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Improving Workplace Commitment to Change: A Test of Impact Reflection and Motivation on Perceived Commitment Constructs

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IMPROVING WORKPLACE COMMITMENT TO CHANGE: A TEST OF IMPACT REFLECTION AND MOTIVATION ON PERCEIVED COMMITMENT CONSTRUCTS

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Abstract

Commitment to change in the constantly evolving world of work presents compelling obstacles for both employers and employees (Meyer, Allen, & Topolnytsky, 1998). The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of impact reflection (i.e., focus on employer vs. employee) and extrinsic motivation (i.e., approach vs. avoidance motivation) on employed and working participants' commitment to change scores and other commitment constructs, such as work-life balance and job satisfaction. In an online survey, participants were asked to consider a potential policy change that their employer might adopt (i.e., formalizing the use of social networking sites to recruit and screen potential employees, and monitor and interact with existing employees) and respond to a battery of measures (Commitment to Change Scales, Work-Life Balance Culture Scales, Job Satisfaction Scales) in response to this change. They also completed the Workplace Culture Questionnaire which measured perceptions of autonomy at work. Results showed no significant main effects of impact reflection or motivation on commitment to change, work-life balance, or job satisfaction. However, these three constructs were strongly correlated with each other, and workplace autonomy was strongly correlated with each of these commitment constructs. Other findings showed that age and educational attainment correlated with commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Implications of these findings and future research are discussed.

Keywords: commitment to change, impact reflection, motivation, autonomy

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Workplace commitment has dominated much of the literature in the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology since the 1970s. This generalized construct examines the extent to which an employee feels commitment towards their organization (i.e., employer), their job (i.e., daily tasks and responsibilities), policy changes, and other work-related foci. A host of research has linked workplace commitment to several constructive outcomes such as reduced employee turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990a), increased effort in performing tasks (Meyer & Allen, 1987), and unsolicited support regarding new workplace programs (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Likewise, studies have associated workplace commitment with increased job satisfaction (Meyer, 2014), work-life balance (Brauchli, Bauer & Hämmig, 2014), greater workplace autonomy (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004), and other important work-related constructs.

By the end of the twentieth century, many organizational psychologists had attempted to define, measure, and analyze workplace commitment. These early models of commitment were often unidimensional and focused principally on commitment to the employer. Recognizing a gap in the literature, Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997; Allen & Meyer, 1990a) sought to unify the few existing, yet analogous, conceptualizations of workplace commitment through the development of their three-component model of organizational commitment. This model unites what they called *affective*, *normative*, and *continuance* commitments into dynamic *commitment profiles*, which correspond with high and low levels of each component. These commitment profiles, in turn, help to describe and predict employee beliefs and behaviours in the workplace.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) advanced this multidimensional model of organizational commitment even further. Their goal was to apply the model to other work-related foci, rather than just the organization (i.e., employer). The results of their research suggested that, regardless

of the referent work-related target, the three-component model could offer a clear analysis of the antecedents and consequences of different levels of commitment. Subsequent research by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) helped reinforce the parsimony, generalizability, and validity of the three-component model, regardless of the referent. Their research extended the model to other workplace targets, including abstract targets like organizational change. It is this three-component model of organizational commitment that serves as the foundation for the current study, mainly commitment to change in the workplace and how it can be improved.

The improvement of commitment during times of organizational or policy restructuring is an important topic in the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology because of its predictive and descriptive significance. However, existing research has yet to causally demonstrate that commitment to change can be improved, and the goal of the current study is to explore this gap. Therefore, the following introduction will be divided into several parts. First, I will review the three-component model of organizational commitment and its applications to workplace change commitment. Second, I will outline two methods that may demonstrably improve commitment to change. Finally, I will provide an overview of the current study and the primary hypotheses.

Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment

In the three-component model of organizational commitment, commitment is conceptualized as a psychological state that encourages continued membership with an employer (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organizational commitment has also been further defined, broadly, as a process by which employees understand their relationship with their employer (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This suggests that this construct, organizational commitment, can be understood as both

behavioural, assessed by measurable activities, as well as attitudinal, assessed by analyzing beliefs or opinions.

Evidence that are distinguishable commitment components has been well demonstrated in numerous studies (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Within the three-component model, each of the components—*affective commitment* (the personal desire to remain in the organization), *continuance commitment* (the need to remain, evaluated in relation to the perceived costs of leaving the organization), and *normative commitment* (the social obligation to remain in the organization)—have distinct antecedents as well as behavioural and attitudinal consequences (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Meyer et al., 1993). Affective and normative commitments, for example, are positively related to job performance and organizational citizenship behaviour, while continuance commitment is not related to these constructive behavioural consequences. All three components appear to be correlated with continued membership with an organization.

Research has also illustrated that these components combine to create unique *commitment profiles* that reflect the relative strength of each of the three components (Allen & Meyer, 1990b). For example, employees can display high continuance (need) and normative (obligation) commitments concurrently with low affective (desire) commitment. This type of commitment profile might be common in circumstances where the employee experiences pronounced financial hardship. Alternatively, employees may display neither need nor obligation, but a strong desire to remain with an employer in situations where these financial costs are nonexistent.

Research has demonstrated that these commitment profiles are also linked to positive and negative behavioural and attitudinal outcomes. For example, research by Meyer and Herscovitch

(2001) illustrated that high levels of affective commitment, concurrent with low levels of normative and continuance commitments, increases the probability of the employee engaging in compulsory behaviours (e.g., showing up to work on time), as well as discretionary behaviours (e.g., unpaid volunteering).

While there may be numerous commitment profiles, eight profile groups have been identified that are categorized by either high or low scores on each of the three components (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). The most optimal profile group, which exhibits the most positive and prosocial behavioural tendencies, is *affective-dominant*. This group is characterized by their genuine display of supportive and promotional behaviours in the workplace. The word dominant serves to define which component is the strongest of the three, meaning there is also *continuance-* and *normative-dominant* profiles, accordingly. However, other research has shown that, despite the segregation of the components, all three ought to be understood as contributing to the overall commitment of the individual additively (Meyer, 2014; Meyer, Srinivas, Lal and Topolnytsky, 2007). In general, high commitment among all three components, not just affective commitment, is desirable in most workplace situations (Meyer, 2014).

Three-Component Model Applied to Commitment to Change

While interest in organizational commitment, meaning commitment that is directed towards the organization or employer, experienced its zenith in the latter part of the 20th century, substantial consideration has been redirected towards the study of commitment to change in the workplace in recent years. This is partially due to the rapidly changing world of work, but also due to research on the extension of the three-component model of organizational commitment (Becker, 1992; Meyer, Allen, & Topolnytsky, 1998; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Commitment to change (CTC) theory, based on the above research, borrows the three-component model's

basic premises, but replaces the foci of interest, the organization, with work-related *changes*. These changes can include, but are not limited to, deviating company policies, shifting employee responsibilities, operational restructuring, and employment-related decisions (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Commitment to change is defined as the expression of support for the stipulated change during times of organizational restructuring or policy implementation (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). This support, like that of organizational commitment, has both behavioural and attitudinal consequences. For example, Topolnytsky (2002) suggested that higher levels of commitment to change is related to positive workplace behaviours such as championing (i.e., direct promotion of the change), compliance (i.e., immediately adhering to the change), and cooperation (i.e., working constructively with others to achieve the goals of the change). In addition, the success of an organizational change appears to depend largely on the commitment of the organization's employees. Particularly, success of the change appears reliant on the extent to which wide-ranging commitment to change exists among the three components.

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) delineated strategies for component-specific improvement of commitment to change that can be derived from the existing literature and lay knowledge. For example, they suggest that activities which encourage training, participation, and empowerment are likely to increase involvement, sense of value, and identification with a specified change, and therefore improve affective commitment to change. Alternatively, normative commitment to change is likely to improve if employees see the organization as meeting a social or contractual obligation towards the employees, such as including employees in decision-making processes and increasing their ownership of the stated change. Finally, continuance commitment to change might be improved by utilizing financial or social incentives that boost behavioural and

attitudinal support. While these activities appear important for the employer to adopt, much of the existing research analyzes the components in isolation, like the literature on organizational commitment. Thus, more evidence is required to substantiate the claim that certain activities may improve commitment to change among the three components.

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) developed the Commitment to Change Scales (CTCS) to analyze commitment to change among the three components. This 18-item Likert scale is an adaptation of Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) 36-item Organizational Commitment Scales. The CTCS replaces the organization with an explicit change as the referent target, and separates each component for individual as well as integrated analyses. While researchers acknowledge the crucial role that commitment to change plays in the overall result of an initiated workplace change, few studies have illustrated a causal relationship between activities that may improve employees' commitment.

In the current study, I examined two factors that may influence commitment to change scores: (1) the focus of employees' reflection on new workplace policies (whether they reflected on how a policy affects employers or employees), and (2) extrinsic employee approach-avoidance motivation (whether they were extrinsically motivated to promote success or avoid failure of the policy).

Impact Reflection and Approach-Avoidance Motivation

One factor that may influence individuals' commitment to change is impact reflection. Impact reflection is the effortful evaluation of the effects of a proposed change on a specific person or group (Cardador, 2014). While researchers have not yet studied the effects of impact reflection on commitment to change, Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) suggested that attention to

work-relevant foci (i.e., an employer or fellow employees) should impact employees' scores on the commitment to change scale.

Becker and Billings (1993) provide substantial support for the effects of work-relevant foci type on commitment. Their research showed that immediate, local foci (i.e., customers, peers, or direct supervisors) elicit favourable commitment when compared to distant, global foci (i.e., executive management or shareholders). Research by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), as well as lay knowledge of the workplace, suggests that impact reflection towards a peer group, such as fellow employees, should yield greater CTC, improved workplace balance, and job satisfaction, when compared to impact reflection towards the employer, which is more distant or global. This is because employee-centric reflection results in positive appraisals of in-group members, and often concerns mutual interests and workplace conditions; whereas employer reflection results in negative appraisals of out-group members, often conflicting with employee interests and lacking shared work conditions (Helpap, 2016; Hill, Seo, Kang, & Taylor, 2012)

A second factor that might influence commitment to change is employees' motivation, specifically whether employees engage in extrinsic approach or avoidance motivation toward a new workplace policy. Ryan and Deci (2000) define extrinsic motivation as engaging in an activity or behaviour because of external demands. An example of this is that of a student completing their homework or assignments, where the student can be either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation means that the student is completing these tasks because of curiosity or personal interest, whereas extrinsic motivation means they are completing these tasks for approval of a teacher or parent, or simply because they have been instructed to.

Johnson, Chang, Meyer, Lanaj and Way (2012) suggest that there is a relationship between motivation and overall levels of organizational commitment, and, by extension, CTC.

Hettema, Ernst, Williams and Miller (2014) illustrate how *motivational interviewing* (i.e., collaborative conversation) might improve appraisal of a planned change. Motivational interviewing, in the current sense, is the act of soliciting thoughtful feedback of possible approach-avoidance behaviour. Research on a similar technique called *Socratic dialogue* involves the participation of employees using approach-avoidance motivation in response to structural or policy changes (Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007). The current study attempts to blend these two techniques by encouraging participants to actively think about actions, behaviours, and strategies that they can employ in the workplace in response to a stipulated change.

Roskes (2015) and Roskes, De Dreu, and Nijstad (2012) suggested that when appropriate constraints channel cognitive resources, through procedural instructions, motivation type can have a positive effect. Specifically, they suggest that avoidance motivation boosts creativity, innovation, and adaptability. They claim that this is because avoidance behaviour focuses attention on task-relevant efforts and engages in planning for unintended effects, whereas approach behaviour limits creative thinking and autonomy through conformity with the stated plan. Additionally, lay knowledge of the workplace suggests that avoidance motivation might produce higher scores on CTC. This is because avoidance motivation allows employees to directly oppose potentially negative policy programs in a meaningful and provocative way, while approach motivation infers compliance with fixed and predetermined goals.

Workplace Autonomy

Research has shown that there is a link between the three-component model of commitment and self-determination theory (SDT), specifically regarding psychological needs at work (Meyer, 2014). Ryan and Deci (2000; 2001) suggest that psychological well-being in the workplace is maintained by three primary needs: the need for autonomy, the need for

competence, and the need for relatedness. These needs can be satisfied by conferring decision-making responsibilities, providing the necessary tools and social praise to complete tasks efficiently, and by offering emotional support, respectively. When one or more of these needs are limited, particularly the need for autonomy, the employee is likely to experience an overall reduction in workplace commitment, work-life balance, and job satisfaction (Meyer, 2014). Likewise, research suggests that perceived autonomy support in the workplace can serve as a buffer to these decreased organizational outcomes (Brauchli, Bauer, & Hämmig, 2014; Meyer, 2014).

Autonomy is also a core part of the two factors identified above (i.e., impact reflection and motivation). In the case of the former, the need for autonomy is raised when reflecting upon those who might encourage free decision-making (i.e., fellow employees) or by reflecting upon those who might threaten free decision-making (i.e., the employer). In the latter, need for autonomy is induced through extrinsic necessity (i.e., requesting that employees list actions, behaviours, and strategies) as well as through avoidance behaviours (i.e., the freedom to oppose the workplace change). Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that extrinsic motivation can satisfy the need for autonomy in the workplace if it is successful in conferring decision-making ability, providing a range of options, and encouragement in completing tasks. Other research on motivation suggests avoidance motivation satisfies the need for autonomy because of these above reasons as well (Roskes, 2015; Roskes et al., 2012).

The Present Study

The current study examined the effects of impact reflection and extrinsic approach-avoidance motivation on perceived commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction regarding an employment-related policy change. Specifically, it tested whether

aggregate commitment to change, meaning the sum of the three components, differs when impact reflecting towards employers compared to employees and engaging in either extrinsic approach or avoidance motivation. As well, it explored the effects of impact reflection and extrinsic motivation on perceived work-life balance and job satisfaction. It also explored the role of perceived workplace autonomy on these above commitment constructs.

This present study focused on a relevant workplace change in North America: the use of social networking sites (SNSs) in employment-related decisions (Thomas, Rothschild, & Donegan, 2014). The common, informal use of SNSs in the recruitment/screening of prospective employees, and the monitoring/interacting of current employees, poses salient advantages and disadvantages for employees, particularly in this interconnected modern world (Asay & Lal, 2014; Jeske & Shultz, 2016; Korzynski, 2015). This widespread shift in the use of SNSs has stimulated research on work-life balance and job satisfaction (Wright, Abendschein, Wombacher, O'Connor, Hoffman, Dempsey, Krull, Dewes, & Shelton, 2014). However, the use of SNSs has not yet been the subject of any workplace CTC literature, or of any substantial experimental study. Thomas et al. (2014) suggests that this is a growing area of concern for workplace psychologists, as well as politicians and legal scholars. They note that as SNSs and communication technology continues to be employed more broadly in many industries, and in an assortment of ways, it is important to use these technologies strategically, efficiently, and responsibly for both existing and potential employees.

In the current study, participants completed an online survey regarding a social networking site policy change that might potentially be enacted by their current employer. Participants were exposed to one of four experimental groups in a 2 (reflection: employer vs. employee) × 2 (motivation: approach vs. avoidance) between-subjects factorial design.

Participants were asked to think about the policy by reflecting on either their employer or fellow employees, and then list either approach or avoidance strategies. Then, they completed measures of commitment to change, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and workplace autonomy.

Based on the above literature review, there are three primary hypotheses, and one correlational hypothesis, that were tested in the current study. First, I predicted a main effect of impact reflection, such that focus on employees will lead to more commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction compared to focus on employers. Second, I predicted a main effect of motivation type, such that engaging in avoidance motivation will lead to more commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction compared to approach motivation. Third, and most importantly, I predicted an interaction between impact reflection and motivation type on commitment to change. Specifically, commitment to change will be the highest with employee impact reflection and avoidance motivation. Finally, I predicted positive correlations among commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, and positive correlations among these three constructs and workplace autonomy.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and nineteen participants were recruited through Qualtrics, an online crowdsourcing and survey platform. Participation was limited to employed persons, either part-time or full-time, defined by the total hours worked per week with their primary employer, and limited to persons residing in Canada and the United States. Any participant who indicated that they were self-employed, retired, or unemployed were not permitted to participate in the study and all participants needed to be able to read and write fluently in English. There were no other

exclusionary criteria, and ineligible participants were pre-screened by Qualtrics and omitted from the dataset, including those who did not answer an attention-check question correctly.

Of the participants, the overwhelming majority worked more than 30 hours per week (85.40%), with the remaining working part-time between 20 and 29.9 hours per week (11.90%), part-time between 10 and 19.9 hours per week (1.80%), and part-time less than 9.9 hours per week (0.90%). Many industries were represented in the sample, however the largest representation occurred in Educational Services (11%), Healthcare and Social Assistance (9.60%), Manufacturing (11.40%), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (11.90%), and Retail Trades (8.20%). The average employment tenure for the sample was 9.37 years and a median of 7 years (SD = 8.40).

Standard demographic information was collected. Gender was slightly uneven in distribution (56% female) and ages ranged from 18 to 81, with a mean age of 42.5 years old and a median age of 41 years old (SD = 13.12). Nationality was slightly uneven in distribution (43% Canadian). Ethnicity was also collected, with participants indicating ethnic or cultural origins in Africa (4.11%), Asia (6.39%), the Caribbean (1.37%), Europe (45.21%), the Middle East (0.50%), Aboriginal or Indigenous North America (3.65%), South America (2.74%), and the remainder reporting other or hybrid responses (36.53%).

Household income and educational attainment data was also collected. Almost half of the participants had a total household income of less than $74,999 (49.80%), and most had a total household income of less than $124,999 (81.30%). Educational attainment was distributed well: no certificate, diploma, or degree (0.90%), high school or equivalent (18.30%), apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma (7.30%), college or other non-university certificate or diploma

(25.60%), university certificate or diploma below bachelor level (12.30%), and university certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor's level or above (35.60%).

Materials

All participants were pre-screened and recruited through the available participant pool with Qualtrics. Participants were redirected to the survey hosted on uwo.eu.qualtrics.com upon selection. All participants were provided a digital copy of the Letter of Information prior to participating in the study, and the Debriefing Statement after completing the study. Both documents could be downloaded as a PDF file for participants to keep for future reference.

Commitment to Change. The 18-item *Commitment to Change Scales* (CTCS), developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), was one of the principle measures in the current study. There are six items per component (i.e., affective, continuance, and normative). The scales measure commitment regarding an organizational change and responses are made using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). An example question from the affective commitment items on the CTCS include, "I believe in the value of this change". An example from the continuance commitment items is, "I have no choice but to go along with this change". An example from the normative commitment items is, "I feel a sense of duty to work toward this change". Higher scores on each component scale indicates a stronger commitment to change. Generally high scores across all items indicate the strongest levels of widespread commitment to change, and aggregate interpretation of the scores is possible. This measure has good internal consistency among the items (α = .84).

Work-Life Balance. The five-item *Work-Life Balance Culture Scale* (WLBCS) was developed by Nitzsche, Jang, Kowalski, and Pfaff (2014). It was used to measure respondents' perceptions of their work-life balance or work-life conflict that they would experience if the

proposed policy change was enforced at their employer. Example items from the measure are, "Our company values measures to promote employee work-life balance" and "Our company supports employees in balancing their professional and private lives". This scale was modified slightly for the current study. The original scale uses an 11-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). The current study used a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), to align well with the other measures employed in the study. This measure has good internal consistency (α = .94).

Job Satisfaction. The single-item job satisfaction scale (JSS) was developed by Dolbier, Webster, McCalister, Mallon, and Steinhardt (2005) and then refined by Cahill, McNamara, Pitt-Catsouphes, and Valcour (2015). It was used in the present study to measure how respondents imagined they would view their overall job satisfaction if their employer adopted the policy change related to the use of SNSs in the workplace. This single-item, Likert-type scale read: "All in all, how satisfied are you with your job?" and responses ranged from 1 (strongly dissatisfied) to 7 (strongly satisfied). While many single-item measures are demonstrably inferior to multi-item alternatives, reliability of this single-item measure of job satisfaction appears to be an exception: the above literature has shown that this measure has similar consistency with multi-item job satisfaction measures.

Workplace Autonomy. The 15-item *Work Climate Questionnaire* (WCQ) was developed by Baard, Deci, and Ryan (2000). This questionnaire is used to measure respondents' perceptions of autonomy they have experienced in their workplace over the past four weeks using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Example questions include, "I feel that my manager provides me choices and options" and "My

manager listens to how I would like to do things". This measure has good internal consistency (α = .96).

Procedure

After an invitation to complete the study was accepted and consent was obtained, participants recorded their employment status for the employer with which they spend most of their time (e.g., full-time more than 30 hours per week, part-time between 20 and 29.9 hours per week, etc.) and their tenure, in years. They also recorded what industry their employer is categorized as, using the employment categories created and provided by Statistics Canada.

After they responded to these three employer-related questions, each participant was asked to read and consider the following:

> According to the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, employers are using social networking sites (such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn) for employment-related decisions. Employers are using these sites to recruit and screen potential employees, as well as monitor and interact with existing employees, even though it may not be a part of their formal hiring practices. Assume that your employer is planning to adopt this policy of formally using social networking sites in these ways.

Once participants clicked next, they were randomly assigned to one of two impact reflection exposure screens (employer vs. employee) where they were given 30 seconds to think about the impact that this policy change would have on the assigned referent group. Participants were then asked to rate how easily they could impact reflect towards their referent group. Responses were reported on a sliding scale that ranged from 0 (very difficult) to 100 (very easy). Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of two extrinsic motivation groups (approach vs. avoidance) where they were asked to list three to five actions, behaviours, or strategies that they can adopt to either: increase the positive benefits (approach motivation), or decrease the negative consequences (avoidance motivation), of this new social networking site policy.

Participants were then asked to complete a battery of the measures outlined above in the

following order: Commitment to Change Scale, Work-Life Balance Culture Scale, and Job Satisfaction Scale. Participants were asked to respond to each how they would feel if their employer adopted the policy change outlined in the paragraph that they were asked to read and consider. For these above measures, participants were prompted with a paraphrased version of the paragraph demonstrating recent research regarding workplace policies on social networking sites. Participants then completed the Work Climate Questionnaire regarding their perception of autonomy in their own workplace over the past four weeks. Finally, participants completed a series of demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, residency, household income, educational attainment, and ethnicity). The entire survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Responses for the approach-avoidance motivation independent variable were open-text, meaning that participants could list free format responses. Some responses, but very few, were clearly gibberish (e.g., "kmh", "kk", and "ko"). Other responses were vague or repeated words (e.g., "respect", "friendship", and "polite"). However, most responses were well constructed and detailed. In the approach condition, many responses were clearly positive and indicative of approach behaviours (e.g., "increase networking" and "learn more about other employees' work interests"). However, some responses were indicative of avoidance behaviours (e.g., "don't post about work"). In the avoidance condition, responses were overwhelmingly negative and indicative of avoidance behaviours (e.g., "stay off of these sites", "clean up my page", and "turn off comments"). However, very few of the responses might be considered approach behaviours (e.g., "be friendly" and "have a very good detailed resume online").

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted on scores on the ease of impact

reflection question as the dependent variable, and impact reflection assignment (i.e., employer vs. employees) as the independent variable. There was no difference between the two groups in level of ease or difficulty in thinking about the ways in which the referent group could be impacted by the policy change, $F(1, 217) = .180$, $p = .672$, $\eta^2 = 8.266$.

Primary Analyses

To test whether the manipulations had effect on commitment to change, a 2 (impact reflection: employer vs. employee) × 2 (motivation: approach vs. avoidance) between-subjects ANOVA was conducted with scores on the CTCS as the dependent variable. The results indicated that there was no significant main effect of impact reflection, $F(1, 215) = .010$, $p = .921$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$, such those reflecting on the employer ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .96$) reported similar scores on the CTCS as those reflecting on the employees ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .92$). There was also no significant main effect of motivation, $F(1, 215) = .217$, $p = .642$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$, such that those engaging in approach motivation ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .98$) reported similar scores on the CTCS as those engaging in avoidance motivation ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .90$). There was also no significant interaction between impact reflection and motivation, $F(1, 215) = .725$, $p = .395$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$.

A similar analysis was conducted with scores on the WLBCS as the dependent variable to examine the effect of the manipulations on work-life balance. No significant effects were observed. Participants reflecting on employers ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.51$) reported similar perceptions of work-life balance compared to those reflecting on employees ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.63$), $F(1, 215) = .391$, $p = .532$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. There was also no difference between participants' perceptions of work-life balance using approach motivation ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.68$) compared to those using avoidance motivation ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.46$), $F(1, 215) = 1.132$, $p =$

.288, partial η^2 = .005. Finally, there was also no significant interaction between impact reflection and motivation, $F(1, 215) = .122$, $p = .727$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$.

Finally, for job satisfaction, the same two-way ANOVA was conducted on JSS scores. The results indicated no significant main effect for impact reflection, with participants' reflecting on the employer ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 1.62$) reporting similar levels of job satisfaction as those reflecting on the employees ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.56$), $F(1, 215) = .290$, $p = .591$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$. There was also no significant main effect of motivation, with those engaging in approach motivation ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.65$) reporting similar levels of job satisfaction as those engaging in avoidance motivation ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.53$), $F(1, 215) = .072$, $p = .789$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$. No significant interaction between impact reflection and motivation was observed, $F(1, 215) = .071$, $p = .790$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$.

Therefore, the impact reflection and motivation manipulations seemed to have no significant effects on any of the dependent measures.

Correlational Analyses

Given that no significant effects of the manipulations were observed, correlational analyses were conducted between the dependent variables. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between scores on the CTCS, WLBCS, and JSS in support of existing research. Commitment to change was positively correlated with work-life balance, $r(217) = .497$, $p = .000$, and job satisfaction, $r(217) = .298$, $p = .000$, such that greater commitment to change was associated with more work-life balance and higher job satisfaction. There was also a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, $r(217) = .730$, $p = .000$, such that more work-life balance was related to higher job satisfaction. Pearson correlation coefficients were also calculated between scores on the WCQ and the above commitment

measurements, the CTCS, WLBCS, and JSS. Workplace autonomy was positively correlated with commitment to change, $r(217) = .288$, $p < .01$, work-life balance, $r(217) = .696$, $p = .000$, and job satisfaction, $r(217) = .697$, $p = .000$. Therefore, greater workplace autonomy was strongly associated with better work outcomes.

Correlational analyses were also conducted examining whether any demographic variables correlated with the dependent measures. Participant age was negatively correlated with commitment to change, $r(217) = -.134$, $p = .048$, as well as work-life balance, $r(217) = -.191$, $p = .005$, such that older participants were less likely to be committed to change and perceived reduced work-life balance than younger participants. Additionally, there was a significant positive relationship between educational attainment and commitment to change, $r(217) = .135$, $p = .046$, such that individuals who reported higher educational attainment (i.e., university certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor's level or above) were more likely to be committed to change. See Table 1 for correlations among commitment constructs and the demographic variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients, and Correlations among Commitment Constructs and Demographic Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Commitment to Change	4.088	.936	*.84*	-	-	-
2. Work-Life Balance	4.642	1.570	.497**	*.94*	-	-
3. Job Satisfaction	5.190	1.585	.298**	.730**	-	-
4. Workplace Autonomy	5.109	1.453	.288**	.696**	.697**	*.96*
5. Age	42.500	13.116	-.134*	-.191**	-.043	-.098
6. Educational Attainment	-	-	.135*	-.084	-.062	-.084

Note. Italicized values on the diagonal represent coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates. Values below the diagonal represent correlation among the variables. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Other Analyses

Gender effects were also examined. Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted with gender as the independent variable and scores on the CTCS, WLBCS, and JSS as the dependent variables. Men (M = 4.08, SD = 1.04) did not differ significantly from women (M = 4.10, SD = 0.85) on scores of the CTCS, $t(217) = -.172$, $p = .864$, $d = -.023$. However, men (M = 4.92, SD = 1.59) had significantly higher scores on the WLBCS than women (M = 4.42, SD = 1.53), $t(217) = 2.383$, $p = .018$, $d = .324$. Men (M = 5.44, SD = 1.51) also had significantly higher scores on the JSS than women (M = 4.99, SD = 1.62), $t(217) = 2.128$, $p = .034$, $d = .289$.

Discussion

The results of the current study do not support the primary hypotheses, which suggests that impact reflection and type of extrinsic motivation do not influence perceived commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction regarding a hypothetical workplace policy change. However, the results showed a very strong relationship among three workplace constructs (i.e., commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction), which is consistent with past research (Meyer, 2014). In addition, the results showed that perceived workplace autonomy also correlated with the three commitment constructs. Finally, the current results showed that age and educational attainment are correlated with commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Taken together, there were no effects of the experimental manipulations on variables associated with work outcomes. However, the work outcome variables were correlated with each other in the expected direction.

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) define the construct of commitment to change as the expression of support during times of organizational or policy restructuring. Their research specifically references the behavioural (i.e., actions that directly support the change) and

attitudinal (i.e., mental support for the change) consequences in rendering their definition and interpretation. Their research assessed both behavioural and attitudinal consequences in developing the CTCS and applying the three-component model to change commitment.

One limitation of the present study is the lack of a behavioural component. There was no measure for analyzing real, or perceived, behavioural consequences of commitment to change. Instead, this study only assessed attitudinal consequences by looking at participants' scores on the CTCS. The decision to focus entirely on attitudinal commitment was made for one primary reason: the existing literature has already established strong correlations between commitment to change scores and behavioural outcomes (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Topolnytsky, 2002). Thus, the focus was on strategies that can impact attitudinal commitment to change. However, it would have been more valuable to assess both attitudinal and behavioural commitment to change. For example, Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) used two behavioural support measures to analyze perceived behavioural support for change initiatives. Both measures evaluated perceived behaviour (e.g., "I will comply with my organization's directives regarding the change") in response to industry- and organization-specific changes. In retrospect, these measures could have easily been implemented into the current design.

Another possible limitation of the current study is that antecedents associated with each component of commitment to change were not assessed. Research by Allen and Meyer (1990b) and Meyer and Allen (1991) suggests that affective commitment is influenced by personal characteristics and experiences; continuance commitment, by the perceived costs of non-compliance; and normative commitment, by socialization both in and outside of the organization. Moreover, as Allen and Meyer (1990b) indicate, these workplace antecedents play a strong role

in fostering the development of commitment and managing the experiences of individual employees.

The antecedents of commitment to change can be both internal (i.e., personality-driven) and external (i.e., organizationally-driven), but can be greatly influenced by the activities of the employer. Past research has shown that each component relates positively to specific employer-driven activities (Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002). For example, increasing training opportunities, employee empowerment, and encouraging participation is likely to increase a sense of value and identification with a change (i.e., affective commitment). Alternatively, meeting social or contractual obligations towards the employees, such as including employees in decision-making processes, increases the employees' sense of ownership of the change (i.e., normative commitment). Finally, financial or social incentives can boost behavioural and attitudinal support (i.e., continuance commitment).

The current study does not measure the antecedents of commitment to change, and in doing so, fails to acknowledge the role of employees' personality and the employer's organizational culture. Both factors could have easily been included as demographic or exploratory variables, using a variety of existing measures. Future research would benefit from including measures to assess the role of these antecedents in times of organizational restructuring or policy change. This can be done by incorporating measures which help identify personality type in the workplace, as well as measures which categorize existing workplace culture. This is especially important if future researchers also use crowdsourcing programs, like Qualtrics, which provides a very diverse participant sample.

The use of crowdsourcing platforms, as with the present study, is appealing because it facilitates the recruitment of many participants with minimal time investment. However, this

deviates from the existing research on commitment to change. For example, research by Allen and Meyer (1990b) was conducted on-location (i.e., in-person) using company- and role-specific samples (e.g., full-time, non-ununionized employees at two manufacturing firms). Indeed, most of the existing literature on commitment to change has partnering with a single, or very few firms (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Herscovitch and Meyer, 2002; Topolnytsky, 2002). While this was mainly due to technological limitations at the time of publication, the samples that these studies presented (i.e., employees at a single firm) were largely homogenous and the studies were largely conducted in-person. While convenient, crowdsourced data captures a variety of opinions from countless firms and industries. Thus, future research might benefit from focusing on partnering with individual firms, wherever possible. With crowdsourcing, it might be useful to recruit only participants who work in the same or similar industries.

Another review of the literature also poses questions about how the scores on the CTCS were analyzed in the present study. Much of the literature on the three-component model represents the three components as an additive composition of the three individual components. However, many researchers have also studied each component of the model independently (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Some studies have downplayed the role of analyzing the components individually, and have called for a holistic approach to studying organizational commitment and commitment to change (Meyer et al., 2007; Meyer, 2014). In focusing too broadly on improving overall commitment to change, the current study has also missed potential analysis of the important factors which might impact each component in specific, unique ways. Future research might benefit from distinguishing impact reflection and motivation manipulations that are likely

to affect all three types of commitment to change components versus specific components of commitments to change.

Another limitation of the study are the impact reflection and motivation manipulations. For the impact reflection manipulation, each of the studies in the reviewed literature emphasize duration and depth. This means that the amount of time and the depth of the reflection towards the exposure is a key component of whether meaningful impact reflection has taken place. While changes in the workplace can be abrupt, exposure to change is usually repeated and clarified. As Topolnytsky (2002) notes, exposure to change occurs over time, on an ongoing basis, and is creatively conveyed by the pertinent stakeholders. This allows employees to impact reflect meaningfully, and more deeply over a longer period of time. It is unclear whether the current study was effective in simulating this type of meaningful impact reflection, and future research should incorporate a manipulation check to assess the duration and depth of participants' reflections.

For the motivation manipulation, the literature is more ambiguous. While motivation has been connected to organizational commitment (Johnson et al., 2012; Hettema et al., 2014), the connection between approach-avoidance motivation and commitment to change was theoretical in nature, as proposed by Roskes (2015) and Roskes et al. (2012). The present study is one of the first attempts to demonstrate causal effects of motivation on commitment. It is possible that the theory behind this extension is flawed, but it is more likely that the extension was made inadequately in the current design. Participants in the current study were instructed to describe three to five activities, behaviours, or strategies that they would adopt to either increase the positive benefits or decrease the negative consequences of the proposed SNS policy change. This was done to mirror the concepts of motivational interviewing proposed by Hettema et al.

(2014) and Socratic dialogue proposed by Skordoulis and Dawson (2007). Again, however, neither of these techniques have yet been tested in an online survey-based setting. Based on research on motivational interviewing and Socratic dialogue, an in-person experimental design might be superior to an online survey to assess commitment to change. The potential social pressure to comply with the request from an in-person researcher might produce more favourable responses. This social pressure would also more accurately replicate and closely resemble an employer-employee relationship than the online survey method because of the presence of social authority in the workplace. Moreover, it would allow the researcher to correct participants if they were engaging in the incorrect type of motivation or clarify any ambiguous responses from participants. For example, as noted earlier, in each of the motivation conditions, participants would sometimes list both approach and avoidance responses, despite the instructions provided. It is unclear whether participants' written responses accurately reflected the motivational approach they were using to think about the use of SNSs in the workplace.

Finally, another important consideration is the use of SNSs as the relevant workplace change foci. Many studies have demonstrated that the use of SNSs is evolving rapidly (Thomas et al., 2014), and that the use of SNSs have both positive effects, such as professional networking, and negative effects, such as decreased autonomy (Asay & Lal, 2014; Jeske & Shultz, 2016; Korzynski, 2015). While this research suggests that the use of SNSs ought to be a sound foci, there are a few considerations that the current study failed to address. Firstly, it may have erred in how much value participants may place on this workplace trend. This could be an example of how the ivory tower inflates the importance of subjects that might be non-issues. Alternatively, this might be another illustration of why this study should have been conducted using a single firm or among similar employees, and in-person. Future research might benefit

from simply changing the foci of interest to something more salient or participant-specific. In the current study, the change was of global interest (i.e., universally applicable) for workers in many industries across North America, according to the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. The use of SNSs in making employment-related decisions, nevertheless, might not have been as global as originally thought. Rather, this policy might be more of an industry-specific concern, or not even a concern at all. Future research would also benefit from exploring change foci that are more general, topical, and real (e.g., laws proposed at a local legislature, or organizational responses to crises-driven environments). This way, the change foci would be regarded as important and consequential, rather than trivial and hypothetical. Alternatively, future research could still focus on the role of SNS policy changes, but only regarding specific industries (i.e., Educational Services or Public Administration), or homogenous hierarchy groups (i.e., managers or subordinates) to make the change exposure more relevant to the sample group.

Secondly, there was no measure to determine if participants even cared about the proposed policies in question. Future studies would benefit tremendously by incorporating some method to determine: (1) level of concern that each individual participant expressed towards the change foci, achieved through the use of a measure, or (2) the commitment of a baseline comparison group, achieved through the use of a control group that measures scores on the commitment constructs without the experimental manipulations. With these measures in mind, future research might be able to demonstrate that some activities do improve overall commitment to change, despite a lack of variance between experimental conditions. It might be the case in the current study that although the experimental groups did not differ significantly from one another, the four groups may have been more committed, overall, if they were compared to a

control group who did not engage in these activities at all. Therefore, any impact reflection and having any type of extrinsic motivation might affect individuals' commitment to change.

The above criticisms notwithstanding, it is very encouraging to see the results support several correlational relationships. First, the results support strong correlations among the three commitment constructs (i.e., commitment to change, work-life balance, and job satisfaction), and replicate findings from the existing literature (Brauchli, Bauer & Hämmig, 2014; Meyer, 2014; Topolnytski, 2002). Second, the relationship between workplace autonomy and these three commitment constructs also supports existing literature from Meyer et al. (2004) and Meyer (2014) that the constructs should be related. Finally, the results also provide evidence for some interesting relationships between age and educational attainment on two dependent variables.

While some of these results are unsurprising, they are important for several reasons. First, the correlations among the three commitment constructs provide a small amount of support for the current method, despite the limitations. It supports the method in that participants appear to be answering the questions as instructed. If participants were randomly selecting answers, as online crowdsourcing is prone to, these constructs might not have been significantly related. Moreover, had there been a significant difference between groups in this experiment, these correlations might still have provided evidence for a holistic approach to change management. In this way, researchers and employers alike should treat change management strategies as a bundling package that not only incorporates commitment to the change itself, but also a heightened sense of job satisfaction and incorporating ways to improve the sense of work-life balance.

Second, the correlations between the three commitment constructs and workplace autonomy provide additional support for the important role of autonomy during times of

workplace change. Brauchli et al. (2014) and Meyer (2014) outline how workplace autonomy is intimately connected to many of the workplace constructs studied in the field of industrial-organizational psychology. They particularly note how autonomy can act as a mediator, or buffer, when change implementation occurs. While the current study has not tested whether autonomy is, indeed, a mediator or buffer, it has offered additional support to the relationship autonomy shares with other commitment constructs. Future research designs should incorporate autonomy more thoughtfully to test whether it is, as the above research suggests, a mediator or buffer in times of organizational change. Moreover, future research would benefit from focusing on exactly what types of autonomy support work best during times of change implementation. For example, Hettema et al. (2014) focuses on the importance of training and interactive coaching as autonomy support, while Ryan and Deci (2000) broadly state that autonomy is best achieved through encouragement of freedom and with an absence of external controls. This means that autonomy can take many different forms (e.g., training programs, offering employees choices, flexible work arrangements, etc.). It would be important for future researchers to test which types of behaviours elicits the most favourable levels of autonomy for both the organization and its workers.

Finally, the relationships between age and educational attainment and two of the three commitment constructs, namely commitment to change and work-life balance, are interesting for a few reasons. The significant negative relationship between age and commitment to change and work-life balance suggests that SNS policy changes might threaten an older demographic. This might lead them to report lower scores on commitment to change and work-life balance. Alternatively, it might be the case that younger participants, having been raised with this technology, report slightly higher scores on commitment to change and work-life balance simply

because of exposure. The significant positive relationship between educational attainment and commitment to change is also interesting. This suggests that the more formal education that the participant had, the higher their score would be on commitment to change. Again, this could be because of continued exposure, like that of younger participants. However, it could also be attributed to greater training, formally through the curriculum of educational institutions, as well as informally through socialization at educational institutions. Participants with higher education might be more receptive to these social networking sites because they view them as tools. This way, social networking sites are seen as a method of advancing careers and maintaining important personal and professional relationships.

These relationships provide evidence, again, for an all-inclusive or holistic approach to implementing change initiatives. While these relationships cannot infer causality, they support deploying change management techniques that are tailored to the demographics represented at an organization (i.e., older vs. younger employees, highly skilled vs. non-skilled). Commitment to change, as the research has suggested, is not going to be the same for every group of individuals. Thus, it is important for future researchers to study what techniques improve commitment for key groups in the labour market, especially as that labour market continues to change itself.

Although the present study did not show that impact reflection and extrinsic motivation influence change commitment, the findings should not weaken the importance of understanding the factors that affect commitment to change. Rather, the results of this study should encourage future research to focus on identifying and testing factors that might contribute to a committed workforce. This can involve studying how employees are committed to their employer, their job, or even abstract targets such as a change in their workplace. Adapting to change continues to be a significant research trend, which means that this area is still very important and ought to be

explored. While the current study has not cracked the commitment code, future research should improve on the current limitations and seek additional insights into how the modern workforce operates.

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