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**Title:****To take or not to take the risk? Influence of empowering leadership on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior****Summary:**

The importance of leadership and organizational citizenship behavior have been recognized in many research studies. However, the influence of empowering leadership on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and the cognitive mechanism to engage in such behavior have received little attention. By drawing on social cognitive theory, this study explores the direct effect of empowering leadership on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and its indirect effect through willingness to take risk. This study also examines the predictive effect from willingness to take risk and regulatory focus on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and the moderating effect from regulatory focus and perceived organizational support on the relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk.

A nested data model using a 3-wave sample of 173 matched dyad relationships from nine financial institutions in Hong Kong using hierarchical linear modeling was tested. The results show that willingness to take risk can partially mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior with interference from regulatory focus and perceived organizational support. While both willingness to take risk and promotion focus are proved to be predictors of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Suggestions for future research and implications on management practice are discussed.

**Track:**

Leadership and Leadership Development

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## 1. Introduction

In view of the rapid changes in business landscape, disruptive technology and turbulent economic evolution, organizations nowadays need to put tremendous efforts not only in maintaining the stability of the business, but also enhancing their adaptability and sustainability by encouraging their employees to come up with changes and relying on them to proactively participate in different behaviors to review the current status, challenge the inefficient workflow, identify problems, propose new methods, inspire innovation and tackle the problems (Crant, 2000).

However, conventionally, people are inclined to resist change and prefer to maintaining the current situation, adhering to the routine behavior and staying in the comfort zone (Aviv and Avi, 2002; Neves and Eisenberger, 2013) because change is often perceived as having urgency, pressure, and risk than the normal organization activities (Jones et al., 2005). Therefore, employees are likely unwilling to take risk to make changes to respond to the changing business environment. In view of the fact that not all leaders and managers can foresee all the problems, it is therefore critical to motivate the employees to take the initiatives to identify any loopholes, issues, malfunction or even faults in the business and take the necessary efforts to make changes rather than waiting for their leaders' or managers' top-down instructions because employees in the frontlines are heavily involved in the day-to-day activities and they are the ones who are familiar the most with the current practices and the weaknesses, loopholes or areas needed for improvement (Burris, 2012; Morrison and Phelps, 1999).

However, not every employee within an organization possesses the relevant attributes to perform beyond their formal role and responsibilities or have the willingness to take risk to make constructive changes because of the uncertainty of the results, disturbances in the routines and relationships, and uncertainty in power balances and job security (Albrecht and Hall, 1991; Burris, 2012; Morrison and Phelps, 1999). Therefore, it is a huge challenge for organizations to determine what kinds of leaders can influence the employees and what kinds of employees will participate in the change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior which is defined as constructive efforts to identify and implement changes with regard to work processes, policies and procedures beneficial for the organizations (Bettencourt, 2004).

Empowering leadership has received increasing attention from both researchers and practitioners because of its compelling influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). However, not all studies show favorable results. Instead, some studies delineated that empowering leadership have detrimental consequences such as reduced performance, weak or no direct effect on behaviors (Li et al., 2014; Srivastava et al., 2006). It is therefore suggested that some boundary conditions might exist. In response to the call from some scholars that it is essential to understand how and to what extent the employee can be empowered by examining individual traits and situational factors (Cheong, et al., 2016), this study extends the previous reviews of empowering leadership by studying whether regulatory focus and perceived organizational support would provide the boundary conditions that alter the influence from empowering leadership on employees' attitude to pursue change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

In addition, despite risk taking has been extensively studied in many contexts covering consumer behavior, sexual behavior, speed driving and entrepreneurship, there are only a few studies on

employees' risk taking in the management context (Tjosvold and Yu, 2007; Wu et al., 2008). Besides, there are very few measurement scales on context-specific willingness to take risk. This study aims to enrich the literature in behavioral decision by examining whether willingness to take risk can directly predict change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

To study why empowering leadership can influence change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, this study examines the mediating effect from willingness to take risk because it possess both situational characteristics as well as person-centered characteristics such that employee's attitude will be influenced or motivated by their leader and they will pursue a particular behavior after cognitively evaluate the potential benefits and costs.

With the desire to fill the existing research gaps, increase the generalizability of the theory application and develop additional insights on the possible paths through which employees engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, the suggested research model (Figure 1) by drawing on social cognitive theory permits some suggestions for numerous important directions for future research and recommends some practical insights for managers and organizations to forge effective strategies in grooming empowering leadership, uplifting employees' cognitive mechanism and building effective team with regulatory fit in order to ensure the organizations' sustainability in the dynamic business landscape.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Empowering Leadership**

Empowering leadership can be defined as leader behaviors whereby authority, autonomy, and responsibility are shared with employees in order to enhance and encourage employees to be more receptive and adaptive to their work environment (Srivastava et al., 2006). Prior research delineated that empowering leadership behaviors cover behaviors such as leading by example, participative decision making, coaching, informing, and showing concern (Ahearne et al., 2005) and ignites employee's passions and intrinsic motivation (Zhang and Batrol, 2000).

Although there are multiple definitions of empowering leadership, there is convergence for the measurement of the leader behaviors. It is appealing that empowering leadership consists of a set of managerial practices including delegation, participative decision-making, persuasive and encouraging communication, performance development and mentoring (Ahearne, et al., 2005; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). There are many indirect evidences to expect that empowering leadership might have a positive influence on change-orientated organizational citizenship behaviors because empowering leadership enhances employees' self-efficacy (Martin et al., 2013) to participate in risk-related behavior such as taking charge. However, empowering leadership is not advantageous in all organizational contexts and not all followers are universally receptive to empowering initiatives (Martin et al., 2013; Yun et al., 2006). Therefore, this study contends that empowering leadership would be a contextual factor to explain change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors for particular kinds of employees under particular situational factors.

## **2.2 Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Organ (1989) suggested that organizational citizenship behavior was both extra-role and organizationally functional while Van Dyne et al. (1995) developed a conceptual framework that differentiated constructively intended proactive employee actions aimed at improving organizational effectiveness into affiliative and challenging behaviors. In terms of different types of change-oriented OCB, Kim et al. (2011) provided a systematic framework of it and some examples of change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors are future-oriented, improvement-related actions such as personal initiative, taking charge, innovative behavior, and voice behavior. According to Choi (2007), change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors can refer to the constructive efforts to identify and implement changes with regard to work methods, policies, and procedures beneficial for organizations. Previous studies have shown that the presence of change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors in individuals can be predicted by individual and situational variables (LePine and Van Dyne, 2001) and by organizational context variables such as leadership or innovative climate (Choi, 2007). However, there is little or even no research on the predictors or antecedents such as empowering leadership and the cognitive mechanism to pursue such behavior. This study will focus specifically on change-oriented actions initiated by employees and not on reactions to organizationally-led change initiatives addressed by previous reviews (Rafferty et al., 2012).

## **2.3 Regulatory Focus Theory**

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001) is specifically concerned with the nature and extent of individual's emotional experience which may help clarify individual's work attitudes and behaviors. Some research indicate that regulatory focus refers to an individual's strategic orientation with respect to how to regulate his or her behavior to strive for desired outcomes (Lanaj, 2012). The theory distinguishes between two regulatory orientations which are promotion orientation and prevention orientation. Promotion focus is a strategic orientation that regulates an individual's cognition and behavior toward the achievement of positive outcomes, whereas prevention focus pertains to a strategic orientation toward the avoidance of negative outcomes. Some studies have shown that regulatory focus plays a role in perception, information processing, persuasion and decision confidence (Lin et al, 2015). Since regulatory focus is about the pursuit of strategy to attain the goals and it is about the extent to which employees believe that they have the self-efficacy to impede their ability to engage in challenging tasks, employees with high self-efficacy have greater confidence in conscientiousness and proactive personality (Parker et al., 2010) which may trigger change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

## **2.4 Willingness to Take Risk**

In classical decision theory, risk is most commonly conceived as reflecting variation in the distribution of possible outcomes, their likelihoods, and their subjective values. Risk taking, which is typically considered as a characteristic of individuals (Burriss, 2012), involves actions having an uncertain outcome, but with potentially high returns. In essence, willingness to take risk or attitude towards risk is different among individuals because of their personality and the situations they come across. In this study, willingness to take risk or attitude towards risk would ride on the concept from cognitive framework which traditionally assumes that decision making situation involves the estimation of the probable costs and benefits of a given behavior.

Employee's attitude in risk taking represents a willingness to withstand uncertainty and mistakes when one explores new ideas, advocates unconventional or unpopular positions, or tackles extremely challenging problems without obvious solutions, in order to increase the likelihood of accomplishment (Pedro Neve et al., 2014). While prospect theory (Avi, et al., 2017; Kahneman and Tversky, 1979) proposes that risk taking is asymmetric about a reference point of which decision makers take more risks when faced with a certain loss than when faced with a certain gain. However, some research indicate that risk taking in situations of gain while risk aversion in the domain of loss are due to individual differences in the perceptions of what constitutes threat and opportunity (Humphreys et al, 2013) while recently, some research elicit that risk taking attitude is domain-specific (Weber et al, 2002, 2017) because changing perceived self-efficacy either changes the general probability function of the expected value or the domain-specific value functions. This study will draw on social cognitive theory to consider willingness to take risk as domain-specific attitude and it relates to outcome expectancies which determines the employees' attitude to pursue change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior after their cognitive decision process (Xie and Wang, 2003).

## **2.5 Perceived Organizational Support**

According to organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 2001), employees who receive valued resources, for instance, pay raises and developmental training opportunities, will develop their perceived organizational support and feel obligated, based on reciprocity norm, to strive to repay the organization by helping it reach its objectives. Despite perceived organizational support is likely to engender a felt obligation to care about and assist the organization in attaining its goals; however, as argued by other scholars, when there is too much support from organizations, the employees are becoming satisfied to stay in the comfort zone and will have less motivation to challenge or change the status quo. On contrary, some research indicate that consistent negative evaluation of organizational support climate will activate expectation aimed at changing the status quo and vice versa (Kurtessis et al., 2015). Since perceived organizational support triggers social desirability or perceived social pressure to carry out the behavior, this study will examine if it will alter the influence from empowering leadership to change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors and what is the impact in view of the contradictory view from different scholars.

## **2.6 Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory elucidates the triadic relationship between an individual's cognitive processes, behavior and the environment and it indicates that behavioral change is made possible by personal sense of control and when people believe that they can take action to solve a problem instrumentally, they become more inclined to do so and feel more committed to the decision. In essence, a strong sense of competence facilitates cognitive processes and performance in a variety of settings, including quality of decision making, goal setting and goal achievement (Bandura, 2001, 2012, 2015).

Outcome expectancies, which are beliefs about the consequences of one's action, is the other key construct in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001). Since employees' discretionary and extra-role behaviors in challenging the status quo may bring forth the risk of misunderstood by supervisors and undesirable social consequences (Higgins, et al., 2010), employees often choose to engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior only after cognitively calculating

the associated costs and potential personal benefits. In this connection, social cognitive theory can provide a useful theoretical framework because it posits that self-efficacy, outcome expectations, goals and impediments can provide not only knowledge for predicting behavior but also a theory of learning and change because this theory can link leader's behavior to employees' intention and behavior (Bandura, 2001) by specifying how employees acquire knowledge through cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral competencies.

### **3. Theoretical Analysis and Hypothesis Development**

#### **3.1 Empowering Leadership and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors refer to the constructive efforts by individuals to identify and implement changes with respect to work methods, policies, and procedures to improve the situation and performances (Bettencourt, 2004; Choi, 2007). Since empowering leadership empower and offer autonomy to their employees, they are granted with the discretion to make decision. More importantly, when empowering leader expresses confidence in employees' high performance and capability, employees feel committed to act for the benefits of organization by initiating planning, problem solving and fostering changes. Consistent with some prior research, empowering leadership can offer flexibility to employees and encourage them to pursue extra-role behavior to improve organizational situations and task performance (Li et al., 2015). According to psychological empowerment theory, employees who feel a sense of empowerment are likely to take an active orientation toward their work and perform above and beyond of duty because they have a strong sense of control over their work (Kim and Bheer, 2017). Therefore, employees' competence and impact of their work are likely to further encourage change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

**H1:** Empowering leadership is positively related with change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

#### **3.2 Willingness to Take Risk and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Willingness to take risk is about employee's attitude towards the risk and it concerns with the evaluation of the potential benefits and associated risk under a particular situation. As individuals who engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior must be change-oriented and willing to take risk to upset the status quo (LePine & Van Dyne 2001), we expect that employees with low level of willingness to take risk may insist to pursue routine work because they consider this is the safest way to survive in their organization while employees with a high level of willingness to take risk are likely to introduce new ideas or pursue behaviors to enhance the performance and sustainability of firms after their cognitive evaluation of the situation because they possess the self-efficacy to treat risk as opportunities (Krueger and Dickson, 1994). It is hypothesized that:

**H2:** Willingness to take risk is positively related with change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

### **3.3 The Mediating Role of Willingness to Take Risk on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship**

Empowering leadership showing concerns for employees is likely to signal that the leaders will act to prevent or mitigate employee's hindrances to performance that might deter from employee's creative efforts (Li et al., 2016). This would decrease the costs when they go through the cognitive process to evaluate the potential benefits and the associated cost to engage in risky behavior. Therefore, employees will be motivated to take up more risk to engage in different kinds of change-related activities (Soane et al., 2010). As empowering leader is perceived as a supportive leader who provides guidance to employees, recognizes the value of their input and treats them in fairly way, employees are likely to consider themselves as an important part of the decision process and therefore are more motivated to take risk as their confidence or self-efficacy has been uplifted by their leader. As a result, they tend to treat uncertainty as opportunities and pursue the risky behavior accordingly. In this connection, empowering leaders will strongly influence employees' attitudes towards taking risk to engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

**H3:** Willingness to take risk mediates the positive relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors

### **3.4 Regulatory Focus and Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Since organizational citizenship behavior is a goal-driven, adaptive behavior, which is strongly affected by employee's motivation and regulatory processes (Bowler et al., 2010) while change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior involves risk taking to challenge the status quo, it is likely that promotion-focused employees who rarely experience fear of risks and failures, tend to perform change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior because of their exploratory orientation and pursuit of ideas and gains (Park, 2016). Organizational citizenship behaviors not only allow the employee to help the organizational directly, but also allows the employee to engage in extra-role behaviors to help themselves through more achievements. As regulatory focus is about the enactment of behaviors in the pursuit of goal, an employee with promotion focus will maximize their achievements and they may spend efforts on both task performance and extra-roles in an attempt to be successful without regard to the commitment of errors and these kinds of behaviors are attributes of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior which is about challenging the status quo to make changes. On the other hand, an employee with prevention focus lends itself to high levels of duty to avoid errors of commission in task performance and hence they have little time or no intention to engage in extra-roles behaviors. Since regulatory focus refers to cognitive processes that guide the selection of behaviors towards desired outcomes and away from undesired outcomes, employees will strategically approach the necessary means to accomplish the tasks (Lanaj, et al., 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

**H4a:** Promotion focus is positively related with change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

**H4b:** Prevention focus is negatively related with change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior



### **3.5 The Moderating Role of Regulatory Focus on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Willingness to Take Risk**

Despite leadership behaviors can influence employees' attitude and behavior, their effectiveness cannot fit all the situations because employee is unique and they have different personal characteristics and therefore their reaction to their leaders do not necessarily the same. Since some employees may view themselves as unready to handle new responsibilities or have other reasons for not wanting to take on more empowered roles; therefore, not all employees can be empowered to take risk to engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, some conditions have to be fulfilled.

It is notably that useful information can facilitate rational decision making while information acquisition, processing and usage are characteristics of regulatory focus which is about the pursuit of strategies to attain the goals. Before the adoption of certain strategies, one must have to make decision to determine which strategies are optimal for the attainment of goals riding on the information on hand. Given empowering leaders share information and knowledge to the employees (Arnold et al., 2000; Cheong et al., 2016), their sharing of information and knowledge to the employees would provide with them the cognitive resources to facilitate their decision making. It is arguably that when employees with promotion focus are motivated or empowered with autonomy and power, and their leaders share with them the useful and relevant information, they are motivated to search for solutions to make decision for achievements and therefore, they tend to be willing to take risk to pursue their goals and solve the problems (Hamstra, et al., 2011). On the other hand, when employees with prevention focus who are duty oriented and compliance focused are empowered, they will feel the stress if they deviate from the rules and guidelines and therefore; they less likely want to be empowered or granted with autonomy. They will only focus in information to minimize the risk of making mistakes. In this regard, it is hypothesized that the regulatory focus will moderate the relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk in different directions:

**H5a:** The positive relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk is stronger when employee promotion focus is high than when it is low

**H5b:** The positive relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk is weaker when employee prevention focus is high than when it is low

### **3.6 The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support on the Relationship between Empowering Leadership and Willingness to Take risk**

Besides self-confidence and perceived competence, whether the employees are willing to take risk are also subject to the organization atmosphere of trust and safety. It is because some scholars indicate that employees' perception of the organization that values their contribution and cares about their well-being is positively related to their trust in the organization to respond benevolently to failure with risk, will lead to positive consequences for risk taking behavior (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). When employees are lacking of encouragement to take risk or have the fear of the personal consequences of failure, employees' willingness to take risk may lessen. On the other hand, when employees perceive that their proactive or risk-taking behavior is socially desirable

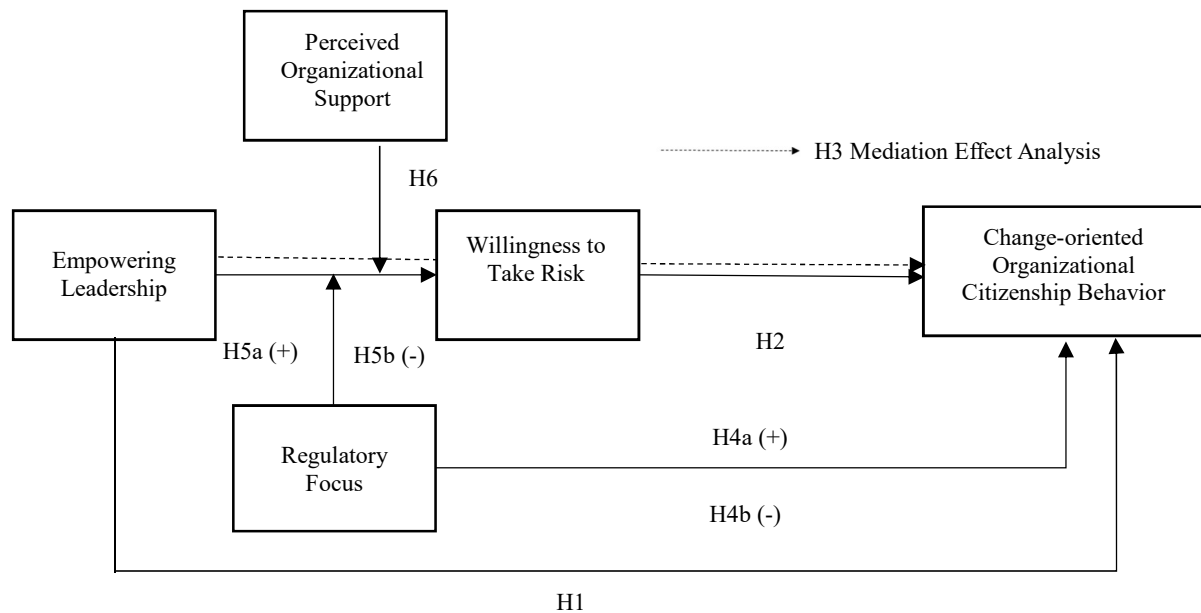
and is endorsed by their organizations, they believe that organizational support can make them feel safe to express themselves without fear of damaging self-image, status or career (Eisenberger et al., 2009) and they tend to experience trust, confidence and predictability (Leung et al., 2015) which leads to their willingness to take risk. It is hypothesized that:

**H6:** Perceived organizational support positively moderates the relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk such that the relationship is stronger when perceived organizational support is high than when it is low

### 3.7 Research Model

Based on the above theoretical analysis, this study proposes the following research model:

**Figure 1 - Research Model - Interactive Effects between Empowering Leadership, Regulatory Focus, Perceived Organizational Support and Willingness to Take Risk**



## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Sample

This research study was in the form of quantitative analysis using dyads as units of analysis. The data collection was conducted from Feb 2018 to April 2018 and data was collected from two sources: employees and their supervisors from nine different financial institutions in Hong Kong. A three-wave time-lag study was carried out to examine the responses of different participants at different points in time and the collection of these variables was separated by a temporal span of three weeks. 340 sets of survey have been given to the designated coordinators from different financial institutions and they randomly (convenience sampling) selected the respondents in their respective financial institutions to participate in the study and they subsequently returned the completed questionnaires to the researcher. At Time 1, 183 completed questionnaires from 44 teams (versus 340 questionnaires sent to 68 teams) were returned from the employees, yielding a

response rate of 53.82% (183 out of 340 questionnaires) for employees. At Time 2, questionnaires were distributed to the same 183 employees and they all returned the completed questionnaires yielding a response rate of 100%. Finally, at Time 3, the questionnaires asking supervisors to rate their subordinates' change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior were distributed to 44 supervisors of those 183 employees who had responded to the questionnaires for both Time 1 and Time 2. All 44 supervisors returned the questionnaires. Due to the missing data for some questions, and in view of the nested nature of the data, three teams having only one teammate have been removed and therefore, in the final sample, there were 41 teams (response rate of 60.29%, 41 out of 68) with a total of 173 employees (response rate of 50.88%). Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations of the demographic information measured in this study, including age, education, gender, job nature and organizational tenure.

**Table 1 – Demographic Information of Participants**

	N	Descriptive Statistics			
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EGENDER	173	0	1	.47	.500
EAGE	173	1	5	1.84	.845
EJOBNAT	173	1	5	2.86	1.282
ETENOR	173	1	5	2.86	1.282
E-STENOR	173	1	5	2.37	1.230
EEDUCAT	173	1	4	2.88	.794
SGENDER	41	0	1	.56	.252
SJOBNAT	41	1	5	2.61	.92
STENOR	41	1	5	3.76	0.4
SEDUCAT	41	1	5	3.146	.853
SAGE	41	1	4	2.902	.943

**Notes:**

EGENDER – Gender of employee. Female – “0” and Male – “1”

EAGE – Age of employee. There were five categories:

1; 19-30/ 2: 31-40/ 3: 41-50 /4: 51-60/ 5: Over 60

EJOBNAT – Job nature of employee. Employees were from different functions and these functions were categorized according to the job nature such as client facing, interaction with regulators, relatedness to system, etc. There were five categories:

HR/Admin/Accounting/Others: 1

Credit Management/Finance/Risk Management/Financial Crime Compliance/Internal Audit/Legal/Regulatory Compliance/Research: 2

Branch Manager/Operations/Fund Management/Product Management/Purchasing: 3

Training/Sales/Marketing/Corporate Communication/Investment Advisory: 4

Information Technology/Product Development: 5

ETENOR – Employee’s tenure with the organization. There were five levels: 1: Less than 1 year / 2: 1-3 Year / 3: 3- 5 year / 4: 5 - 10 year / 5: Over 10 years

E-STENOR – Employee’s tenure with his/her immediate supervisors. There were five levels: 1: Less than 1 year / 2: 1-3 Year / 3: 3- 5 year /4: 5 - 10 year / 5: Over 10 years

EEDUCAT – Education level of employee. There were 5 levels: 1: Secondary School/ 2: Diploma/ 3: Bachelor Degree/ 4: Master Degree/ 5: Others

SGENDER - Gender of supervisor. Female – “0” and Male – “1”

SJOBNAT – Job nature of supervisor. Supervisors were from different functions and these functions were categorized according to the job nature such as client facing, interaction with regulators, relatedness to system, etc. There were five categories:

HR/Admin/Accounting/Others: 1

Credit Management/Finance/Risk Management/Financial Crime Compliance/Internal Audit/Legal/Regulatory Compliance/Research: 2  
 Branch Manager/Operations/Fund Management/Product Management/Purchasing: 3  
 Training/Sales/Marketing/Corporate Communication/Investment Advisory: 4  
 Information Technology/Product Development: 5

STENOR – Supervisor’s tenure with the organization. There were five levels: 1: Less than 1 year / 2: 1-3 Year / 3: 3- 5 year / 4: 5 - 10 year /5: Over 10 years

EEDUCAT - Education level of supervisor. There were 5 levels: 1: Secondary School/ 2: Diploma/ 3: Bachelor Degree/ 4: Master Degree/ 5: Others

SAGE – Age range of supervisor. There were four levels: 1; 19-30/ 2: 31-40/ 3: 41-50 /4: 51-60/ 5: Over 60

**Table 2 - Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between Variables**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>1 EGENDER</b>	1									
<b>2 EAGE</b>	-.019	1								
<b>3 E-STENOR</b>	-.047	.593**	1							
<b>4 EL</b>	.060	-.189*	-.099	1						
<b>5 WL</b>	.125	-.048	-.168*	.171*	1					
<b>6 PREV</b>	-.092	-.114	.026	.161*	-.099	1				
<b>7 PROM</b>	.205**	.077	-.174*	.246**	.468**	.081	1			
<b>8 POS</b>	-.001	-.024	-.149	.167*	.182*	-.009	.276**	1		
<b>9 CHOCB</b>	.052	.080	-.136	.286**	.178*	-.030	.272**	.113	1	
<b>10 PP</b>	.029	.196**	.069	-.134	.059	-.086	.134	.071	-.021	1

Notes:

N = 173 at the individual level \* p <.05 \*\* p <.01 (Two-tailed)

- EL Empowering Leadership
- WL Willingness to Take Risk
- PREV Prevention Focus
- PROM Promotion Focus
- POS Perceived Organizational Support
- CHOCB Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior
- EGENDER Gender of Employee
- EAGE Age of Employee
- E-STENOR Tenure with Supervisor
- PP Perceived Organizational Politics

## 4.2 Measures and Method

A 5-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree, 5- strongly agree) was used for all study items. The items were obtained from various journal sources with good academic standing and the scales were of stringent reliability and validity measures. Following other researchers (Choi, 2007; Lanaj et al., 2012), the control variables are age, gender and tenure with supervisor and perceived organizational politics which has a significant negative relationship with extra-role behaviour (Bodla et al., 2014).

Empowering leadership – 12-item scale by Ahearne, et al. (2005) which has been extensively adopted in previous research (Cheong et al., 2016; Li et al., 2015) and this 12-item scale has been used in Chinese context (Zhang & Bartol, 2010.)

Change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior - 4-item measurement scale on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior developed by Choi (2007) which has been adopted by some scholars (Sim et al., 2016).

Regulatory focus – 18-item scale by Neubert and et al. (2008) which has been adopted in previous empirical studies (Petrou, et al., 2015).

Willingness to take risk - 4-item scale was developed by Neves and Eisenberger in 2013 which focuses in context-specific risk taking attitude rather general risk taking attitude nor risk taking behavior.

Perceived Organizational Support – 10-item developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) which has been adopted in previous empirical study (Neves and Eisenberger, 2014).

Perceived organization politics - 6-items developed by Hochwarter, et al. (2003) was adopted as control variable in this study which has been adopted by previous empirical study (Hochwarter, et al., 2010).

Majority of the Cronbach’s alpha values are found to be greater than 0.70, which is the threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2014) except the value of 0.56 for willingness to take risk which is similar to the value of 0.61 developed by the scholar (Neves and Eisenberger, 2014).

Mplus (Version 7.3; Muthén & Muthén, 2012) was used for confirmatory factor analysis to assess the model fit and the testing of the hypotheses about the impact from empowering leadership, the predictive attribute of the predictors on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and the moderating and mediating effects using hierarchical linear modelling in view of the nested nature of the data (HLM; Raudenbush, et al., 2002).

**Table 3 – Reliability Analysis**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Reliability</b>
Empowering Leadership	12	3.858	.699	0.894
Prevention Focus	9	4.061	.533	0.847
Promotion Focus	9	3.667	.736	0.829
Willingness to Take Risk	4	3.528	.668	0.560
Perceived Organizational Support	10	3.298	.603	0.904
Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior	4	3.236	.961	0.937
Perceived Organizational Politics (control variable)	6	3.115	.927	0.902

## 5. Results

ANOVA tested whether average scores differed significantly across teams as indicated by *F* test and the results suggested that the between-group variance in empowering leadership, willingness to take risk, promotion focus and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior were significant as per Table 4, thereby justifying the use of HLM to test the hypotheses despite it were non-significant for prevention focus, perceived organizational support.

**Table 4 – Aggregation Statistics**

	One-Way ANOVA Result			ICC Testing		rWGj (Median)
	F-Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance	ICC1	ICC2	
<b>Empowering Leadership</b>	1.935	40, 172	0.003	0.1812	0.4828	0.9865
<b>Willingness to Take Risk</b>	1.969	40, 172	0.002	0.1870	0.4925	0.9231
<b>Prevention Focus</b>	1.278	40, 172	0.153	0.0617	0.2172	0.9721
<b>Promotion Focus</b>	1.824	40, 172	0.006	0.1635	0.4521	0.9553
<b>Perceived Organizational Support</b>	1.067	40, 172	0.382	0.0109	0.0444	0.9719
<b>Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior</b>	2.359	40, 172	0.000	0.2433	0.5758	0.9710

As illustrated in Table 4, this study also calculated the inter-member reliability (ICC1 and ICC2). ICC1 indicates the proportion of variance in ratings due to team membership, whereas ICC2 indicates the reliability of team mean differences (Bliese, 2000). In this study, there are good supports for aggregation for empowering leadership, willingness to take risk and promotion focus. Since the between-group variances for prevention focus and perceived organizational support were non-significant while some research indicate that perceived organizational support is an individual-level construct, and the perceptions of organizational support may be different among employees because of the difference in their individual attributes or experiences in the organization even though they belong to the same organization (Eisenberger, et al., 1986); therefore, only empowering leadership, willingness to take risk and promotion focus were grand mean centered, that is, the overall mean of each predictor was subtracted from every case of that variables to reduce multicollinearity (Hofmann & Gavin, 1988).

Before testing the hypotheses, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Mplus (Version 7.3; Muthén & Muthén, 2012) to evaluate the discriminant validity of the variables and the model fit (Hair et al., 2014) was conducted. Item parceling has been adopted to reduce the number of indicators of each construct (Hall, 1999). In view of the four dimensions of empowering leadership, mean value of items from each dimension has been adopted as the indicator for each dimension. Since there were only four items for willingness to take risk and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, no item parceling was needed. The hypothesized six-factor model with factors namely, empowering leadership, willingness to take risk, prevention focus, promotion focus, and perceived organizational support and change-oriented organizational support demonstrated acceptable fit:  $\chi^2(155, N = 173) = 252,344, \rho < 0.001$ , Comparative Fit Index (CFI)

= 0.943, Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.93, Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06, Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.057, and all factor loadings were significant. Since both Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) had values below 0.06 and 0.08 respectively, it demonstrated that the indicators were of good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In addition, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) were reported with values near to 0.95, it demonstrated that the indicators were of acceptable model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

**Table 5 - Comparison of Measurement Models for Study Variables**

Model	Description	$\chi^2$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	Change from Model 1	
								$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$
Model 1	Hypothesized six-factor model	252.344	155	0.943	0.93	0.06	0.057		
Model 2	Five-factor model	466.878	160	0.82	0.786	0.105	0.129	214.534***	5
Model 3	Four-factor model	834.038	164	0.606	0.544	0.154	0.162	581.694***	9
Model 4	Three-factor model	699.336	167	0.705	0.664	0.132	0.119	446.992***	12
Model 5	Two-factor model	1150.55	169	0.423	0.351	0.183	0.152	898.206***	14
Model 6	One-factor model	1308.455	170	0.331	0.252	0.197	0.157	1056.111***	15

Note. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation

SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual \*\*\* p <.001

- a. Five-factors: empowering leadership and prevention focus combined; willingness to take risk; promotion focus; perceived organizational support; change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior
- b. Four-factors: empowering leadership, prevention focus and promotion focus combined; willingness to take risk; perceived organizational support; change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior
- c. Three-factors: empowering leadership, prevention focus, promotion focus and perceived organizational support combined; willingness to take risk; change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior
- d. Two-factors: empowering leadership, prevention focus, promotion focus, perceived organizational support and willingness to take risk combined; change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

In addition, Harman’s single-factor test of all major variables from employees’ rating (44 items) was conducted using varimax rotation (Xue, Bradley, & Liang, 2011) and it was found that 11 factors were extracted with eigenvalue greater than 1, the accumulated amount of explanatory variance was 67.567%, and the largest factor did not account for a majority of the variance (20.868%). Therefore, no single dominant factor was found and thus common method variance was not a pervasive problem.

## 5.1 Hypotheses Testing Results

Table 6 illustrated the Hierarchical Linear Modelling results on dyad relationship at individual level by controlling the group variance. Model 1 is the null model with control variables and the dependent variable, change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Each model reflects the results of a specific hypothesis.

**Table 6 – Hierarchical Linear Modelling Results on Individual-Level**

Dependent Variable	Change-oriented citizenship behavior organizational			Willingness to take risk			Change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior			Willingness to take risk
	Models	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
Hypothesis	Null Model	H1	H2	H3	H5a	H5b	H3	H4a	H4b	H6
<i>Control variables</i>										
Gender	0.089	0.076	0.068	0.078	-0.003	0.083	0.042	0.208	-0.092	0.039**
Age	-0.094	-0.088	-0.068	-0.073	0.010	-0.069	0.042	-0.145***	-0.008	-0.074
Tenure with supervisor	0.048	-0.040	0.06	-0.046	-0.053	-0.043	0.063	0.034	-0.073*	-0.054
Politics perception	-0.045	-0.084	-0.063	-0.08	0.024	0.073	-0.028	0.087	-0.030	-0.171*
<i>Predictors</i>										
Empowering leadership		0.195**		0.196*	0.145*	0.269**	0.179**			-0.070
Willingness to take risk			0.273**				0.211*			
Promotion focus					0.434***			0.20***		
Prevention focus						-0.089			0.012	
Perceived organizational support										0.141
<i>Interaction Effect</i>										
EL x POS										-0.201*
EL x PROM					-0.345**					
EL x PREV						-0.324*				
<b>Residual Variances</b>										
	0.416	0.241	0.403	0.211	0.17	0.209	0.416 CHO CB 0.222 WL	0.236	0.221	0.233

Notes: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

- EL = Empowering Leadership
- WL = Willingness to Take Risk
- PROM = Promotion Focus
- PREV = Prevention Focus
- POS = Perceived Organizational Support
- CHO CB = Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior

**H1:**

Model 2 shows that empowering leadership was positively correlated with change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior ( $b = 0.195$ ,  $SE = 0.072$   $p < 0.01$ ). H1 was supported.

**H2:**

Model 3 showed that willingness to take risk was positively correlated with change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior ( $b = 0.273$ ,  $SE = 0.098$   $p < 0.01$ ). H2 was supported.



### H3:

By applying the mediation analysis method of Baron and Kenny (1986) to evaluate the mediating effect of willingness to take risk, Model 4 in Table 6 shows that the relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk is statistically significant ( $b = 0.196$ ,  $SE = 0.095$   $p < 0.05$ ). When willingness to take risk was entered in the relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, the relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (Model 7) became less significant ( $b = 0.179$ ,  $SE = 0.112$   $p < 0.01$ ), whereas willingness to take risk was still found to be positively related to change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior ( $b = 0.211$ ,  $SE = 0.119$   $p < 0.05$ ). The result demonstrates partial mediation effect. Since all conditions of mediation analysis method of Baron and Kenny (1986) prevailed, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

### H4a:

Model 8 posited that promotion focus was positively related to change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior ( $b = 0.200$ ,  $SE = 0.05$   $p < 0.001$ ). H4a was supported.

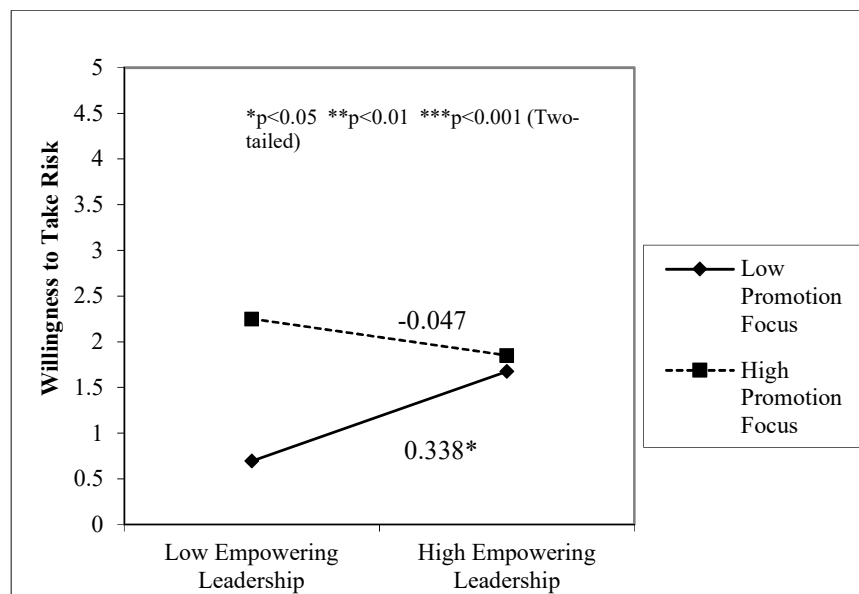
### H4b:

Model 9 posited that the negative relationship between prevention focus change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior was not significant ( $b = -0.12$ ,  $SE = 0.059$   $p > 0.05$ ). H4b was not supported.

### H5a:

Model 5 showed that the interaction effect between empowering leadership and promotion focus on willingness to take risk was significant ( $b = -0.345$ ,  $SE = 0.118$   $p < 0.01$ ) and according to Figure 2, the positive relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk is stronger when employee's promotion focus is low than when it is high. The direction of the result was opposite to the hypothesis. H5a was not supported.

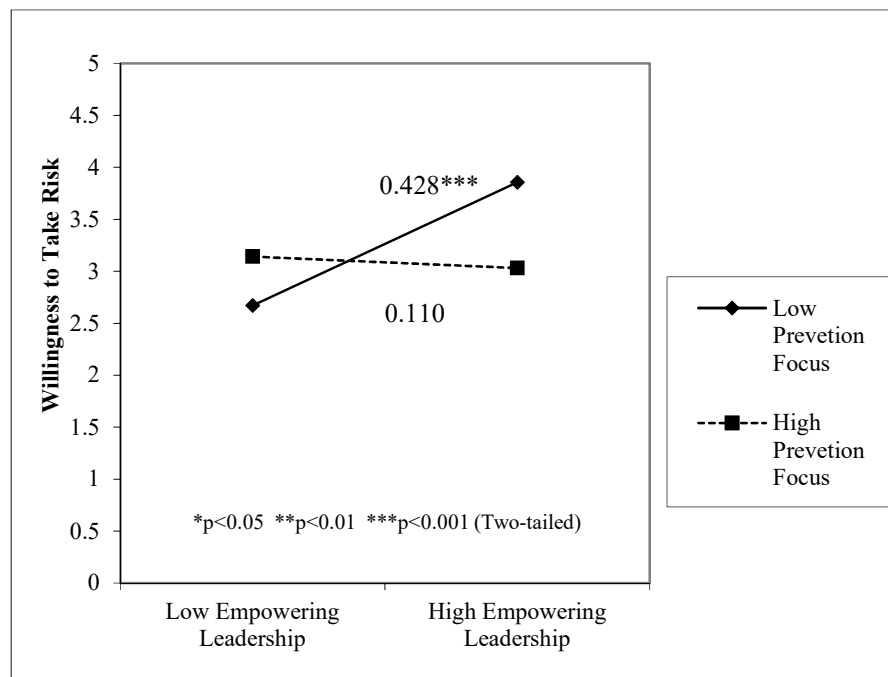
**Figure 2 - The Effects of Empowering Leadership on Willingness to Take Risk at Low and High Levels of Promotion Focus**



### H5b:

Model 6 showed that the interaction effect between empowering leadership and prevention focus on willingness to take risk is significant ( $b = -0.324$ ,  $SE = 0.175$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The simple slope analysis demonstrated that when prevention focus was high (i.e. 1 SD above the mean), empowering leadership and willingness to take risk exhibited a non-significant relationship ( $b = 0.110$ ,  $SE = 0.133$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) whereas when prevention focus was low (i.e. 1 SD below the mean), empowering leadership had a significant positive relationship with willingness to take risk ( $b = 0.428$ ,  $SE = 0.99$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). H5b was supported.

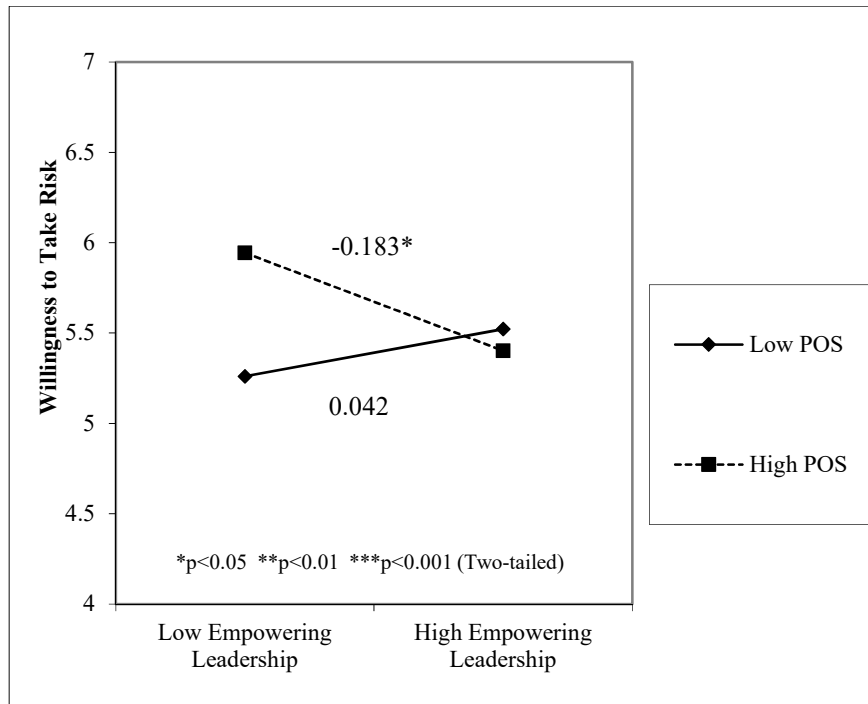
Figure 3 - The Effects of Empowering Leadership on Willingness to Take Risk at Low and High Levels of Prevention Focus



### H6:

Model 10 showed that the interaction effect between empowering leadership and perceived organizational support on willingness to take risk was negative and significant ( $b = -0.201$ ,  $SE = 0.101$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Simple slope analysis demonstrated that when perceived organizational support was high (i.e. 1 SD above the mean), empowering leadership and willingness to take risk demonstrated a significant negative relationship ( $b = -0.183$ ,  $SE = 0.075$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) whereas when perceived organizational support was low (i.e. 1 SD below the mean), empowering leadership had a non-significant positive relationship with willingness to take risk ( $b = 0.042$ ,  $SE = 0.085$ , ns). The direction of the result was opposite to the hypothesis. H6 was not supported.

**Figure 4 - The Effects of Empowering Leadership on Willingness to Take Risk at Low and High Levels of Perceived Organizational Support**



## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Theoretical Contributions

The key contribution is that this study developed insights for understanding employee’s cognitive process in the participation of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior from empowering leadership’s perspective. With respect to the leadership literature, a growing body of research has taken a multilevel perspective to delineate the spillover process by which a leader’s team-directed behaviors can influence individual followers (Chen et al., 2007, 2013) and therefore group variance was controlled when examined the hypotheses at individual level. In addition, the results of this study contribute to the management discipline and reconcile the prior mixed findings.

Firstly, there were inconclusive results among different scholars about the direct effect of leadership on citizenship behavior (Li et al., 2014; Podsakoff et al, 2000; Srivastava et al., 2006) and there were only a few studies (Auh et al., 2014) to examine the influence of leadership on organizational citizenship behavior. To my best knowledge, only one study has been done on the direct relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (Li et al., 2016) and there was no study on the predictive power of willingness to take risk on change-organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, this study has addressed the call from the scholars to study other antecedents for organizational citizenship behavior (Kark et al., 2015). This positive effect is enlightening as it suggests that leadership has influence on

employee's attitude and behavior (Kark et al., 2015). Moreover, this study advances the social cognitive theory by studying how empowering leadership is related to employees' cognitive decision process in the participation of change-oriented organizational behaviors through their willingness to take risk, regulatory focus and perceived organizational support which echo the interplay of the crucial factors that influence behavior under the social cognitive theory.

Since willingness to take risk involves the recognition and commission of uncertainty, risk, mistakes and failures when one proposes new ideas, adopts new initiatives and implement new measures, it is about the cognitive decision process of evaluating the potential benefits and the associated risks before engaging in certain behavior. Therefore, the measurement of willingness to take risk developed by Neves & Eisenberger (2013) is relevant for this study because it is about the willingness to try new procedures, accept difficult tasks with a high probability of failure or being honest about mistakes after cognitively taking consideration of the potential benefits and associated risks to pursue a particular behavior.

It is interesting that despite promotion focus has positive influence on change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, its moderating effect on the relationship between empowering leadership and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior is stronger when promotion focus is of low level. It might be because employees with strong promotion focus has very strong competence and strong intention to pursue the relevant strategy to attain the goal and therefore; their intention to participate in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior dominates its moderating effect. However, for employees with low promotion focus, empowering leadership can exert their influence on them by providing a perspective of confidence in their decision making to facilitate them to pursue the desired end-status. Since promotion focus can result in employees' creativity, eagerness, attentiveness to positive outcomes, risk taking and innovative behavior (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007), employees can be induced by the empowering leadership to pursue change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior when they are of low promotion focus and therefore it can play the role of a moderator.

Result also shows that employee with prevention focus can moderate the influence of empowering leadership on change-oriented citizenship behavior and the relationship is stronger when prevention focus is low. These provide an interesting and additional insight that employees with prevention focus do not necessarily reject any possibility of risk and their behavior to pursue for changes can be influenced or motivated by their leaders. This idea seems in contrast to prior research suggesting that employees with prevention focus are keen on safety, security and compliance (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). Despite personality traits have effects on job attitude and work behaviors via regulatory focus; however, employee with low prevention focus can be influenced by their supervisors by uplifting their confidence and competence such that their willingness to take risk will become higher which in turn engage in challenging or risky behavior such as change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior when there is regulatory fit (Ahmadi et al., 2017; Dimotakis et al., 2012). Regulatory fit is about people's subconscious process of adaptation to adjust their thinking to become more congruent with their environment and it is arguably that empowering leaders' behavior can have association with employees' regulatory orientation, attitudes and change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors when employees with low regulatory focus feel right about what they are doing, they will be more likely motivated to pursue the goal (Higgins, 2000, 2002).

Another result in this study indicates that perceived organizational support can moderate the relationship between empowering leadership and willingness to take risk when it is of high level but the relationship is negative. Theoretically, employees will reciprocate with behaviors which benefit their organizations when they receive support from their organizations from the perspective of social exchange; however, the result of this study demonstrates a phenomenon when there is high level of perceived organizational support, employees are in the comfort zone and they are unlikely to take risk to challenge the status quo. Therefore, when the leader is supportive, high level of perceived organizational support will decrease the employee's willingness to take risk (Li et, al., 2014).

## **6.2 Practical Significance**

This study provides insights to the organizations which require flexible and dynamic workforce for high adaptability towards drastic market changes, surging customer demands and the deployment of business transformation. Empowering leadership with the attributes of encouraging employees' autonomy, enhancing meaningfulness of the work, expressing confidence in the employee and their self-direction can influence employee to cognitively engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, provision of effective employee training programs to develop leaders' empowering leadership behaviors can cultivate a promising contextual factor to facilitate change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior which is beneficial to organizations

Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that leaders and organizations could utilize both the selection and managerial interventions to better encourage the employee to engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior by triggering their cognitive process and regulatory focus mechanisms and it is notably that employees with promotion focus tend to engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior while employee with low prevention focus and low promotion focus can be influenced by the empowering leader to uplift their willingness to take risk to participate in such behavior. Therefore, effective training aimed at managing employees' prevention and promotion foci might instill in them a higher willingness to take risk when they perceive potential risks as opportunities to initiate constructive efforts and make good decision choices for the betterment of the organizations (Choi, 2007).

Organizations can also arrange specific training programs to develop the employees' confidence and competence with mentality change and the acquisition of the relevant skill sets to cope with the ever-changing business landscape and motivate them to face the potential risks when they encounter problems or challenges in their workplace. Setting up a robust risk management regime which can cultivate a healthy risk attitude and culture. All these can result in their exhibition of extra-role behaviors courageously.

Undoubtedly, effective human resources strategies can recruit the leaders and employees with certain personality traits, attitude, goal orientations or regulatory focus that reflect a positive attitude of willingness to take risk and provide them with the necessary resources such as support and motivation to drive the success of the individuals and the competitive advantage of the organizations (Amadi, 2017).

In summary, from a managerial standpoint, new knowledge about predictors or antecedents of

change-oriented organizational citizenship can help practitioners design interventions for promoting change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. This study will contribute to the management and human resources domains by understanding the perfect mix of a workforce for those activities which require the employees to take initiatives and expect them to have an attitude of willingness to take risk to tackle the challenges.

In a nutshell, this study is meant to address all the issues, with an attempt to confirm the conventional wisdom that recruiting the right people with the provision of the right atmosphere, culture and psychological factors can facilitate employees to engage in behaviors which can help the organizations to sustain in the playing ground.

### **6.3 Limitation and Future Research**

Several limitations should be noted when interpreting the results from this study and they could be addressed by future research. First, the data was obtained in a mixed cultural context and the generalizability of my results to Western countries remain unclear. Hong Kong is an international financial centre where East meets West and the nine financial institutions for this research study have different cultures. Among the nine financial institutions, one is an UK bank, one is a Japanese bank, one is a Chinese financial institution, one is a US bank while the remaining five are Hong Kong based financial institutions. Although an increasing amount of organizational research is being conducted in China with relatively similar findings to the West (Chen, Tjosvold, & Lu, 2006), it is important to consider the extent to which the findings may be culture specific. For instance, mainland China is a country with high social desirability and high distance power and therefore Chinese employees are more reluctant to engage in proactive and challenging behaviors than western employees as they dare not to ruin the relationship with others. Thus, the role of empowering leadership in promoting employees' change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior may be distinct in a pure Chinese society. It is recommended for future research to study the relationship in a pure Chinese culture and Western culture to observe the generalizability of the results.

Second, the issue of omitted variables, failing to include important control variables, could result in estimated coefficients of regression inconsistency. To address this issue, several control variables such as gender, age, tenure with supervisor and perceived organizational politics were included in order to minimize the issue in the research model. Other control variables such as Big Five personality traits which may affect the variables such as regulatory focus (Wallace, et al., 2006) can be included for the future research.

Finally, from the perspective of levels of analysis in the domain of leadership, the current study only examined the influence of empowering leadership at the individual level with the matched data from dyad relationship. Despite this study has controlled the variance from teams, a better study would include all sources to report about all variables so that multiple levels of analysis such as group level and team level in empowering leadership could be tested. Since empirical studies indicate that organizational citizenship behavior does influence work-group and unit performance (Podsakoff and MacMenzie, 1997) and according to Maynard et al. (2013), it is unclear whether competent teams or groups are likely to embrace or resist empowering initiatives, future research should also examine whether empowering leadership can influence change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior with team-level as unit of analysis.

It is recommended that future research can also study the potential moderating effects of other organizational context such as task routinization, intrinsically satisfying tasks, power distance orientation and procedural justice which have been found to influence organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000) but still no idea in the area of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

In addition, future research can investigate the potential moderating effects of individual differences such as felt responsibility for change, accountability, psychological safety, thriving at work and autonomy orientation. It seems plausible that understanding the employee's cognitive decision process can enrich the literature in behavioral decision domain and can foster more effective human resources and management practices.

Moreover, assessing multiple mediators in a single study might help determine which of these possibilities is accurate.

In view of the overlapping conceptual definitions of change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior among different scholars, it is essential for future research to test rigorously for the discriminant validity of the constructs and their measures. Future research needs to provide evidence not only of whether the measure is reliable and valid, but also whether they are distinct from measures of closely related construct.

Future research can also consider applying a longitudinal design in the study of willingness to take risk to increase the internal validity of the relationships tested in the present study. A longitudinal design could further explicate the causal link between willingness to take risk and change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and study the possibility of reverse causality.

Finally, in order to examine what benefits can be brought from change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, it is recommended to study its influence on individual, team and organizational performances.

## **7. Conclusion**

To conclude, the research results from the matched data on employees and their supervisors demonstrate the importance of empowering leadership on employee's cognitive process to engage in change-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the results show that the antecedents such as willingness to take risk and promotion focus predict change-organizational citizenship behavior uniquely, differentially and interactively. More importantly, the study reinforced previous empirical research that empowering leadership can influence employees' attitude and their behavior. The mediation effect from willingness to take risk advances the domain in leadership and decision management. From a scholarly perspective, information highlighting the under-investigated predictors can enrich the existing literature and facilitate future research.

From management perspective, the research results provide the leaders, senior management and human resources managers with more understanding of empowering leadership and its effects on employee's attitudes and organizational behavior. These can provide grounds for them to develop their people strategy more effectively. More importantly, this study would be welcomed by

organizations doing business in Hong Kong or companies with similar culture to foster a social and psychological work environment conducive to the accomplishment of organizational goals by creating opportunities for the suitable employees to perform their change-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors which are beneficial to the sustainability and viability of the organizations.

Since not all employees are likely to be empowered and not all leaders are willing to empower their employees, it is crucial for the financial institutions to recruit, train and forge a flexible and dynamic team which has the cognitive ability and willingness to take risk to speak up courageously, challenge the status quo and make constructive change to avoid any breach in regulatory compliance, default in operations, product defects, error in transactions, competition from rivals, etc. which may lead to huge financial loss, regulators' reprimand and impose of penalty, loss in customers' trust, loss in competitiveness and eventually collapse.

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