Factors influencing the change-supportive behavior: learning agility, perception of reasons and benefits for change

Fatores que influenciam o comportamento de apoio à mudança: agilidade de aprendizagem, percepção dos motivos e benefícios para a mudança

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ABSTRACT
This study aimed at describing the influence of individual factors such as Learning Agility and the perception of reasons and benefits for change on change-supportive behavior. The study has also tested the effect of leadership position on learning agility and on change-supportive behaviors. The model was tested by a cross-section quantitative study in two corporations, with a sample of 324 employees. It used four instruments (learning agility scale, scales of reasons and benefits for change, and scale of behavioral responses to change) with evidence of validity, in addition to standard multiple regression analyses and structural equations to test the model. Results point out that reasons and benefits perceived for change and learning agility predict change-supportive behaviors, and also that leadership position predicts change-supportive behaviors.

Keywords: learning agility, leadership position, change-supportive behavior, reasons and benefits for change.

RESUMO
Este estudo teve como objetivo descrever a influência de fatores individuais como a Agilidade de Aprendizagem e a percepção de razões e benefícios para a mudança no comportamento de apoio à mudança. O estudo também testou o efeito da posição de liderança na agilidade de aprendizagem e nos comportamentos de apoio à mudança. O modelo foi testado por um estudo quantitativo transversal em duas corporações, com uma amostra de 324 empregados. Utilizou quatro instrumentos (escala de agilidade de aprendizagem, escalas de razões e benefícios para a mudança, e escala de respostas comportamentais à mudança) com evidência de validade, além de análises de regressão múltipla padrão e equações estruturais para testar o modelo. Os resultados apontam que
razões e benefícios percebidos para a mudança e a agilidade de aprendizagem prevem comportamentos de suporte à mudança, e também que a posição de liderança prevê comportamentos de suporte à mudança.

**Palavras-chave:** agilidade de aprendizagem, posição de liderança, comportamento de apoio à mudança, razões e benefícios para a mudança.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Change is part of the everyday of people and organizations. Both the academy and corporations have tried to understand this topic by virtue of its complexity and depth regarding its antecedents and consequences, mainly focusing on the human aspect (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). Around 70% of the initiatives of change fail, and one of the main factors for such failure is the resistance of people. This justifies the increasing interest on the matter (Beer & Nohria, 2001).

Change-supportive behaviors is the most desired positive reaction intended by corporations (Kim, et al., 2011) and it makes this manifestation a critical aspect to successful changes (Vakola, 2016). Support to organizational change can be defined as behaviors consistent with the objectives of change (Vakola, 2016), and it occurs when collaborators actively participate in actions that facilitate and contribute to a change started by the organization (Kim et al., 2011). Since understanding the change-supportive behaviors is crucial to drive the implementation of changes (Carter et al., 2013), understanding what “makes sense” to employees during the process also is. In situations of organizational change employees try to explain change, supported by a subjective vision and their values that, together, build their response to organizational change (Lysova et al., 2015). Responses related to support to change may result from the perception of career opportunity, understanding of initiatives of change (Lysova et al., 2015), participation of managers during the process, employees’ evaluation of the program, and perceptions on the usefulness of the intervention (Carter, et al., 2013).

Employees are more prone to organizational changes when they trust in organization leaders or when the organization shows concern about the worker’s quality of life (Cunningham, 2006). Understanding change may bring about commitment to the process. Commitment to change was found to be one of the predictors of positive behaviors related to organizational changes (Fedor & Herold, 2006; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).
But what makes an employee support the change process in organizations? Research disclose a lack of studies on positive responses of employees to the processes of changes, as most of the studies deal with negative responses such as resistance (Vakola, 2016; Vakola, Armenakis, & Oreg, 2013). Considering this scenario, the factors associated to behaviors supportive to organizational change should be understood (Kim, Hornung, & Rosseau, 2011) as this construct presents a more positive perspective to change process. This article also considers that understanding the complexity of individuals’ reactions during organizational change is relevant and beneficial to provide inputs to interventions (Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007).

Understanding the reactions to organizational change is critical to the success of changes (Bartunek et al., 2006; Oreg, et al., 2011; Vakola, 2016). Literature reports a wide range of surveys about attitudes related to the implementation of change, such as readiness to change (Puspasari, Sukmawati, & Sumertajaya, 2017; Weiner, 2009), openness to change (Cunningham, 2006) and behaviors of resistance to change (Oreg, et al., 2011). However, few studies investigate behavioral responses of support to change (Kim et al., 2011; Nery & Neiva, 2015). This gap is the driver of this search that pursues understanding this behavior and its influences during change process.

2 CHANGE-SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORS

Many constructs approach the employees’ responses to process of changes; however, few ones directly approach behavioral responses (Kim, et al., 2011). The organization members may commit to or support an organizational change because they want (appraise change), because there is no other option (few options) or because they must (are mandated). Responses based on “want” reflect the highest level of commitment and support to organizational changes (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). According to those authors, three dimensions of behavior favorable to change could be advocated: compliance, cooperation and advocacy. Compliance refers to the employees’ willingness to do what the organization demands during the implementation of change. Cooperation refers to acceptance of the “change spirit” and willingness to make it work. Finally, advocacy refers to employees’ willingness to accept change and “sell it” to others.

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Perception of Reasons and Benefits for Organizational Change

Most theories also assume that people use some way of rational measurement pursuing their own interests (Schwandt, 2005). The model of change-supportive behavior is also based on rationality and planned behavior (Kim et al., 2011), since it considers that individuals are motivated to adhere to an object or process when it “makes sense”, i.e., when it has a reason to be or when situations or actions entail benefits that cater to individual interests (Kim et al., 2011).

The sensemaking perspective could be considered to understand individual willingness to express behaviors supportive to change (Schwandt, 2005). Sensemaking process is based on previous knowledge to assign meaning to new information. It is facilitated by schemes (Balogun, 2006; Bartunek, et al., 2006) that reduce the complexity of the information received and allow associating actions to past meanings (Schwandt, 2005). That association facilitates understanding the process of change and brings meaning to the process experienced by the individual. Understanding the meaning and reasons for change could also enhance the perception of professional development (Bartunek et al., 2006).

Reasons for change involve creation of a purpose or sensemaking of the change. This helps members to accept the need for changes (Kim et al., 2011, Vakola, 2016) as they assist making sense to the process of changes. Such reasons or “sense” of the process may be related to change-supportive behaviors (Kim et al., 2011, Vakola, 2016).
The addressees can also measure organizational change in terms of their own gains, either perceived or anticipated (Kim et al., 2011, Vakola, 2016) or loses, as changes make the quality of some aspects of their job or professional lives improve or not (Vakola, 2016). The benefits anticipated from change refer to change expected results of personal worth for the employees (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011; Kim et al., 2011). The perception of gains may increase adherence and participation of individuals in processes of change (Bartunek et al., 2006). This supports the argument that supportive behavior is positively related to the perception of gains or benefits entailing from change.

Labor relationships quality, formal engagement and perceived benefits are related to supportive behavior to organizational change (Kim et al., 2011) and become more and more important as change advances. When the individuals perceive the benefits of change, they tend to present supportive behaviors over time, making conscious decisions of engaging in change.

Organization members appraise an organizational change for many reasons: they value change, assess their need, perceive benefits or if the change “is worth it” (Weiner, 2009), suggesting worthiness of organization change to individuals. The organizational change worthiness may be made up by both extrinsic (awards, benefits) and intrinsic (autonomy, fulfillment, satisfaction) components (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). When the change worthiness becomes positive, it may be influenced by the perception of change benefits related to favorable reactions to the process (Fedor, Caldwell & Herold, 2006; Kim et al., 2011).

These arguments give rise to the two hypotheses of the study:

H1: The perception of reasons for change (RMO) positively affects change-supportive behaviors;

H2: The perception of benefits for change (RMO) positively affects change-supportive behaviors.

Reasons and benefits perceived with organizational change may be considered good predictors of change-supportive behaviors (Fedor et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2011). However, may authors theorize about relationships of that support and the learning process (Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Puspasari et al., 2017) and other personal dispositional traits (Oreg et al., 2011; Vakola, Armenakis, & Oreg, 2013).
3 LEARNING AGILITY

Process of change demands organizations and their members to understand the experiences and change towards the proposed direction (Oreg et al., 2011; Vakola et al., 2013). The individual and dispositional characteristics are constructs that explain consistent standards of behavior in different situations (Kira, Van Eijnatten, & Balkin, 2010). Those traits are associated to individual responses to organizational changes (Oreg et al., 2011) and affect success of the proposed actions (Nery & Neiva, 2015).

Although the individual and dispositional characteristics have been associated to a wide range of items related to change, such as age and cognitive capacity (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004), attitudes (Nery & Neiva, 2015), result-driven (Schlosser & McNaughton, 2007), and leadership position (Carter et al., 2013), the interest in understanding how individual characteristics and behaviors affect the responses to changes (Vakola, 2016; Oreg et al., 2011) is recent.

Literature in the field seems to agree that change is associated to the learning by individuals and organizations, as it demands new behaviors of individuals in the workplace. The experience of interaction between the individual and their environment would allow them “learning” something that would be further manifested or evidenced through change in their behaviors (Fiol & Lyles, 1985).

The concept of learning agility is on the intersection between the learning topics and individual characteristics as phenomena that affect the employees’ behavior during the processes of change, as it could help explaining the different reactions to changes (Allen, 2016; Burke, 2016; Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004).

Learning could be defined as the process of improving actions through knowledge and understanding (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Despite the large number of surveys on the main learning topics, as support to learning, on-the-job informal learning, and individual attributes that promote learning, doubts remain about why some individuals pass by the experiential learning process faster than others. Similarly, current research will also explain why some individuals are more flexible to understand a given situation, can change their minds and viewpoints in an easier way and, finally, can connect ideas and situations more easily than other persons (De Meuse, Guangrong, & Hallenbeck, 2010). The aforementioned characteristics are associated to the concept of Learning Agility.

Learning Agility could be defined as an individual characteristic that refers to the capacity and willingness to learn with experience and further apply the learning to a new
situation. Individuals with high level of Learning Agility present learning characteristics linked to adaptability, speed and search for challenges. Moreover, they actively seek feedback from peers and managers to grow and progress. These individuals are keener to express sharp curiosity, high tolerance to ambiguous situations, interpersonal relationship skills, vision and innovation (Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004). They are also more prone to continuous self-reflection (De Meuse et al., 2010), global assessment of the environment (Sheldon, Dunning, & Ames, 2014), and to reach results and improve performance in the long term (De Rue, Asford, & Myers, 2012). According to the last authors, theoretical accuracy of the concept of Learning Agility will be enhanced by specifically thinking over issues related to speed and flexibility in learning process.

Some authors (e.g., Silzer & Church, 2009; Swisher, 2013) reinforce the important role of learning components to identify high potential and improve performances. Other authors (e.g., Ahn & Ettner, 2014; Jones & Geoges, 2014) are concerned about the attributes that differentiate leaders from non-leaders. This somewhat recent construction of Learning Agility is increasingly recognized as crucial to the long-term success of leadership (Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004). It is also recognized as predictor of the adaptation of leaders to new situations (e.g., Ahn & Ettner, 2014; Jones & Geoges, 2014), besides playing a role in the connection among leadership, learning and intended behaviors (e.g., Silzer & Church, 2009; Swisher, 2013). In particular, given that learning agility is an individual characteristic (a stable trait), it is likely that individuals who demonstrate learning agility emerge as leaders (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). Alternatively, we proposed a moderation: Leaders who have high learning agility, engage more strongly in change supportive behaviors.

Some authors (e.g., Bahrami, Kiani, Montazeralfaraj, Zadeh, & Zadeh, 2016; Lim, Yoo, Kim, & Brickell, 2017) advocate for and investigate association between Learning Agility and the adaptive performance. Learning Agility could arise as an essential competence both at the level of individual and organizational to solve several problems caused by internal and external influencers in an organization. Considering the quick change of global and technological environment, organizations are facing new situations and require individuals with Leaning Agility to hold strategic roles in the organization. These individuals are considered strategic and agents of change. Not only they seek for different experiences, but also learn positions of value and new ideas through the processes of change (Lim, et al., 2017).
The influence of leaders on learning process and readiness of employees in processes of organizational change has been object of some studies (Puspasari et al., 2017). According to these authors, the work of leaders as the organizational communication led to direct positive impact on employees’ participation, and an indirect positive impact on employees’ readiness to changes in business environment.

Moreover, the participation of employees has also created direct positive influence to the readiness of employees towards adhering to changes in business environment.

Results of that study also suggest the owners to actively communicate the planning of changes to improve the employees’ participation (Puspasari et al., 2017).

This study assumes that Learning Agility plays a core role to contribute to improve individual results during changes, as the process of change enables some individuals to quickly learn with experience. Learning Agility level may influence the positive behavioral responses to the process of change (De Rue et al., 2012) as it triggers more efficient learning and adaptation process, focused on mind openness, risk-taking capacity, speed and flexibility (Swisher, 2013).

Surveys associate Learning Agility to individuals considered to have high potential to perform leadership activities in organizations, and to individuals that easily fit into new situations (De Rue et al., 2012; Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004). Managers usually face situations to which their corporations are not ready. In this environment of uncertainty, they must anticipate, consider, influence and shape beliefs in search for support to the implementation and commitment to initiatives of change (Carter et al., 2013) and influence those managed by them to adhere to the changes (Carter et al., 2013).

If managers serve as agent of change and may experience different reactions to the process of change (Burke, 2014, Burke, 2016) understanding the construct of Learning Agility and its relationship with leadership positions is more and more important. That presence may indicate greater mind openness and speed of adaptation (Allen, 2016; Burke, 2016; De Meuse et al., 2010) and also differentiate them regarding the behavior supportive to changes. These arguments give rise to other hypotheses of the study:

H3: Individuals holding leadership positions present higher levels of learning agility;
H4: Individuals holding leadership positions present higher levels of change-supportive behaviors;
H5: Higher levels of Learning Agility are associated to change-supportive behaviors.

H6: The relationship between change-supportive behavior and holding leadership position is mediated by the presence of Learning Agility.

Figure 1 resumes the relationships hypothesized and tested by the study.

Figure 1: Hypothesized model

![Figure 1: Hypothesized model]

Source: It was elaborated by authors

Having described the hypotheses, the objectives of this study are resumed: i) identify the influence of perceptions of reasons (RMO), benefits to organizational change (BMO) and Learning Agility (ELA) on change-supportive behaviors of a set of workers from two Brazilian organizations undergoing processes of change; ii) test the moderator effect of leadership position on the relationships present in the model; and, iii) test if the relationship between change-supportive behavior and holding leadership position was mediated by the presence of high levels of learning agility among managers.

4 METHOD

4.1 PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURES

A large sample of Brazilian employees participated in this study, totaling 324 respondents from two Brazilian organizations. Organization 1 is a public company in the field of bank loans that has 800 employees and 437 were invited to participate, as they belong to the same regional unit. Of these, 181 employees responded the survey, and the return rate was 41%. Organization 2 is a multinational in the field of sales of technology...
products and services that has 231 employees and all of them were invited to participate in the survey. Of these, 143 employees responded the survey, and the return rate was 62%.

The mean age of participants was 26 years old (SD=0.96), of which 56% are aged between 25 and 34 years, 23% between 18 and 24 years, and 17% between 35 to 44 years. Most were women, accounting for 57%. Most of the employees work for the company from 6 months to 2 years (36%) and from 2 years to 5 years (32%). As regards the positions held, 41% were in the sales area, 19% in administrative positions, and 30% in other areas of the organizations. Regarding the analysis of positions, 81% are in operational positions and 19% in leadership positions in the organizations.

The study employed scales translated and adapted to Brazil, applied to respondents through an on-line and face-to-face questionnaire applied in organizations undergoing processes of organizational change. In Organization 1, the survey was publicized by e-mailing the link that directed participants to a webpage with explanations about the study and the questionnaire. The face-to-face application was performed only in Organization 2, by applying the questionnaire (60% of respondents) in a room reserved to the survey at pre-defined time. A test on means difference was performed and showed no difference between both types of application.

4.2 INSTRUMENTS

The LAS (Learning Agility Scale) was originally studied by Burke (2016) and tested by Franco (2017) in Brazil. It presents a multifactor structure composed by sixteen items, eight factors and a 7-point scale (1 – the lowest value and 7 – the highest level) that analyzes the following factors: mind openness, collaboration, reflection, search for information, speed, flexibility, feedback and risk-taking capacity. The values of factor loadings are above 0.50, and the Cronbach’s Alpha for all is above 0.75. The adjustment measures ($\chi^2$/df = 1.69; CFI = 0.92; RMSEA = .06) are compatible with those presented by Burke (2016). Example of one item of the scale: “I react well to unexpected problems”. Those results were replicated in the findings in Brazil (Franco, 2017) involving the cultural adaptation of the instrument to Brazil, where factor loadings reported values above 0.60, the Cronbach’s Alpha above 0.78 and proper adjustment measures ($\chi^2$/df = 5.9; CFI = .91; GFI = .91; NFI = .90; RMSEA = .09).

The scales of reasons for organizational change (RMO) and Benefits for change (BMO) were built based on the review of literature and on the instrument of Kim et al.
The RMO scale reports unifactorial 7-item structure and assesses the occurrence of responses related to employees’ perception about the organization’s reasons for change. Factor loadings values are above 0.50 and the Cronbach’s Alpha is near to 0.90, and the adequate adjustment measures ($\chi^2$/df = 2.3; CFI=.96; RMSEA= .07) are similar to the results of the original instrument (Kim et al., 2011). Example of a RMO item: “The organization should change to be more competitive in the market”.

The BMO scale has a unifactorial structure, and the 10 items assess the occurrence of responses linked to the individuals’ perception of benefits and opportunities resulting from the organizational change. The values of factor loadings are above 0.50, and the Cronbach’s Alpha is above 0.91. The adjustment measures ($\chi^2$/df = 1.18; CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.04) are adequate according to Kim et al. (2011) and ratified in the Brazilian sample. Example of a BMO item “Organizational change will result in raise of salary and benefits to me”.

Finally, the instrument to measure change-supportive behavior presented by Nery and Neiva (2015) has bi-factorial structure and the nine items assess occurrence of behavioral responses supportive to change. The factor “change-supportive behaviors” comprises the issuance of behaviors desired by the process of change. Cronbach’s Alpha was above .90, eigenvalues above .40, and the adjustment measures of confirmatory factorial analysis were adequate ($\chi^2$/df = 2.06; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .06). Example of one item of the scale: “I behave favorably to change”.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Initially, assumptions of multivariate statistical analyses (atypical data, missing data, normal distribution of variables, multicollinearity, linearity, homoscedasticity and singularity) were performed. No violation to the aforementioned assumptions was found, and the data analysis was continued. Decision on retaining of data or exclusion of database was made based on recommendations by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Three external multivariate outliners were found. However, as exclusion did not cause relevant changes in the analysis of the assumptions and final results, the cases were extracted from the database.

Missing data were found in less than 5% of the sample (corresponding to items in blank/not responded in the questionnaires), accounting for extremely low percentage of
data lost considering the total items of the instrument. Thus, following the recommendations by Tabachnick and Fidel (2013) those missing data were replaced by the mean value of the respective data. This decision was made once to the study all variables should remain in the analysis, and the values of regression coefficients and structural equations should be simultaneously estimated to all variables.

After checking the theoretical and statistical assumptions, the standard multiple regression (RM) was performed to verify the relationships of prediction between the variables of criterions and antecedent variables. The analysis adopted is expected to check the contribution of each antecedent variable (RMO, BMO and Learning Agility) in the equation in terms of to which extent each of them adds explanation to the criterion variable (behavior supportive to change). Moreover, a model of relationships between the variables was tested through structural equations. This model, developed to test hypotheses of the study, was formulated based on factorial scores of the variables after exploratory and confirmatory factorial analysis of the instruments (Franco, 2017). As it is a complex model of many variables, we decided to work with factorial scores and a factorial analysis of the factorial scores of the learning agility instrument to confirm the multidimensional structure of the concept.

To test the influence of variance of common method, a one-factor model was used that did not present an acceptable fit (NFI = 0.49; CFI = 0.38 and NNFI = 0.51). The single factor model is used to assess whether there is an effect of variance of common method (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). When there is no adjustment in this model, it is concluded that the variance of the common method alone does not explain the results found.

5 RESULTS

Descriptive analyses of the variables were performed and the results are presented in Table 1. The indexes show the behavior of the variables of the study, suggesting that participants’ responses were generally above the mean point of the scale, with reasonable standard deviation value. Table 1 shows that RMO, BMO and Speed were the variable with highest means.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results of bivariate correlations among the explanatory variables in Table 1 do not report correlations above .80, indicating lack of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, the antecedent variables showed to be correlated to the criterion variable, but little correlated one to another.

The RMO, BMO and Learning Agility measures in general are little related one to another. Table 1 shows that the RMO and BMO variables are, among the variables studies, more strongly correlated with the variable of change-supportive behavior. Next, values of tolerance and VIF (variation inflation factor) were analyzed to check collinearity, Tolerance values below .1 or VIF values above 5 or 10 show problems of collinearity (Field, 2009). However, VIF and tolerance values did not suggest problems of collinearity among the variables investigated.

Table 2 presents the results of the MR analysis using the standard method to check the relationship of prediction between antecedent variables and the criterion variable. The $R = .75$ suggests strong correlation among the variables of the study. The $R^2 = (.52)$ and the adjusted $R^2 = (.50)$ indicated that the regression model adopted is a good predictive model. Together, the antecedent variables explain a significant share (52%) of the variability of scores by participants in the criterion variable – Change-supportive Behavior.
Table 2: Analysis of the Multiple Regressions Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard model</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.444</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>0.241*</td>
<td>7.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMO</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.253*</td>
<td>3.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMO</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.241*</td>
<td>3.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>1.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>1.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.184*</td>
<td>3.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>-0.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>1.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>1.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>-0.438</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.178*</td>
<td>-4.365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Square R Adjusted square R Standard error of the estimate Durbin-Watson
.75* .52 .50 .67 1.91


* p≤ .05
Source: It was elaborated by authors

The Beta weights were analyzed in the standard MR to find the importance of each variable in the explanation of the criterion variable. Thus, the Beta weight values are always comparable as these are standardized. In the model, the variables Perceived benefits – BMO (β =.253), Perception of the reasons for change – RMO (β =.241) and Speed (β =.184) are more important to predict the behaviors supportive to changes. Regarding the Position, the model suggests differences in supportive behaviors depending on the position. In this sense, managers (β = .178) reported more behavior supportive to change than non-managers. The variables feedback, reflection, risks and position presented negative standardized beta coefficients non significant to the variable of behavior supportive to change.

The standardized values of the regression weights (betas) showed that perception of Reasons (RMO) and Benefits perceived for change (BMO), Speed and Position generated greater changes to the criterion variable. Based on the results found we can infer that respondents with more change-supportive behaviors are those with higher speed in the learning process during the organizational change, understand better the reasons for change, perceive the benefits generated by change and, generally, hold managerial positions.

Next, the model that assesses the hypotheses of the study was tested and is shown in Figure 2.
The adjustment indexes for the proposed structural model are considered reasonable and are presented in Table 3. The re-specified models present a relationship between , indicated by the software used, MPlus. The estimation method was the Maximum Likelihood – ML, together with the Diagonally weighted least squares (WLSMV). The WLSMV is the most robust method that does not assume that variables are normally distributed, mainly in relation to ordinal variables (Brown, 2015).

Table 3: Indexes of the Model Adequacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>$\chi^2 \gamma$</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>RMSEA (CI 95%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial model</td>
<td>274.77</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.11 (.09-.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-specified model</td>
<td>216.62</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.421</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.10 (.089-.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remark. *p < .001; d.f. = degrees of freedom; CI = confidence interval (95%).

The models tested present good adjustment indexes, indicating that relationships presented are empirically supported. After the general testing and based on results, the hypotheses stipulated in the model were analyzed. The first hypothesis was fully
supported. The effect of the relationship between reasons for changing and behaviors supportive to changes is positive and significant (β = .29, p < .001), although moderate. In all models tested, the magnitude of effect presented similar values. The effect of the relation between benefits perceived with change and behaviors supportive to change is positive and significant (β = .24; p < .001). The effect of the relationship between position and behaviors supportive to change is also positive (β = .17, p < .001). Therefore, the second and the fourth hypotheses were also supported. The results about magnitude of the effect on the relationships tested are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Magnitude of the effect of the relationships tested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>Non-standardized</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position-Learning</td>
<td>.145</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning-support</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMO-support</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>4.324</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMO-support</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>3.616</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position-support</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: It was elaborated by authors.

The third and the fifth hypotheses regard the effects related to learning agility and were supported by the results. Individuals holding leadership positions also present the highest indexes of learning agility (β = .21; p < .001). Moreover, the relationship between learning agility and behavior supporting to change is positive and reports the highest index among the relationships tested (β = .35; p < .001).

The indirect relationship between holding a leadership position and behavior supportive to change was tested in the study, through the mediation of learning agility, presented in Table 5. According to the literature, when the mediating variable is included in the regression equation, the impact of the independent variable on the dependent is reduced or neutralized (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 5: Result of the mediation test to the dependent variable of behavior supportive to organizational changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>0.17**</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning agility</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: It was elaborated by authors.

The results of the mediation test suggest that learning agility (partially) mediates the relationship between holding a leadership position and change-supportive behaviors.
The results of the learning agility mediation test for the variable behavior supportive to organizational change suggest that the indirect effects were evidenced by the use of the bootstrapping technique (Hayes, 2017). In other words, the relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variable reduced its magnitude after the inclusion of the mediator variable (Byrne, 2016; Hayes, 2017).

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study was to identify the influences of perceptions of reasons (RMO) and benefits for change (BMO) and Learning Agility (ELA) on behaviors supportive to organizational changes, in a sample of Brazilian workers belonging to the staff of two organizations that were going through processes of organizational change. A second objective was to test the moderator effect of leadership position on the relationships present in the model, as well as to test whether the relationship between behavior supportive to changes and holding leadership position was mediated by the presence of high levels of learning agility in managers. Considering the results previously described, it is concluded that the objective was achieved, thus providing a predictive model that addresses antecedents and behaviors supportive to change for a sample in the Brazilian context.

The indexes of correlations obtained between the variables of RMO and BMO and behaviors supportive to changes corroborate the results found by the study carried out by Kim et al. (2011) that pointed out that perception of reasons and benefits of organizational change drives the behavior of individuals and directs them to present the required behaviors during programs of change. Thus, knowing the reasons for change and the likely benefits of the process facilitate the emergence of the desirable behaviors. According to the theory of planned behavior, the perceived benefits of organizational change are factors that generate expectations regarding the results of the change, something crucial to determine the level of support to changes (Bartunek et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2011). The perception of the reasons and benefits of change affects the worthiness of change and can make it more attractive, so individuals can make the decision to support it based on their individual expectations (Vakola, 2016). The benefits anticipated from change refer to the expected results of the change of personal worth for the employees (Kim et al., 2011; Oreg et al., 2011; Vakola et al., 2013). Although recent reviews of the literature on this topic show that 42% of the studies included a variable
related to the benefits perceived by employees (Kim et al., 2011), in Brazil the studies related to organizational changes do not attach high interest in understanding perceived benefits.

Any organizational change generates uncertainty and speculations. The results of this study reinforce the idea that clearly disclosing the direction and purpose behind the changes helps to mitigate employees resistance (Kira et al., 2010), insofar as they must believe that there is a latent reason or need for change (Bartunek et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2011). Individuals seek to clarify what is happening when they face moments of ambiguity or uncertainty (Balogun, 2006). In the process of organizational change, “sensemaking” seems to be a cognitive and conscious process. Apparently, human beings seek “sense” by extracting and interpreting the suggestions of our environment (Bartunek et al., 2006; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). However, not knowing it, the way to see clues is, in itself, limited and contaminated by previous experiences, education, relationships with other relevant events, change of context, but, above all, by all types of processes of social perception and social learning (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

The results found regarding the relationships between position and behavior supportive to organizational changes corroborate the research on quality of relationships between leaders and employees (Carter et al., 2013), possibility of professional advancement and career challenges in change (Lysova et al., 2015) and orientation to results and processes of change. Managers, in most cases, have a different view that could affect the behavior of subordinates with regard to pointing directions and the positive worthiness of change (Ahearne, Lam, Mathieu, & Bolander, 2010; Balogun, 2006).

Based on the results achieved in this study, it is plausible to admit that managers tend to learn faster about the process of change, perceive the benefits and reasons for changing, and show more supportive behaviors. The fact that the Learning Agility characteristic mediates the relationship between the leadership position and behaviors supportive to change reinforces this crucial role of learning to support programs of change (Ahearne et al., 2010; Balogun, 2006). This finding highlights the role of leadership in change (Howell, & Shamir, 2005), the need for criticism, rationality and understanding the internal context by leaders (Jones & George, 2014) and the role of leader as a transformative agent to minimize negative behaviors during changes (Herold et al., 2007; Jones & George, 2014). Learning is presented as the main driver of change, through the
strengthening of leaders, which causes organizations to transform a situation of stagnation into an active process (Howell, & Shamir, 2005; Schwandt, 2005).

Learning Agility is considered to be an individual characteristic related to speed and flexibility (Allen, 2016; Burke, 2016; De Rue et al., 2012; De Meuse, 2010). According to the results found in this study, the most prominent aspects of this variable that predicts supportive behaviors are related to speed. When analyzed in the light of its components, the factors of mind openness, search for information, flexibility, search for feedback, reflection, collaboration and risk-taking capacity did not present significant prediction of behaviors supportive to change. However, when analyzed in global terms, this attribute consistently predicts behaviors supportive to change and also mediates the relationship between holding position and behaviors supportive to change. This result is surprising at first glance, and may be related to the need for better measuring this attribute, which may still be in the embryonic phase, as the results of the confirmatory analysis seem to confirm these attributes (Allen, 2016; Burke, 2016; Brown, 2015, Franco, 2017) and the analysis of this study points to a structure with second-order latent variables (Brown, 2015).

These findings support studies linked to positive reactions and behaviors to changes, suggesting that search for information (Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2013), tolerance to ambiguity (Weiner, 2009), openness to experiences (Ahearne et al., 2010) and need for feedback are variables that influence behaviors linked to organizational change (Herol et al., 2007; Heuvel et al., 2013).

6.1 FINAL REMARKS

It can be seen that the current study contributes to shedding light on the facets of organizational changes and providing more evidence that can help organizations to manage and improve communication and understanding of processes of change, assisting in the diagnosis of key variables for successful implementation.

The main objective was to identify factors that influence behaviors supportive to organizational changes. Thus, the perception and evaluation that the benefits of change can be important for individuals to show positive reactions should be emphasized. Understanding the reasons and motives for change to occur, in turn, could also facilitate the process of organizational change. Understanding how individuals support change and what factors affect that support can be the key to drive processes and foster positive
behaviors in relation to change (Burke, 2014).

The results found in this study point in the direction that leadership plays an important role of influence on the followers that could contribute make clear the reasons and benefits of organizational change, and thus, trigger the conquest of more support than resistance to change.

The speed with which the individual captures the direction of changes (learning agility) helps in adaptation and could also result in behaviors supportive to change. The behavior of the managers themselves when implementing changes is something that should be investigated more deeply (Carter et al., 2013), since leaders must be, by nature, efficient agents, models or guides in the process of organizational change (Herold et al., 2007). By transforming followers' beliefs and values, leaders are able to enhance employees’ self-efficacy and provide confidence that change can be beneficial (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

When leading organizational change, professionals must keep in mind that active support by the employee is a dynamic function of perceived benefits, reasons for change and the speed at which individuals capture initiatives of change. This study provides tools to collect behavioral indicators related to the success of change, a gap pointed out by some authors (Kim, et al., 2011).

Despite the contributions of the study, it is important to highlight the limitations of this research and directions for new investigations. It is worth mentioning that results found are a punctual view of a change and demand further studies to potential generalizations to other contexts and types of change. Our findings are limited to the characteristics of the organizations and process of implementation, although it could serve to drive investigations in other contexts. Another limitation is the cross-section nature of the study, which hinders the investigation of low-prevalence conditions and one single time point of the analysis of the phenomenon. A longitudinal or multi-wave study is suggested to obtain more predictive validity to results.

DECLARATION AND AGREEMENTS

We attest to the fact that all authors listed on the title page (author 1 and author 2) have contributed significantly to the work, have read the manuscript, attest to the validity and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation, and agree to its submission to the Brazilian
Business Review. Author 1 is responsible for Conceptualization; Data curation (Lead); Formal analysis; Funding acquisition; Investigation; Methodology; Resources; Software; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing-original draft; Writing-review & editing. Author 2 is responsible for Conceptualization; Data curation (Supervision); Formal analysis; Funding acquisition; Investigation; Methodology; Resources; Software; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing-original draft; Writing-review & editing.
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