and COC examining traits of self-esteem, optimism, perceived control, general self-efficacy and one situational factor; affective commitment and coping mechanisms. Results reveal that general self-efficacy and perceived control are significant traits on COC. Affective commitment elucidates limited role on COC. Optimism mediates the relationship between affective commitment and COC. Cognitive avoidance, cognitive redefinition and information seeking were observed as coping responses employees adapted in COC. Change agents should consider content, context and process issues in planning or responding change, but also put utmost importance in evaluating employees' self-efficacy, perceived control potential, information sharing for smooth change period.

Key Words: Coping with organizational change (COC); personal resources; coping responses; affective commitment; self-efficacy; perceived control; optimism

1. Introduction

Rapid change in external environment today is so dramatic that it leads to continual state of change for organizations in terms of strategy, technology, structure and processes. All organizations try to implement some strategies to respond external and internal forces. All initiatives asked employees to change and learn more and more capabilities to cope with change and global competition.

The world economy is transforming into a digital economy with a proliferation of cloud computing, big data and analytics, mobility and broadband connectivity, e-commerce, social media and the use of smart sensors and the Internet of Things (IoTs) with a new technological paradigm (Lu, 2021) etc. Notably, today's dominant business transformation shifts human and technical processes through digitally responding to changing business environments in adapting changes. Hence, the successful management of change is vital for any organization in order to survive in highly competitive and continuously evolving business environment (Todnem By, 2005). Notably, the digital business transformation in adaptation of processes and operations management (Reis, Amorim, Melao and Matos, 2018) requires a clear strategy and prioritization supported by financial resources, leadership and active participation of all employees in the organization for global connectivity. Managers should adapt their organizational strategy to a new digital reality. The new technology necessitates organizational change not only concentrating on one side; technology but considering also human agency and social interaction (Volkoff, Strong and Elmes, 2007).

The newness in general or "new normal" during digital transformation and improvements in adoption of artificial intelligence to some works, lately job losses from Covid 19 pandemic, global uncertainty, increased implementation of telecommuting and economic losses from all these factors add more stress factors into employees' lives leading them to feel psychologically weak. Circumstances oblige organizations to take serious measures to cope with fast adaptation for survival. However, organizations should seek support from employees involved in any change endeavors for the success of change strategies. The stand-alone change applications will not strengthen collaborative working. (Erdogan, Anumba, Bouchlaghem and Nielsen, 2014; Bonanomi, 2019).

Continuous organizational change is a prerequisite for organizations to survive and maintain their competitiveness in the market. Naturally, organizational change is a very comprehensive construct. Oreg, Vakola and Armenakis, (2011) drew a general picture for assessing organizational change. Briefly, organizational change consists of content, context and process as organizational instruments, but change recipients' characteristics was also listed as an important data in the evaluation of employees' reactions and change consequences. Most organizational change articles concentrated on content, context and process aspects of the change. Human side is much less studied (Oreg, Bartunek, Lee and Do, 2018). Many organizational change initiatives do not reach the intended consequences due to failure to warrant employees' commitment and support (Bayraktar and Jiménez, 2020). Organizations should take note that when implementing changes, they need to be aware of the ramifications on the perceived distributive justice for the employees (DiPietro, Moreo & Cain, 2020). Albrecht and Marty (2020) examined personality traits influence in terms of self-efficacy and job resources and their associations with employee engagement, affective commitment and turnover intentions considering the influence of job resources and personal resources.

This study focuses on employees' experiences in dealing with organizational change in terms of employees' dispositional traits and their coping mechanisms. In this regard, some dispositional traits as personal resources namely self-esteem, optimism, perceived control and self-efficacy for COC are examined. Moreover, the study tries to understand how COC would turn into a coping response such as whether it is appraisal focused coping, emotional focused coping or problem focused coping (Ashford, 1988; Judge, Thoresen, Pucik and Welbourne, 1999; Fugate, Prussia and Kinicki, 2012; Vardaman, et. al, 2012, Bayraktar and Jiménez, 2020). As a situational organizational factor, we included affective organizational commitment to change. Hence, inclusion of both theoretical and practical perspectives, this study acts as a guideline to identify significant dispositional coping resources on coping responses for overcoming the stress. Although there have been much more traits to analyze, we limited the construct with these general traits for simplicity.

This study aims to measure personal traits and coping mechanisms in coping with organizational change in Turkish context. To the best of our knowledge, such kind of examination has not been done in Turkey.

2. Theoretical Background

Planned change and organizational development can be listed as two perspectives on organizational change (Boonstra, 2004). Planned or market-induced change aims creating an economic value and refers to improving work processes by developing human resources with commitment to change around the value chain. On the other hand, organizational development looks for integrating needs and interest of employees with the collective interest of the organization.

While planned changes could be rapid and painful, organizational development further oversees trust and commitment and concentrates on construction of employee competencies (Beer and Nohria, 2000). Apparently it is important to get strong support from employees for a successful adaptation of change. However, organizational cultures, individual uncertainties and psychological resistance to change would contain human barriers against the change (Boonstra, 2004; Fugate et al, 2012; Oreg et al, 2011). It is obvious that change potentially involves real or perceived problems for employees. Major changes can be linked to uncertainty about upcoming rules, procedures and new norms and competencies. If they are not provided with satisfactory information or not motivated by the change, employees could not feel like

behaving properly in changing environment and psychologically react the situation (Boonstra, 2004). Change, itself, is a real stress factor as it threatens employees existing way of doing things, psychological well-being, potential job losses, transfers, change status, increased conflicts and confusion among employees and management, economic losses and further demand to acquire new competencies to meet the new job requirements (Judge et al, 1999, Ashford, 1988, Self, Armenakis and Schraeder, 2007). Unfortunately many change endeavors fail leading to negative employee outcomes (Biggane, Allen, Amis, Fugate, Steinbauer, 2016).

Lazarus (1993, p.4) emphasized stress as an individual evaluation of the person-environment relationship (external/internal) in terms of why it is threatening or noxious from what is benign and coping with stressful demands by using mind or body and a complex patterns of effects on mind referred to as the stress reaction (p. 4). Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen and Delongis (1986) drew attention to individual cognitive and behavioral efforts to cope with stressful situations. In their relational model, Lazarus and Launier (1978) proposed to consider stressors and individuals' reactions together for a better understanding of stress and concluded that individuals with strong coping resources can handle stress more effectively. Responses containing continuous interactions vary according to the environment and individuals' coping mechanisms.

Organizational change efforts stimulate employees and environmental relations creating a stress level. Employees need to respond to this new situation with their personal resources regardless how the change management is carried out. Personal resources are closely related with resiliency and play functional roles when situations put demands on people (Hobfall, Johnson, Ennis and Jackson, 2003; Oreg et al., 2018). Personal resources helping employees to cope with change is strongly related more what employees bring with them to develop their coping responses than what they do (Ashford, 1988; Smollan, R.K., 2017). Successful change efforts should combine organizational goals with employees coping responses in a harmony. This requirement naturally generates the question of what individual coping resources are crucial for overcoming the stress and reduce its negative impact during organizational change period.

Regarding these personal resources, Lau and Woodman (1995) developed a personal change schemata claiming that employees reaction toward organizational change differed and affected by this individual schemata which contained individual's mental change mapping reflecting one's change knowledge construct and its connection with various change endeavors. Following studies noticed its remarkable relationships with employees' reactions to organizational change (Okumus and Hemmington, 1998). Personal resources affect seriously this mental mapping (Judge et al, 1999) and personal resources have positive impact on adaptation to change (Avey, Wernsing and Luthans, 2008; Wanberg and Banas, 2000).

In general, coping strategies fall in two categories (Carver et al., 1989). The first model assumes that coping is situational; it changes from one case to another depending on the stressful events. It relates the coping with what subject does in a specific stressful event (Folkman and Lazarus, 1985). On the other hand, the second model assumes that coping is dispositional. It relates it to be relatively stable in time and situations because subject has already inside some coping resources.

2.2 Coping with Organizational Change (COC) and Coping Responses
Coping is closely related with the understanding of how stress influences the individuals. This connection is highly accepted by researchers (Skinner, Edge, Altman and Sherwood, 2003; Smollan, 2017; Fugate, Kinicki, Prussia, 2008), and how individuals respond it could also assist them to diminish and tolerate stress level individually and organizational wise (Ashford, 1988). Lazarus and Folkman (1980, 1984) defined it as the individuals' determined cognitive and behavioral actions as a transactional process between person and environment to overcome stressful events internally and externally. This transactional process commences with cognitive appraisal of an individual-situation encounter. The appraisal is related firstly with the effect of a stressor on individual's well-being and secondly the appraisal of the person's own capability or resources (Lazarus, 2001). Lazarus (1991) added emotions to Lazarus and Folkman model (1984) theorizing that cognitive appraisals change emotions and together they affect one's choice of coping strategies. Cacioppo and Gardner (1999) claimed that appraisals symbolize cognitive evaluations of an individual–

situation encounter while emotions concrete the personal meaning or importance of this interaction. Thus, individuals' emotional reactions are important to define their coping strategies.

Coping strategies are classified differently by researchers. Latack (1986) used control and escape oriented strategies for explanation where control coping is strongly related with action and cognitive reappraisal and added avoidance behavior to them for clarifying escape strategies. Lazarus and Folkman (1980) developed "Ways of Coping Checklist" and later further development made by Lazarus (1991, 1999). COPE scale, as dispositional coping measurement under a situational encounter, which was developed by Carver, Scheier and Weintraub, (1989), Carver and Scheier, (1994), contains 15 scales for explanation of coping styles under the classification of problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, focus on and venting of emotions, behavioral disengagement and mental disengagement. Endler and Parker (1990) developed Multidimensional Assessment of Coping where they detected three coping behaviors: task-oriented coping, emotion-oriented coping and avoidance-oriented coping.

However, it can be generally assumed that coping strategies fall into three segmentations (Lazarus, 1993, Ashford, 1988). Problem-focused coping in which individuals try to solve a problem actively by adopting cognitive and behavioral strategies to eliminate the stressor such as by learning a new competence, information gathering, seeking information or advice, decision making, problem-solving action and planning (Moos and Billings, 1982; Smollan (2017). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) claimed that problem-focused coping is especially beneficial for controllable stressors. Coping through emotional focus compasses effectively revealing emotions, applying mechanisms such as distancing, seeking emotional support, and escape-avoidance (Stanton, Dannoff-Burg and Twillman, 2000). Emotion-focused coping was claimed to produce positive outcome when stress situation was uncontrollable and unchangeable. However, some researchers proposed to avoid a sharp distinction between problem-focused and emotional-focused coping. (Connor-Smith and Flachsbart, 2007). Appraisal-focused coping in which meaning of a stressful event is re-evaluated could be either cognitive redefinition or avoidance. Ashford (1988) evaluates cognitive redefinition as a challenge or opportunity raised from organizational transition. However cognitive avoidance could be adopted as a coping mechanism since most organizational change are strategic and top down initiatives in which employees have little or no impact on its timing and implementation. Cognitive appraisals which individuals use lead to interpreting the personal meaning of the situation. (Folkman, 2010, Ashford, 1988). Some scholars claim on the other hand that emotions and appraisals are related constructs and they have synchronous reciprocal connections and they occur together (Fugate, Harrison and Kinicki, 2011, Oreg et al, 2018).

Focus of coping and method of focus are the concepts that are generally evaluated by researchers to categorize the coping responses (Moos and Holahan, 2003). Focus of coping refers how an individual approaches to a stressor in a way to solve it or escape from the problem or managing the person's emotions about the stressor. M*ethod* of coping refers to how cognitive and behavioral actions are interrelated. Billing and Moos (1982), Moos (2002), Moos and Holahan (2003) combined these methods and defined four different coping responses. Cognitive approach, behavioral approach, cognitive avoidance, and behavioral avoidance. Table 1 shows specified dimensions of coping resources.

Table 1. Underlying Dimensions of Coping Responses

Types of Coping	Approach Coping	Avoidance Coping
Cognitive	Logical Analysis Positive Reappraisal	Cognitive Avoidance Acceptance / Resignation
Behavioral	Seeking Guidance and Support Problem Solving	Seeking Alternative Rewards Emotion Discharge

Source: Moos and Halovan, 2003

These coping mechanisms contain reaction to that particular stressor accepting and attaching it to former experiences, thinking alternative acts and likely results for shaping it into something positive. Behavioral coping encompasses actions such as searching for guidance and help and taking decisions to handle the

situation instantly. Cognitive avoidance coping on the other hand includes responses directed at denying or underestimating the stressor and its consequences under the assumption that the situation is somehow uncontrollable or unchangeable.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated avoidance, minimization, positive comparisons, and cognitive reappraisals as coping responses. Avoidance refers to the inclination of staying away from the stressor simply trying to forget it. Correspondingly, distancing refers to all kind of efforts. Minimization refers to leaving behind the impact of stressor. Comparing positively and cognitive reappraisals are cognitive styles. The first one aims to evaluate the stressor with worse case stressors. The latter one is the cognitive, which is defined by Lazarus and Falkman (1984) as the change in the way an encounter is construed without changing the objective situation.

Oreg et al (2018) further propose to include the valence and activation of employees' emotions to assess behavioral responses to organizational change. They developed a framework integrating employees' responses to change and underlying core affects. They defined four behavioral responses: change acceptance, change disengagement, change resistance and change proactivity. Coping potential of employees derived from social support and perception of control play response activation role together with goal relevance of change effort. Individual and organizational goal congruence as a primary appraisal would lead to response valence. Behavioral responses to change initiatives are naturally related with coping response.

Coping with stress and its outcomes is imperative in an organization to welcome the change endeavors. Coping with change and coping responses are interrelated concepts. The way employees react to change is related with their personal resources which then lead to their specific coping styles – responses reflected in their COC. Because of this reason, COC is determined as outcome variable in this study together with coping responses. Thus, we have distinguished interrelated coping via employee COC and as a result of this coping, we tried to search what coping responses are applied in the sample.

In the research, we tested two dependent variables. COC scale measured both reactance to change and leading change (Judge et al, 1999). Secondly, we followed the classification of Ashford (1988) for measuring coping responses. We tested appraisal focused coping (AppCope) via "cognitive redefinition-CRD" and "cognitive avoidance - CA", "information seeking - IS" for problem focused coping (ProCope) and "emotional discharge -IS" for emotion-focused coping (EmoCope). Ashford (1988) claimed that employees could overcome change related stress by extenuating sentimental disturbance via affect regulation, resigned acceptance and emotional discharge.

2.2. Personal Resources (Independent variables)
Lazarus (1991) mentioned about the importance of self-esteem, coping efficacy, locus of control, both human and social capital in the establishment of coping mechanism. When a person faces a stressful situation, there uses basically three themes to cope with it as readjustment process: (a) trying to give a meaning to the situation, (b) gaining mastery back and (c) enhancing one's self-esteem. (Taylor, 1983). The cognitive adaptation theory argues that if individuals could sustain well-being when they are experiencing stressful events in their life, they have high self-esteem and they keep their optimism and keep life events under their personal control (Aspinwall and Taylor, 1992). Wanberg and Banas (2000) classified these personal resources under personal resilience heading as composite of self-esteem, optimism and perceived control. These personal resources are closely linked to willingness to change which is a key element for the successful implementation of change. Ashford (1988) and Judge et.al.' (1999) studies on this field made important contributions to state the importance of dispositional factors such as self-esteem and perceived control. These factors were negatively associated with stress level of employees and it played a positive role in coping with organizational change. Similarly contribution from Lau and Woodman (1995) for the importance of locus of control made it clear to understand the relation between openness to change and its impact on job satisfaction after change implementation in the organization. Optimist people's inclination to support change endeavors was reported by Scheier and Carver (1985). Wanberg and Banas (2000) claimed that change specific self-efficacy was related with accepting the change more easily. Specific self-efficacy

could be deemed to an employee's perceived competence to adapt with the change in a specific situation and to execute the competence despite new job demands from changing work conditions.

2.2.1. Self Esteem (SE)

Pierce et al (1989) defined self-esteem as a dispositional and global personality factor related to a holistic concept of individual competence and worthiness; in general acknowledgment of the self. Self-esteem plays a role in workplace attitudes and behaviors. Folkman et al (1986) stated that self-esteem helped employees to adapt changes positively. Moreover it was noted that self-esteem was negatively correlated with stress, anxiety and depression and prognosticate positive outcomes on employees' change efficacy (Ashford, 1988; Callan, Terry and Schweitner, 1994). All these findings reinforce the relationship between self-esteem and COC. Thus,

Hypothesis 1a: *There is a positive relationship between SE and COC.*

2.2.2. Self-efficacy (GSE)

The definition of self-efficacy refers to one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 2012, p.3). Thus, self-efficacy can be considered as a generalized ability which allows people to achieve a certain purpose by amalgamating their cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral skills. This dispositional asset helps people how to behave in different situations. Bandura (1997) states the major sources of self-efficacy as mastery experience, vicarious learning, social persuasion and overcoming emotional barriers. Adopting these factors into business activities illuminates the way to increase employees' self-efficacy.

Because of close links of self-efficacy with persistence, readiness to change, self-motivation for new jobs and development actions, individuals in high with self-efficacy can embrace change positively (Hornung and Rousseau, 2007). Self-efficacy helps coping with change in various ways. Under the situations employees find new, unforeseeable and stressy, self-efficacy is certainly notable (Schunk, 1983). Frayne and Geringer (2000) claimed that self-efficacy was positively related with increased performance (Ng and Lucianetti, 2016). The impact of self-efficacy on work engagement were reported to be salient (Schaufeli, Bakke and Solanova, 2006; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti and Schaufel. 2008) and it played a role for work quality (McDonald and Siegall, 1996). Self-efficacy as a related concept with meaning making helps individuals to use it as personal resource to cope with change (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schreurs, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2009). On the other hand, low self-efficacy has negative effect on change efforts with defensive resistance, thus and it was claimed that it led to actions against to change (Ashforth and Lee, 1990).

There are some different approaches in literature for the measurement of self-efficacy. Bandura suggested to measure change-specific self-efficacy (Ashford, 1988). Change specific self-efficacy is an individual's perceived ability to handle in change demanding workplaces (Wanberg and Banas, 2000; Fugate et al, 2012; Vardaman and et al, 2012). Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) claims on the other hand that GSE is more capable to demonstrate change specific self-efficacy across different situations and tasks referring to its predictable general characteristics of performance and its shielding role against weakening effect of negative practice. Under the results listed above, we believe self-efficacy to be an important personal resource which employees would refer to cope with the change.

Hypothesis 1b: *There is a positive relationship between general self-efficacy and COC.*

2.2.3. Optimism (OP)

Scheier and Carver (1985) defined optimism as a dispositional trait and referred to its generalized positive future expectancies. Optimist individuals are assumed to sustain subjective well-being in difficult times. Because of this characteristics, the researchers linked optimism with coping mechanisms claiming that optimists exhibit more engagement coping and individuals low in optimism display avoidance behaviors or disengagement in coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Skinner et al, 2003). Solberg, Nes and Segerstrom (2006) reported positive association of optimism with the measurement of engagement coping explaining its

cognitive restructuring and acceptance and with problem-focused coping such as planning and looking for support. Optimism is claimed to a positive regulation to life transitions (Carver, Scheier and Sgerstronm, 2010), a belief about positive future free from one' behavior (Alarcon, Bowling and Khazon, 2013) and a trait to ease the realization of desired goals (Carver and Scheier, 2005).Thus, optimism could answer both controllable and uncontrollable stressors in organizational change processes.

Carver et al (1989) also reported that pessimist individuals did not display adaptive behaviors in coping with change. Optimist individuals diverge from pessimists, as they are more capable in consistent coping mechanism and in coping reactions when dealing with life stressors. Xanthopoulou et al (2009) reported the mediation role of optimism in the relationship between job resources and work engagement. Optimism is claimed to be related reversely with disengagement coping and emotion-focused disengagement. Thus,

Hypothesis 1c: There is a positive relationship between optimism and COC.

2.2.4. *Perceived Control (PC)*
Perceived control was defined as the reliance of an individual on his/her own internal state, actions and behaviors that impress one's surrounding environment and achieve preferred end results (Wallston et al, 1987). Bandura (2001) highly mentioned about the most crucial and prevalent role of individuals' reliance, among their personal agency mechanisms, on their capacities as an execution of control toward their functioning and environmental circumstances (p.10). Explanations dealing with coping with life stressors consider perceived control as an appropriate construct because of people's fundamental need of control (Frazier, Keenan, Anders, Perera, Shallcross ad Hintz, 2011). They mentioned about their perceived control construct referring to various dimension of it. Accordingly, temporal dimension of perceived control plays a critical role in adjustment to life stressors. They stated the relationships of perceived control with (a) past control – occurrence of the event, (b) present control – current aspects of the event and (c) future control – the event happening again.

Different models are proposed as follows: Rothbaum, Weisz and Snyder (1982) posited a person's attempt to control the environment as the primary control step, and if this is not achieved, then as the secondary control step to balance one's cognition, perception and understanding. Similarly, Folkman, Schaefer and Lazarus (1979) developed a transaction model where they defined two coping mechanisms. Problem-focus approach dealt with changing stressor directly and emotion-focus approach dealt with the impact of stressor created on people. It is possible to conclude that an individual's competency to handle with stressy events depends mostly on one's control on emotions. Perceived control as a dispositional trait helps individuals to manage both the demands of the stressful events and emotional outcome raising from these events. Perceived control as a dispositional trait helps individuals to manage both the demands of the stressful events and emotional outcome raising from these events. Thus:

Hypothesis 1d: There is a positive relationship between perceived control and COC.

2.3. Affective Commitment (AC)
During the organizational change, managers should work on organizational identification. Succeeding in providing employee – organization commitment for a successful change initiative will surely augment employees' readiness to modify their behaviors (Bovey and Hede, 2001). Affective commitment is portrayed as an identification of employee who emotionally involved and attached to one's organization. Characteristics of commitment in the definition are: employees' acceptance of organizational values and beliefs on them, a strong willingness to exhibit considerable *effort* for the organization, and the strong desire to continue in the organization (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Affective commitment sticks employees to their organization so it has a critical importance for a successful change implementation (Vakola and Nikolaou, 2005). Individuals can commit themselves to both organizations and behaviors (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). When employees feel commitment to their organizations, their behaviors concentrate on the attainment of goals and implementation of policies (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Both commitment to organization and commitment to behavior are interrelated. It is

highly important to search workplace commitment because of the importance of its foundation for the conceptualization of commitment to change (Herscovitch, 1999). Affective commitment is not a dispositional trait. Depending on individualistic experiences, employees develop it or not.

This study considers AC as the only situational factor because of its relationship with dispositional factors. All organizations possess many different situational factors. Individual situational meaning is derived from how an employee makes sense and makes connections in ongoing organizational events (Biggane, et al, 2016). This meaning giving defines an employee's appraisal of the situation and one's reaction to change in this case. On the other hand, it is highly probable that employees with high level of affective commitment benefit more from the change (Fugate et al., 2011)

We expect that affective commitment of employees will help them to demonstrate more adaptive behaviors in response to organizational change. Thus, we consider affective commitment as a driving factor in organizational change in respect of employee adoptive behavior.

> **Hypothesis 2:** *There is a positive relationship between affective commitment and COC.*

Hypotheses for dependent variables representing COC
Based on the literature review regarding dependent variables representing C*OC* following hypotheses are established:

> **Hypothesis 3**: *There is a relationship between coping with organization change and employees' coping responses.*
> **Hypothesis 3a:** Appraisal focused coping (AppCope) and COC.
> **Hypothesis 3b:** Emotional focused coping (EmoCope) and COC.
> **Hypothesis 3c:** Problem focused coping (ProCope) and COC.

3. Methodology
3.1. Statistical Analyses and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)
We performed confirmatory factor analyzes for independent and dependent variables by using SPSS 25 AMOS 24.0. Maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) methods was applied. Referring to confirmatory factor analysis results, we computed Cronbach's alpha, AVE and CR values. For testing the relationship between variables we applied structural equation modeling and for further analysis for optimism mediation effect we used bootstrapping method.

3.2. Research Model
The research model is depicted in Figure 1. Despite we developed such a research model, we planned to study all possible relationships among independent and dependent variables. We searched some possible mediating effects between dispositional and situational variables for explaining coping with organizational change. See Figure 1 for the research model.
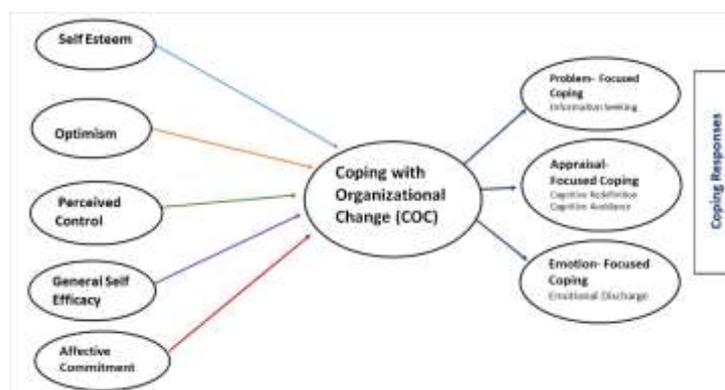

Figure 1: Research Model involving Personal Resources and Affective Commitment on Coping with Organizational Change and Coping Responses

4. Case Study

4.1. Samples, participants and procedure

Participants were employed in various private sector companies and small portion of participants are from public sectors in Turkey. They participated to individual development trainings in a private development center in Istanbul either by their own initiatives or financed by their organizations. The online questionnaire consisted of 79 questions was administered to total 2,139 people with the notification to preserve the privacy of the information provided. 305 answers out of 2,139 have been collected constituting 14.3% response rate. Because of some missing answers, 244 responses have been retained (11.4% response rate). Table 2 shows the demographics of the respondents.

Table 2. Demographics of the respondents

Profile of Respondents N=244		Count	Count N %
Gender	female	192	78.7%
	male	52	21.3%
age class	20 - 30	3	1.2%
	31 - 40	80	32.8%
	41 - 50	106	43.4%
	51 - 60	48	19.7%
	61 -	7	2.6%
working period	1 -5 years	11	4.5%
	6 -10 years	35	14.3%
	11 - 20 years	91	37.3%
	21 - 30 years	81	33.2%
	31 - years	26	10.7%
position	staff	64	26.2%
	first level manager	41	16.8%
	middle level manager	82	33.6%
	senior manager	57	23.4%
education	high school	28	11.5%
	university	155	63.5%
	master / ph.D	61	25.0%

4.2. Measures

All measures used 5-point Likert scales to measure variables ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The Self-esteem concept was measured using 10- item Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1979). (Cronbach's alpha: 0.880).

For measuring optimism, Scheier and Carver's (1985) 12-item Life Orientation Test is used. The test was developed as a psychometrically sound measure of optimism. (Cronbach's alpha: 0.838).

Perceived control's measure was 18-item Pallant's (2000) Perceived Control of Internal States Scale (PCOISS). Pallant (2000) developed this scale to measure the ability of individuals' perceptions on their internal state control and regulating their emotions, thoughts, behaviors and physical well-being. (Cronbach's alpha: 0.934).

For measuring self-efficacy, we applied 8-item Chen, Gully and Eden's General Self Efficacy (GSE) scale because of its unidimensional construct measuring body. Self-efficacy measurement generally fall into two form; specific self-efficacy and general self-efficacy in the literature. The scale of Chen, Gully and Eden

developed anticipated specific self-efficacy and moderated the impact of former performance on subsequent specific self-efficacy. (Cronbach's alpha: 0.895).

Affective commitment was measured by Allen and Meyer's (1996) affective commitment scale. (Cronbach's alpha:0.911).

Judge and Pucik developed 12 -item The COC Scale for measuring COC (Judge et al, 1999) considering reactance to change and leading the change. (Cronbach's alpha: 0.850).

Thus, for the measurement of coping responses, we used scales developed by Ashford, (1988). The 4-item Cognitive Avoidance scale (Cronbach Alpha: 0.728), 1 item Cognitive Redefinition Scale were used for measuring appraisal focused coping **(AppCope).** 3-item Emotional Discharge Scale (Cronbach Alpha : 0.847) was used for the measurement of emotion focused coping **(EmoCope).** Lastly, 2-item Information Seeking Scale (Cronbach Alpha: 0.779) was used to measure as demonstration of problem focused coping **(ProCope)**.

4.3. Statistical Analyses
4.3.1. Factor Analysis
To test the scales, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to investigate the significance of measurement models for each scale. Generally, factor loads less than 0.50 were excluded from the analysis. Table 3 depicts factor loads and p values for scales' questions.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analys

	Std.Est.	P		Std.Est.	P
COC			**AC**		
coc12	0.661		ac6	0.741	
coc11	0.764	***	ac5	0.813	***
coc10	0.662	***	ac4	0.757	***
coc9	0.491	***	ac3	0.75	***
coc7	0.614	***	ac2	0.833	***
coc6	0.476	***	ac1	0.796	***
coc5	0.659	***	**PC**		
coc2	0.658	***	pc18	0.775	
coc1	0.621	***	pc17	0.832	***
SE			pc16	0.801	***
se10	0.815		pc15	0.765	***
se9	0.789	***	pc14	0.833	***
se8	0.549	***	pc13	0.646	***
se7	0.835	***	pc12	0.747	***
se6	0.64	***	pc10	0.641	***
se5	0.691	***	pc8	0.696	***
se2	0.672	***	pc6	0.748	***
se1	0.682	***	pc5	0.618	***
GSE			pc4	0.691	***
gse8	0.591		pc2	0.622	***
gse7	0.5	***	**OP**		
gse6	0.693	***	op10	0.684	
gse5	0.781	***	op9	0.618	***
gse4	0.783	***	op8	0.705	***
gse3	0.761	***	op7	0.506	***
gse2	0.824	***	op4	0.754	***
gse1	0.724	***	op2	0.708	***
			op1	0.601	***
AppCope					
ca4	0.629				
ca2	0.829	***			
ca1	0.732	***			
Crd	-0.542	***			

*** p< 0.001 **p<0.01 * p<0.05

In COC scale, questions 6-9 remained since they were statistically significant (p<.001) despite their load factors slightly lower than 0.5.

Three item emotional discharge scale for measuring emotional focused coping could not be analyzed because of very low factor loading of question3. After elimination this question, Amos classified this scale as unidentified. However, Cronbach Alpha was calculated as .847. Problem focused coping measured with 2 items information seeking scale was also defined as unidentified with Cronbach Alpha as .779. These scales were remained in the research model to test overall model. (Unidentified warning disappeared as Amos calculated number of observed variables higher than unobserved variables).Table 4 represents individual scales' fit indices in acceptance limits.

Table 4. Factor Analyzes Model Fit Measures

Scales	X^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Coping with Organizational Change	1.507	0.969	0.983	0.046	0.0357
Self-Esteem	2.425	0.958	0.972	0.077	0.0349
General Self-Efficacy	2.743	0.956	0.974	0.085	0.0380
Optimism	1.777	0.969	0.979	0.057	0.0418
Affective Commitment	2.181	0.983	0.993	0.070	0.0203
Perceived Control	2.371	0.916	0.960	0.075	0.0408
Cognitive Avoidance	3.032	0.994	0.992	0.091	0.0225

Then, the significance of full model was checked. The model test values in confirmatory factor analysis yielded as: (p<0.05), x^2 = 2708.896 x2/df = 1.528, CFI= 0.891; RMSEA = 0.047; SRMR = 0.0672. Consequently, CFA was considered significant for the measurement model.

Convergent validity can be controlled by examining the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE). Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987) suggest CR values to be greater than 0.7 for an acceptable fit. Moreover, AVE ought to be better than 0.5 however 0.4 is also and the composite reliability to be greater than 0.6 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hayes and Preacher, 2014). Both conditions together assure the convergent validity of the construct of the research model.

In order to confirm the discriminant validity, the square root of a dimension should be greater than other latent concepts, each correlation between itself and other latent concepts. The square roots of the AVE values were given in parentheses in the table 5 to evaluate the discriminant validity. Since the values were mostly higher than all correlation values in the same column, the discriminant validity was confirmed for all variables. Table 5 represents the composite reliability coefficients.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix with reliability, CR and AVE

	MEAN	STD	COC	SE	GSE	OP	AC	PC	AppCope	ProCope	EmoCope
COC	3,74	0.55	(0.670)								
SE	3,92	0.78	.409**	(0.715)							
GSE	4,04	0.52	.682**	.552**	(0.714)						
OP	3,70	0.64	..566**	.629**	.625**	(0.654)					
AC	3,52	0.92	.270**	.221**	.269**	.227**	(0.782)				
PC	3,68	0.63	.590**	.600**	.589**	.770**	.168**	(0.728)			
AppCope	2,85	0.56	-.331**	-.127*	-.245**	-.203**	-0.085	-.248**	(0.641)		
ProCope	3,89	0.71	.284**	.161*	.229**	0.120	.187**	.135*	-.223**	(0.8000)	
EmoCope	3,65	0.76	-.128*	-0.094	-0.054	-.126	0.022	-.162*	0.027	0.081	(0.850)
Cronbach's Alpha	-	-	0.85	0.88	0.895	0.839	0.991	0.934	0.768	0.779	0.847
(CR)	-	-	0.85	0.892	0.891	0.815	0.904	0.936	0.818	0.787	0.775
(AVE)	-	-	0.449	0.511	0.510	0.428	0.612	0.530	0.412	0.640	0.730

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.3.2. Regression Analysis

We conducted a regression analysis in Amos.24 firstly to test the relationships among each variables separately. Following the results, we developed a model for explaining COC.

According to the result, we concluded that SE, OP, PC, GSE and AC were separately related with COC. In the regression analysis p values for all scales and fit indices were in acceptance limits. Very interestingly, we observed that affective commitment explained only 8.5% of variance in dependent variable. GSE had the highest level of relation as 55.5%. Similarly perceived control explained the variance of 43.6%. OP explained 44.6% of variance in dependent variable SE itself explained variance of 25.7% in dependent variable. Table 6 lists the results.

Table 6. Independent variables regression analysis

	SE → COC	OP → COC	PC → COC	GSE → COC	AC → COC
X^2 /df	1.370	1.175	1.643	2.147	1.311
GFI	0.933	0.940	0.890	0.898	0.945
CFI	0.976	0.987	0.956	0.937	0.985
RMSEA	0.039	0.027	0.051	0.069	0.036
SRMS	0.0462	0.0447	0.0499	0.0607	0.0448
	0.507	0.668	0.66	0.745	0.291
R^2	0.257	0.446	0.436	0.555	0.085

According to these results we conclude that as separate constructs all independent variables are related with coping with organizational change. Thus, hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e and hypothesis 2 are accepted.

To confirm our theoretical model empirically, all variables were evaluated together to assess their overall relations with coping with change and how this coping was reflected as coping responses on the respondents. We applied structural equation modeling. The p values for OP (0.891), SE (0,152), Emotional Focused Coping (0.223) and AC (0.102) are higher than 0, 05 confidence level. With these values, we could not satisfactorily verify the model entirely. Because of p values results we excluded optimism, self-esteem, affective commitment and emotional focused coping from the research model (Figure 2).
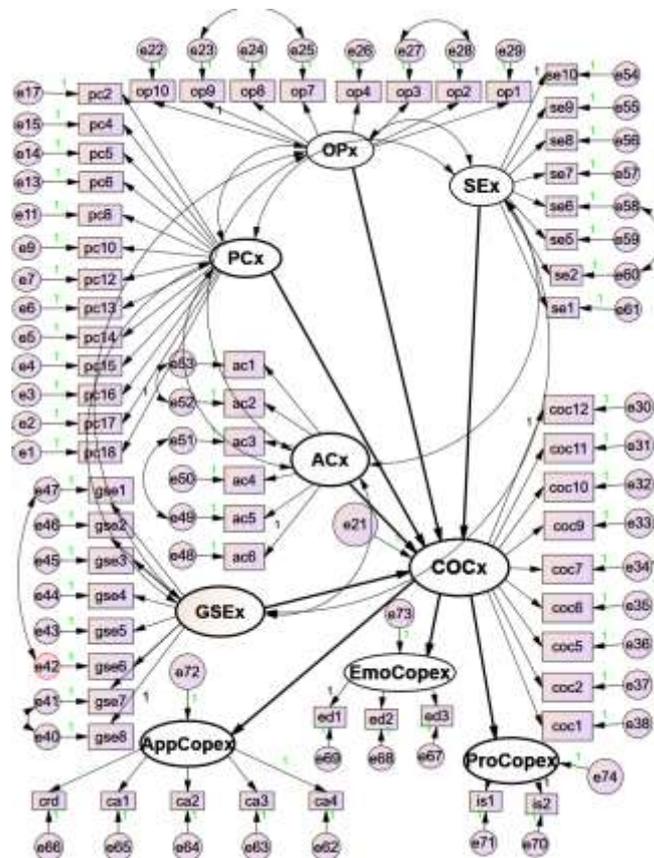
Figure 2: SEM Analysis of Research Model

The goodness of fit values of this model were within acceptable limits (X^2 = 2738.012; X^2 / df = 1.529, CFI = 0.891; RMSEA= 0.047 and SRMR = .0692).

Since we expected that excluded concepts should have a strong power to explain coping in organizational change we further searched the roles of these concepts for a possible mediation effect among the variables. Here it is worth to mention about OP mediating effect between AC and COC.

AC alone had a limited influence on coping with organizational change (p<0.01; β=0.291; R^2 =0.085). We tested the mediation effect of optimism in the relationship between affective commitment and COC with Bootstrapping method (n=5000, 95% CI). Bootstrapping method has been found to have higher power than the Sobel test (Hayes and Preacher, 2014). Mediation analysis via Bootstrap method suggests that upper and lower confidence intervals must not contain zero value for indirect effect (Hayes, 2018). The direct effect of AC on the coping with organizational change was significant (β= .301; p <0.04; X^2 = 311.445, X^2 / df = 1.730, CFI = 0.945, RMSEA = 0.055, SRMR = 0.0656). However, OP's mediation involvement between AC and COC increased the explained variance on COC from .09 to . 47. The result showed that the link between AC and COC was partially mediated by optimism (X^2 = 499.818, X^2 / df = 1.479, CFI = 0.947, RMSEA = 0.044, SRMR = 0.0658) since indirect effect; β= .172; 95% CI [.06 / .290] does not contain zero in confidence interval and COC was explained higher with OP mediation. Table 7 summarizes direct and indirect effects analysis. Figure 3 depicts the mediation relationship between AC and COC.

Table 7: OP Mediation Analysis between AC and COC

	AC → COC (direct)		AC → OP → COC (indirect)		
	β	p		β	p
AC → COC	.301	.001	AC → OP	.269	.001
COC → AppCope	-.694	.001	OP → COC	.64	.001
COC → ProCope	.361	.001	AC → COC	.13	.04
			COC → AppCope	-.711	.001
			COC → ProCope	.351	.001
R² COC	.09		R² COC	.471	
AppCope	.13		AppCope	.120	
ProCope	.482		ProCope	.51	
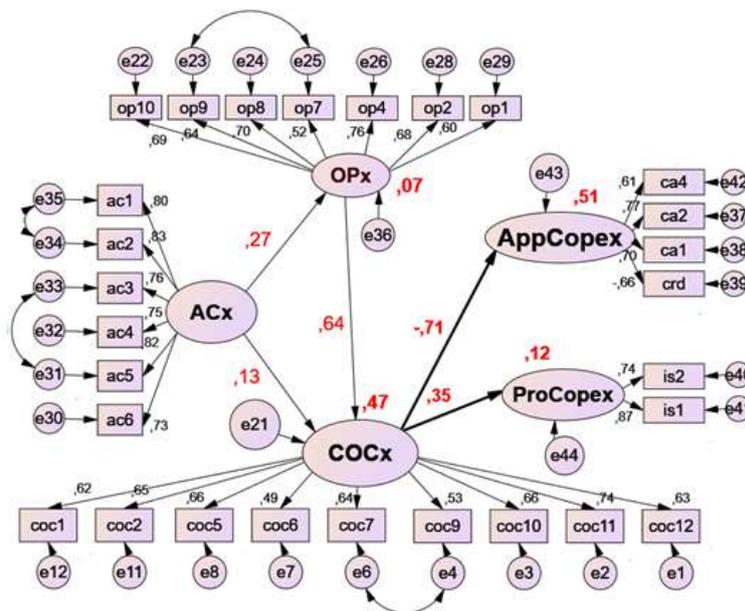
Figure 3: Mediation effect of OP on AC and COC

Although this mediation effect is important, we excluded OP and AC from the model.

The new model was established with PC, GSE, COC, AppCope and ProCope. To confirm the model, we applied structural equation modeling. The fit indices of this model were within acceptable limits; X^2 = 1028.367, X^2 / DF = 1.782, CFI = 0.909, RMSEA = 0.057, SRMR = 0.0698. (P < 0.001).

When considered hypotheses under the final model, we admit that this study did not verify the hypotheses 1a (SE and COC), 1c (OP and COC) and Hypothesis 2 (AC and COC). However, it is important to note that AC being a situational factor, it should be measured under specific cases to assess its important role in COC.

According to the final model's results, the findings support the hypothesis 1b (GSE) and 1d (PC). These concepts are regressed significantly with COC.

When we analyzed H3, R^2 for COC was 62.8%, appraisal focused coping 54% and problem focused coping 12.4%. These signal for strong explanatory power. Appraisal focused coping was assessed with cognitive avoidance and cognitive redefinition. These were completely contrasting concepts and negatively related ones. When assessed model with only cognitive avoidance total power reduces from 54% to 35%. Since cognitive redefinition was measured by one item, an explaining specific value could not be generated for it.

However it is apparent that both coping responses have been adopted by the participants. Thus, we can conclude that there is a relationship between coping with organizational change induced from personal resources namely general self-efficacy (β= 0.548 p>0.001) and perceived control (β= 0.317 p<0.001) and coping responses. Naturally, we accept the hypothesis 3. The results for this study show that appraisal focused coping (cognitive avoidance and cognitive redefinition) and problem-focused coping were highly adopted as coping responses by the participants when they faced with organizational change. However emotional focused coping was very poorly adopted and rejected according the results. Thus hypotheses 3a and 3c are accepted and Hypothesis 3b is rejected.
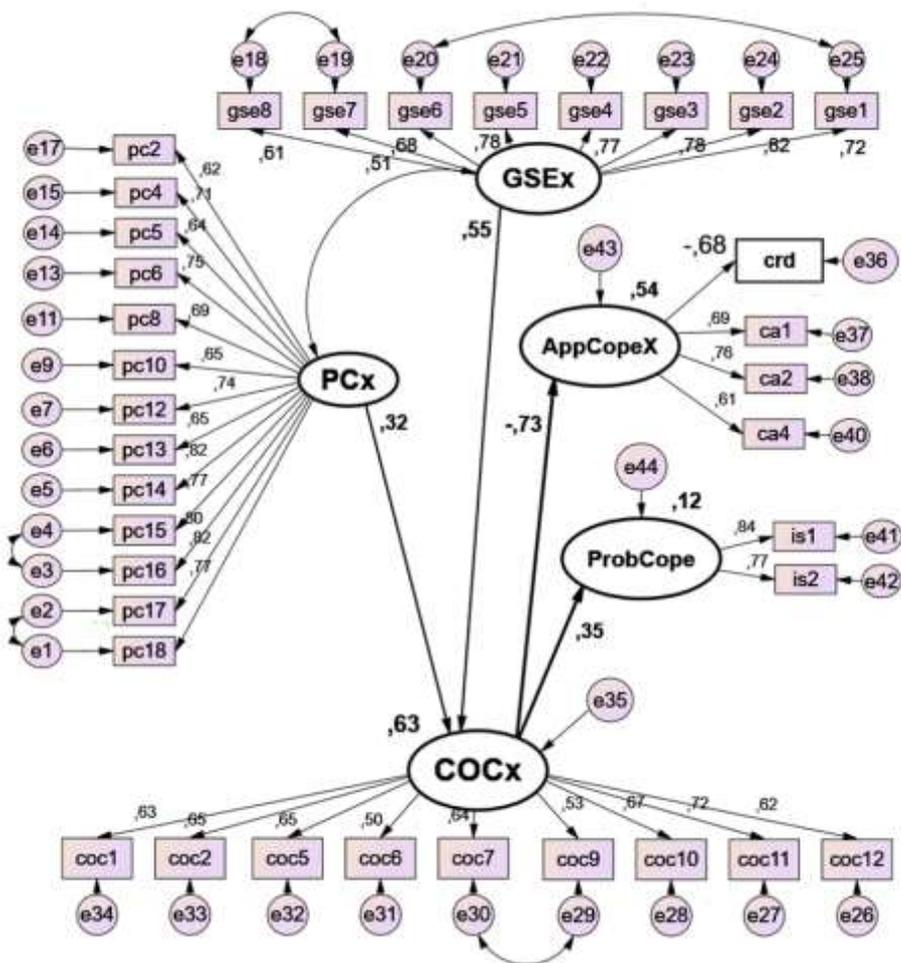
Figure 4: Structural equation modeling results

5. Results and Discussions
This study started from the stand point that personal resources are important factors which could facilitate change initiatives in a positive way and these factors influence the behaviors and attitudes of employees. All dispositional traits showed statistically significant match with COC individually. However, results of the proposed model indicate that general self-efficacy and perceived control are the most related traits in explaining with organizational coping with change.

In a recent study of Bayraktar and Jiménez (2020), it is stated that employees' change related self-efficacy mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and reaction to change and self-efficacy in high level change contexts to be instrumental resource in generating positive reactions to change. In the same vein, change-related self-efficacy is claimed to mediate centrality in organizational networks and employee interpretation of organizational change controllability (Vardaman et al., 2012). Feeling of perceived control can serve as a buffer to the stress raised from organizational change stress. Perceiving control of employees over their lives can adapt their behaviors toward change appropriate to their

acceptance level, thus they can cope with change better. General self-efficacy explains the major variance in coping.

Results showed that COC, Appraisal focused coping (AppCope) and problem focused coping (ProCope) provided strong statistical support in the study. Since uncertainty is the major stressor in organizational change periods, information-seeking coping is an adaptive coping strategy in which organizational employees use as a proactive behavior to balance the new organizational demands (Barrett, 2018). This outcome indicates the importance of communication for organizational change.

On the other hand, results point out that emotion focused coping did not provide statistical support as a coping response. Appraisals are assumed to be outcomes of assessment of objective features of an employee – situation encounter. However, emotions devote to subjective meaning making out of an experience (Fugate et al, 2008), immediate reactions and changeable upon time. Thus, it could be wise not to make a strict distinction between appraisals – emotion focused coping. Lazarus (1999), Latack (1986) and Cacioppo and Gardner (1999) evaluated appraisals as cognitive assessment of objective characters of a situation whereas emotions as subjective meaning. They concluded that emotions as negative or positive may co-occur and could lead to individually different appraisals from the person – situation perspective. Thus, this conception requires firstly an appraisal-coping relationship in order to generate an emotion. Notably, appraisal focused coping was followed by cognitive redefinition and cognitive avoidance, as contradicting constructs and emotion focused coping with emotional discharge. Cognitive reappraisals similar to problem focused coping are engagements from action and proactive behavior, whereas cognitive avoidance as escape strategy in withdrawal form. Although we separated coping responses into three categories, it is doubtful that they occur separately without interdependence. Fugate et al (2011) contended that there is a reciprocal, synchronous relationship between emotions and appraisals. This finding could lead to integration of cognitive, affective and behavioral features of employees' responses to organizational change.

Since we did not provide statistical support to optimism, self-esteem and affective commitment in the proposed model, we cannot downgrade these constructs importance. Each individually had a strong impact on COC. Since the model proposed more robust constructs like GSE and PC, altogether they were not as strong as expected. However, it is important to note that optimism plays a major mediation role between affective commitment and COC. Affective commitment demonstrated to be lowly related with coping with change. Actually this was quite an unexpected result. The study about antecedents of affective commitment claimed that it is associated positively with personal importance, esteem-based need satisfaction and value-based need satisfaction (McCormick and Donohue, 2016). These concepts have close relations with self-esteem, general self-efficacy, perceived control and optimism. Affective commitment in this study explains very low variance in COC. Though, we note that any organization that are successful in getting its employees' affective commitment to change has the greater support for its change endeavors. This study mostly focused on dispositional resources, affective commitment as a situational nature has given various individualistic experiences from participants, and thus we can conclude that measurement of AC would be more suitable for defined cases or under a prevailing change initiative. Moreover, AC plays an important role under the optimism's mediating role. This relationship can be further examined and analyzed for a better understanding the relationship between optimism and affective commitment.

In this research, data collected from an individual development center. It was assumed at the very beginning of this study that the coping capacity of participants would be high. The education level of the participants was quite high. Thus, we should be cautious in commenting the results. We did not execute this study for a specific organization under change. Instead, we measured independent experiences of participants without any reference to a specific common case. We trusted on self-report data. The results are based on individualistic experiences from various sectors. However, it is quite probable to state that individuals in high with personal resources would cope with stress better, and naturally to cope with organizational change (Judge et al, 1999, Jimmieson et al, 2004, Bayraktar and Jiménez, 2020).

Bandura (2012) states that self-efficacy beliefs change through activity domains and situational conditions and it is not constant across contexts. For example, self-efficacy in dynamic task environment was found to

contribute effort-performance relationship especially when some goal choices were put into action by individuals (Seo and Illies, 2009). Since we did not research on one specific organization we consistently focused on GSE. Importantly we conclude that self-efficacy is an important dispositional factor which should be paid attention for empirical or practical studies while studying COC and it could have different reflections in different task environments. From this standpoint, it must be noted that change specific self-efficacy can explain better if a specific change project/organization is being worked out.

6. Conclusion and Managerial Implications

Change is inevitable and a strategic compulsory for organizations, but it is also the employees who determine the destiny of change implementations. This study focused on human side in terms of personal resources. Some change initiatives are beyond the impact area of employees. In this case, high emotional coping mechanisms become more widespread. If employees feel that they can influence the process, they broadly apply problem focused mechanisms. Thus, managers have responsibility to evaluate change nature for employees' reactions. Considering employees' appraisals to organization restructure efforts and their probable emotions and behaviors is as important as the change need and actually a prerequisite for the change initiatives' success. Supportive responses of employees would change and shorten processes in favor of change initiatives.

The organizations should consider human factors, namely their GSE and PC before any change plan execution. Actively involving employees by considering their personal resources in change endeavors and giving them self-efficacy regarded and accordingly organized trainings would serve to strengthen their own self-concept, and hence it increases their motivation level.

Managers might think intensively the impact of change on employees and how they would appraise it. Management communication is crucially vital and should be planned considering these effects. It is obvious that information seeking is one of the basic coping mechanisms which serves to decrease uncertainty and ambiguity. Active involvement of employees in the process, open and fair communication about the reason of change need and new vision, managerial support, clear expectations from employees in the new organizational environment are steps for human assets preparation to the change. An important reason for resistance is lack of competence feelings on the employee side. Managing stress is closely related how employees link their competence to new environment. Training employees for strengthening their self-efficacy seems to be an active managerial response for employees' support. Vicarious learning and social persuasion as basic sources of self-efficacy could be injected into human side planning and execution of the change process. Managers and/or change agents should overcome emotional barriers which usually weaken the growth of self-efficacy beliefs

It is important for a manager to distinguish if employees possess commitment to the organization and its success or not. Organizations, especially with change plans should consider also its managers themselves to have positive self-constructs. Organizations could try to match its goals by creating a meaning making to its employees. It remains in the manager competence to relate work events to employee's personal values through some mechanisms. Managers should know about stress management, because it is closely related with resistance to change. The resistance is not just a reaction but also a coping response.

Meaning making is also an important concept to include coping with change researches. Since major aim was to measure personal resources role on COC itself, we did not examine other intrinsic and extrinsic factors' roles on COC such as job satisfaction and salary. Future researches can examine the intrinsic and extrinsic factors' roles on COC.

Future researches can consider different measurement instruments for more specific cases. Especially coping mechanisms research necessitates abstract constructs such as emotions and appraisals. Besides, new dimensions, more specifically including the behavioral responses can be examined. In this vein, personal valence and activation of responses can be considered seriously in future studies in determining employees' coping reactions. Similarly, social capital as a personal resource effective on employees' attitudes in organizations (Semerci, 2020) could be studied for understanding its role on employees' coping responses.

It must be taken into account that this study is handled as cross sectional research. For further study, longitudinal research can be handled to reveal extensive causality relationships. In addition to this, other types of personal resources can be handled for COC.

Moreover, how digital platforms facilitate personal resources as dispositional traits can be examined for COC. It would be interesting to further examine with qualitative along with quantitative techniques, survey-based methods, the interplay between the types of connections in terms of self-efficacy constituting digital transformation for business environments.

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