

HOW DOES REGULATORY FOCUS AFFECT ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT? TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A MEDIATOR

Hsing-Chau Tseng

Graduate school of Business and Operations Management
Chang Jung Christian University
No. 396 Chang Jung Rd. Sec.1 Kway Jen Tainan, Taiwan
Tel.: +886 9 20751798; fax: +886 6 2785942.
hsingchau@mail.cjcu.edu.tw

Long-Min Kang

Graduate school of Business and Operations Management
Chang Jung Christian University
No. 396 Chang Jung Rd. Sec.1 Kway Jen Tainan, Taiwan
Tel.: +886 9 20751798; fax: +886 6 2785942.
ken.k541093@msa.hinet.net

Abstract: This study developed and tested an empirical research model in a Chinese culture context. It confirmed the relationship among promotion focus, prevention focus, transformational leadership, and organizational commitment to fill important research gaps in regulatory focus theory literature. The implications, limitations and directions of future research are discussed.

Key word(s): Regulatory focus; Transformational leadership; Organizational commitment

INTRODUCTION

Recent organizational psychologists have devoted increased attention to the causes, consequences, and expression of emotion in the workplace (e.g., Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989; Staw & Barsade, 1993; George & Brief, 1996). Researchers (e.g., George & Brief, 1996) found people's work attitudes and behaviors are affected by differences in the nature and magnitude of their emotional experience (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). However, scholars have devoted much less concern to the psychological processes of the relationship between employees' emotional experience and their work attitudes and behaviors. In contrast, regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) is specifically concerned with the nature and magnitude of people's emotional experience and, by extension, may help clarify people's work attitudes and behaviors.

One of the most well-known leadership theories over the past two decades, Bass's (1985, 1997) and Bass & Avolio's (1990) conceptualization of transformational and transactional leadership theory is perhaps the most cited source for leadership researchers. These transformational behaviors are believed to augment the impact of transactional forms of behaviors on the employee outcome variable, because "followers feel trust and respect toward the leader and they are motivated to do more than they are expected to do" (Yukl, 1989). Transformational leadership (Bass, 1981, 1985, 1997) involves encouraging others with whom they work to develop and perform beyond standard expectations. Transformational leaders inspire others with whom they work by viewing the future with optimism, projecting an idealized vision, and communicating that the vision is achievable (Benjamin and Flynn, 2006). And Scandura & Williams (2004) postulate transformational leader have incremental effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) assumes people are motivated to approach pleasure (promotion focus) and avoid pain (prevention focus), therefore, promotion-focused people are directed toward achieving positive outcomes (by pursuing their ideal goals) and prevention-focused people are concerned with minimizing negative outcomes (by pursuing their "ought" goals). Thus, promotion-focused people may display an affinity for transformational leaders because they encourage followers to reach their ideal states. Similarly, prevention-focused people may prefer transactional leaders because they appreciate the avoidance (Benjamin and Flynn, 2006). Idson, Liberman, & Higgins (2000) found the emotional intensity emanating from a promotion focus success (cheerfulness) is greater than the emotional intensity that grows out of a prevention focus success (quiescence). This finding suggests work attitudes (such as job satisfaction) can be experienced more intensely when people succeed on the job with a promotion focus than with a prevention focus. Brockner & Higgins (2001) employed qualitative techniques to look into the relationship of regulatory focus, transformational leadership, and organizational commitment. They found regulatory focus was related to transformational leadership, and organizational commitment. Further, they suggested it would better to examine the effect of regulatory focus employees' emotion, attitudes, and behaviors in actual organizational settings. The generalizability of regulatory focus to organizational setting needs to be evaluated (employed empirical study).

Most prior research on regulatory focus theory conducted qualitative techniques, such as conceptual researches (e.g., Brockner, Higgins, & Low, 2004; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). Even though studies have employed quantitative techniques, most of the empirical tests were conducted under controlled laboratory conditions, with college

students or teachers as participants (e.g., Liberman et al., 1999; Leung & Lam, 2003; Leone, Perugini, & Bagozzi, 2005; Markman, Baldwin, & Maddox, 2006). This study merged Brockner et al. (2001) conceptual research' findings to develop and test a research model in Taiwan's National Police Administration setting examining the relationship among regulatory focus, transformational leadership, and organizational commitment to fill important research gaps in the regulatory focus theory literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Regulatory Focus Theory

Regulatory focus theory proposed by Higgins (1997, 1998) deals with how people are motivated to approach pleasure and avoid pain. Higgins suggested people have two distinct hedonic self-regulatory systems, first a promotion self-regulatory focus and second a prevention self-regulatory focus (Friedman, Higgins, & Shah, 1997; Idson et al., 2000; Brockner et al., 2002). Individuals in promotion focus are sensitive to the presence of gains (or their absence) and positive result, seek pleasure, and are inclined to approach matches to desired end-states as a natural strategy. On the one hand, individuals in prevention focus are sensitive to the absence of losses (or their presence); avoid pain, and are inclined to avoid mismatches to desire end-states as natural strategy to reach goals.

Higgins (1997, 1998) suggested people's regulatory focuses are composed of three factors that serve to illustrate the differences between a promotion focus and prevention focus: First, the needs people are seeking to satisfy. Second, the nature of the goal or the standard people are trying to achieve or match. Third, the psychological situation that matters to people. According to regulatory focus theory, promotion-focused people strive to realize their ideals and aspirations to address their needs for growth and advancement; are sensitive to gains and nongains. In contrast, prevention-focused people strive to fulfill their duties and obligations to address their needs for safety and security; they approach their goals with vigilance and are sensitive to losses and nonlosses (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Brockner et al., 2004).

Regulatory Focus and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment represents a psychological link between employees and their organization which makes voluntary turnover less likely. It is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of three components (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer et al., (2004) conceived individuals who are affectively committed, experience more autonomous forms of regulation, or both might be expected to have a stronger promotion focus. In contrast, those who have a strong normative or continuance commitment, experience more controlled regulation (introjected or external), or both might have a stronger prevention focus. They proposed: (a) Compared with employees with lesser affective commitment, those with stronger affective commitment to a target experience greater intrinsic motivation and a stronger promotion focus in the pursuit of goals of relevant to the target. (b) Compared with employees with lesser normative commitment, employees with stronger normative commitment to a target experience greater introjected regulatory and a stronger prevention focus in the pursuit of goals of relevant to the target. (c) Compared with employees with lesser continuance commitment, employees with stronger continuance commitment to a target experience greater external regulation and a stronger prevention focus in the pursuit of goals of relevant to the target. Therefore, this research hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 1. Both promotion and prevention focus have a significantly positive effect on organizational commitment.

Regulatory Focus and Transformational Leadership

One key characteristic of followers who appreciate transformational leaders are their regulatory orientation - the manner in which they pursue goals and value goal attainment, and an individual's regulatory orientation, may influence people's preferences for leadership style as their regulatory focus (Benjamin & Flynn, 2006). Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) assumes people are motivated to approach pleasure (promotion focus) and avoid pain (prevention focus), therefore, promotion-focused people are directed toward achieving positive outcomes (by pursuing their ideal goals) and prevention-focused people are concerned with minimizing negative outcomes (by pursuing their "ought" goals). Thus, promotion-focused people may display an affinity for transformational leaders because they encourage followers to attain their ideal states. Similarly, prevention-focused people may prefer transactional leaders because they appreciate the avoidance (Benjamin & Flynn, 2006). In addition, according to Brockner & Higgins (2001), given the uncertain nature of work environments, organizational authorities as "makers of meaning" may influence members' regulatory focus by using language and symbols. The more the rhetoric of authorities focuses on ideals, the more likely organization members will develop a promotion focus. In contrast, the more the rhetoric of authorities focuses on responsibilities, the more likely organization members will develop a prevention focus. This reasoning suggests transformational leaders may elicit more of a promotion focus in their followers, whereas transactional leaders may secure more of a prevention focus in their followers. Kark & Van Dijk (2007) developed a conceptual framework proposing leaders' chronic self-regulatory focus (promotion versus prevention) with their values, influencing their motivation to lead. Therefore, this research hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2. Promotion focus has a significantly positive effect on transformational leadership, while prevention focus has no significantly positive effect on transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Research on the transformational leadership paradigm has been promising. Some scholars' (cf. Avolio & Bass, 1988; House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993) common perspective is by articulating a vision of the future of the organization, providing a model that is consistent with that vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, and providing individualized support, effective leaders change the basic values and attitudes of followers so they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by organization. Individually, transformational leadership can positively influence satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship (e. g., Shamir et al., 1993; Podsakoff, MacKenize ,& Bommer, 1996; Avolio et al., 2004; Whittington, Good,& Murray, 2004; Moss et al., 2007).

In addition, Scandura & Williams (2004) postulate the transformational leader has incremental effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Transformational leadership has incremental effects with idealized influence and inspirational motivation for job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Meyer et al. (2004) argued transformational leaders are likely to build commitment, chiefly affective commitment, to relevant social foci and their goals. Transformational leaders exert their influence through two channels: satisfaction of personal needs and commitment to social foci. Thus, transformational leadership is positively related to organizational commitment. Transformational leadership has incremental effects with idealized influence and inspirational motivation for organizational commitment. Therefore, this research hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3. Transformational leadership has a significantly positive effect on organizational commitment.

Integrating the results of literature review finds promotion focus has a positive effect on transformational leadership, while prevention focus has no positive effect on transformational leadership. Transformational leadership has a positive influence on organizational commitment. This study infers transformational leadership mediates promotion focus and organizational commitment. Therefore, this research hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4. Transformational leadership positively mediates the relationship between promotion focus and organizational commitment. Also, transformational leadership positively mediates the relationship between prevention focus and organizational commitment.

METHOD

Participants

This study's participants were from the National Police Administration employing 500 full-time employees. A total of 261 responded within a month. The valid response rate was 46.80% (for 234 completed surveys). Most of the final samples were between 36 and 40 years of age (36.30%), 206 were males (88.00%), 203 were married (86.80%), and 202 in non-manager positions (86.30%). For their educational background, 56 (25.20%) were high-school graduates, 98 (41.9%) had graduated from a college, and 63 (26.90%) were university graduates.

Measures

Regulatory focus

Higgins (1997, 1998) suggested promotion focus and prevention focus are two distinct hedonic self-regulatory systems. Therefore, this study measuring regulatory focus distinguishes between two constructs in self-regulatory- promotion focus and prevention focus.

Promotion focus

Promotion focus defines employees as concerned with obtaining nurturance and is concerned with accomplishment, growth and advancement (Higgins, 1997, 1998). A 9-item measure of promotion focus (Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002) was used. A Likert's five point scale ranging from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree" was employed. A sample item from the promotion focus measure is "I see myself as someone primarily striving to reach my ideal self to fulfill my hopes, wishes, and aspirations". The Cronbach's α reliability estimate was acceptable at .78, respectively (Nunnally, 1978).

Prevention focus

Prevention focus refers to employees' tendency to desire security, safety and fulfillment of responsibility (Higgins, 1997, 1998). A 9-item measure of prevention focus (Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002) was used. A Likert's five point scale

ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5=“strongly agree” was employed. “I am anxious that I will fall short of my responsibility and obligations (Prevention focus). The Cronbach’s α reliability estimate was acceptable at .75, respectively (Nunnally, 1978).

Transformational leadership

The 34-item scale from the Leadership from Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire was used to measure transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990). This scale is designed to measure four dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation). Idealized influence defines leaders perceived as being confident and powerful, and viewed focusing on higher-order ideals and ethics; Individualized consideration represents leaders paying special attention to the needs of each individual follower for achievement and growth; Intellectual stimulation captures leaders stimulate followers’ efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways; Inspirational motivation is defined leaders meaning and challenge to work, team spirit is evident, and enthusiasm and optimism are displayed (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). A Likert's five point scale ranging from 1= “not at all” to 5=“frequently if not always” was employed. Sample items from each scale are: “Displays a sense of power and confidence” (idealized influence), “Helps understand the priority of my career” (intellectual stimulation), “Focuses me on developing my strengths” (individualized consideration), and “Articulates a compelling vision of the future” (inspirational motivation). The Cronbach’s α reliability estimates were acceptable at .95, .88, .90, and .87, respectively (Nunnally, 1978).

Organizational commitment

An 18-item measure of organizational commitment (Allen, & Meyer 1993) was used. This scale is designed to measure three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment). Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organization; continuance commitment is defined as an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization; and normative commitment represents a feeling of obligation to continue employment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). A Likert's five point scale ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5=“strongly disagree” was used. Sample items from each scale are: I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization” (affective commitment), “If I leave the current organization, I might not find such good employment opportunities” (continuance commitment), and “This organization is worth my loyalty” (normative commitment). The coefficient α reliability estimates were acceptable at .69, .78 and .90, respectively (Nunnally, 1978).

Analysis

This study conducted CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) using Amos 6.0 to judge the goodness-of-fit these various CFA models. Further, SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) verified the relationship, mutual influence and overall Structural Equation Modeling was used to explore the relationship among regulatory focus, transformational leadership, and organizational commitment.

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The CFA showed all constructs of standardization path coefficients displayed significance level ($p < .001$, γ are from .54 to .93) with acceptable measurement system and construct reliability. As far as Construct Model Reliability is concerned, promotion focus construct, $\chi^2 = .714$ ($p = .70$), $\chi^2 / df = .39$, RMR = .01, GFI = .99 CFI = 1.00; prevention focus construct, $\chi^2 = 4.81$ ($p = .09$), $\chi^2 / df = 2.40$, RMR = .03, GFI = .98 CFI = .99; transformational leadership construct, $\chi^2 = 221.489$ ($p = .00$), $\chi^2 / df = 2.55$, $R^2 = .12$, RMR = .02, GFI = .90, CFI = .96; and organizational commitment construct $\chi^2 = 95.15$ ($p = .00$), $\chi^2 / df = 2.32$, $R^2 = .28$, RMR = .05, GFI = .93, CFI = .96. These results of identification show all constructs fit index for $\chi^2 / df < 3$, RMR < .05, GFI and CFI > .90, respectively (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Bentler, 1990). The results of CFA indicate per construct measurement model is fit and construct validity is acceptable.

Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Table 1 displays the result of measurement model analysis. To examine the interactive relationships of promotion focus, prevention focus, transformational leadership, organizational commitment, the study conducted SEM using AMS 6.0. All constructs of factor loading are acceptable to a significant statistical level ($p < .001$), respectively. It also shows all constructs of

the measurement system are acceptable. The result of the fit test of the structural model has acceptable fit indexes, with $\chi^2=70.22(p=.000)$, $\chi^2/df=2.34$ (fit index is <3), $RMR=.05$ (is $<.05$), and $GFI=.95$, $CFI=.97$ (fit index = $.90$), hence this model is fit (see Figure 1).

Table 1 :Standardization Path coefficients between Latent Variables and Observed Variables

Latent Variables	Observed Variables	Estimate	p-value
Promotion focus	Promotion focus	1.00	a
Prevention focus	Prevention focus	1.00	a
Transformational Leadership Promotion Focus	Idealized influence	.96	.96***
	Inspirational motivation	.87	.000***
	Intellectual stimulation	.89	.000***
	Individualized consideration	.89	.000***
Organizational commitment	Affective commitment	.70	.89***
	Continuance commitment	.84	.000
	Normative commitment	.80	.000

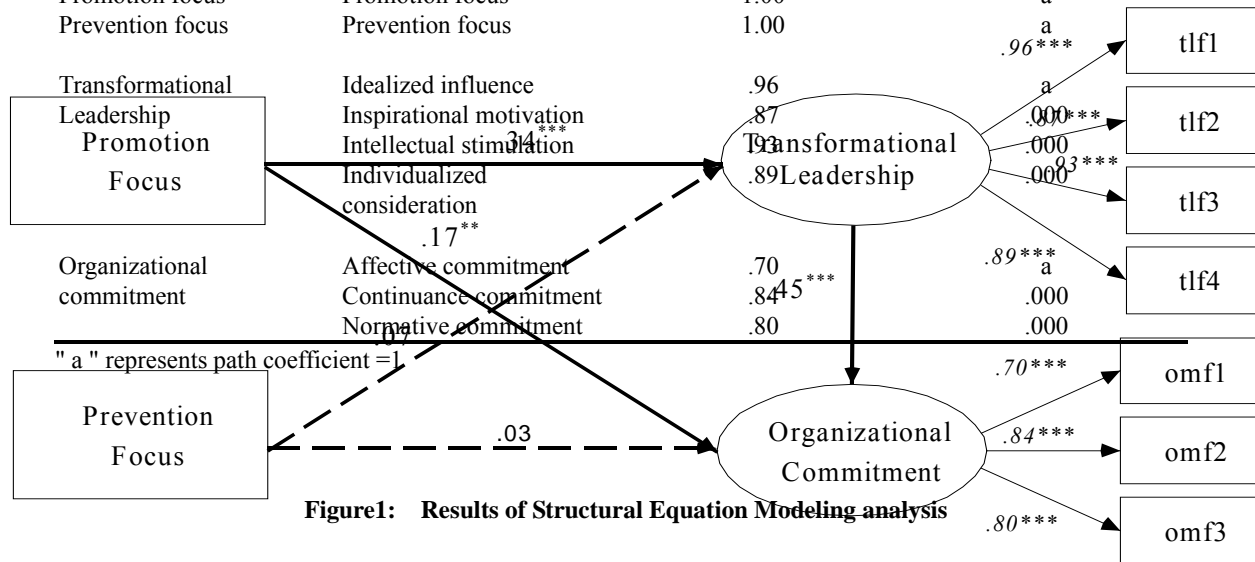


Figure1: Results of Structural Equation Modeling analysis

Note: All paths are significant estimate, * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

tfl1= Idealized influence, tfl2= Inspirational motivation, tfl3=Intellectual stimulation, tfl4= Individualized consideration; OM= Organizational commitment, omf1= Affective commitment, omf2=Continuance commitment, omf3= Normative commitment

Figure 1 shows the results of the Structural Equation Modeling analysis conducted to test hypotheses 1-4. Regarding H1, promotion focus shows a significantly positive influence on organizational commitment ($\gamma=.17$, $p=.01$), but prevention focus has no significantly positive influence on organizational commitment ($\gamma=.03$, $p=.64$). This implies if followers have a higher level of promotion focus, then they would show higher levels of organizational commitment. On the contrary, while followers have a higher level of prevention focus, they won't show a higher level of organizational commitment. These findings partly support hypothesis H1. In addition, promotion focus has a significantly positive influence on transformational leadership ($\gamma=.34$, $p<.001$), but prevention focus does not ($\gamma=.07$, $p=.31$). This finding reveals only followers with a high level of promotion focus show a higher level of preference for transformational leadership. This finding supports hypothesis H2 which agrees with the results of qualitative techniques by Higgins (1997), Brockner & Higgins (2001), and Kark & Van Dijk (2007).

Examination of Figure 1 indicates transformational leadership displayed a significantly positive influence on organizational commitment ($\gamma=.45$, $p<.001$; see Figure 1). Thus, research hypothesis H3 is supported. This result of the research shows leaders perceived as being transformational were more likely to be associated with subordinates who expressed commitment to the organization. This finding agrees with findings of other studies (e.g., Dubinsky et al., 1995; Whittington et al., 2004; Moss et al. 2007).

SEM analysis was conducted to examine the mediating effects of transformational leadership on the relationships of promotion focus (prevention focus) and organizational commitment. The mediating effect of transformational leadership on the relationships between promotion focus and organizational commitment is supported (indirect effects are $.153$, $.34 \times .45$). However, the mediating effects of transformational leadership on the relationships of prevention focus and organizational commitment are not statistically significant (indirect effects are $.032$, $.07 \times .45$). Hypothesis H4 is partly supported. This means for followers with a higher level of awareness of transformational leadership, promotion focus rather than prevention focus may help them feel increased organizational commitment.

DISCUSSION

Integrating Brockner et al. (2001) conceptual research, this study developed and tested an empirical research model in Taiwan's National Police Administration setting under a Chinese culture context. It confirmed the relationship among regulatory focus, transformational leadership, and organizational commitment. The results of the research significantly contribute to filling important research gaps (Lack of empirical research and generalization, Brockner et al., 2001) in regulatory focus theory

literatures. It clarifies the special role of regulatory focus in the traditional police organization and its implications for police officers, utilizing a non-American setting to allow a cross-cultural examination of regulatory focus theory.

This study found through empirical analysis that employees with high promotion focus perhaps have more organizational commitment. Contrary to expectations, the prevention focus doesn't play important roles in determining a positive level of organizational commitment. This means, employees might report higher commitment to the organization as a whole only when high levels of promotion focus orientation were elicited. In addition, the significant relationship between prevention focus and continuance commitment ($\gamma = .15$, $p = .02$) is in line with relationships in the conceptual analysis of Meyer et al. (2004) comparing employees with lesser continuance commitment, employees with stronger continuance commitment to a target experience greater external regulation and a stronger prevention focus in the pursuit of goals of relevance to the target. Further, this study finds promotion focus has a significantly positive influence on transformational leadership, but employees in prevention focus are not significantly and positively affected by transformational leadership. Taken together, this result agrees with the findings of Brockner & Higgins (2001) and Benjamin & Flynn (2006). Promotion-focused people may demonstrate an affinity for transformational leaders because they encourage followers to attain their ideal states. Similarly, prevention-focused people may prefer transactional leaders because they appreciate the avoidance. These findings align with the proposition that employees with more of a promotion focus display higher preference for transformational leaders than employees with more of a prevention focus. Regulatory focus orientation may be closely related to leadership style and stronger promotion focus of self-regulation may positively impact employees' evaluation of transformational leaders.

In addition, this work finds employees' perceptions of transformational leadership predicted organizational commitment. Meyer & Allen (1997) found organizational commitment focuses on employees' commitment to the organization in three areas: (a) affective commitment exists when employees stay with the organization they *want to*, (b) continuance commitment exists when employees stay with the organization because they *need to*, and (c) normative commitment exists when employees stay with the organization because they feel they *ought to*. This means transformational leader behaviors which involve having a shared vision, emphasizing development, recognizing accomplishments, encouraging creativity, building trust, providing coach, and generating enthusiasm do predict the magnitude of the variation in how employees feel about wanting to, having to, and feeling obligated to stay with the organization. The more leaders display these behaviors, the more employees may want to, need to, and feel obligated to stay.

The findings further indicate transformational leadership perceptions play a mediating role in the relationship between promotion focus and organizational commitment. Rather, prevention focus is not indirectly related to employees' positive organizational commitment through their relationship with transformational leadership behavior. The findings of correlation analysis indicate promotion focus is significantly and positively related to transformational leadership behaviors. All behaviors of transformational leader are significantly and positively related to affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. These findings suggest transformational leadership may heighten the positive relationship between employees' promotion focus and their feeling of emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organization; need to stay with the organization; and obligation to continue employment.

Implications

Results of the present study provide practical implications for police leaders and managers. Promotion focus appears to be important for increasing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the preference for transformational leadership. Moreover, when police officers' preference for leaders providing transformational leadership behaviors is high, promotion focus has both a direct and indirect on their organizational commitment. Thus, police leaders should elicit followers' high level of promotion focus. One method is through selection. By choosing people to be unit members (or assigning existing members to promotion focus related tasks) based on their regulatory focus orientations. Leaders may increase the likelihood of heightening followers' promotion focus orientations. The second method is by creating organizational conditions that influence its members' regulatory focus orientation (Brockner, Higgins, & Low, 2004). Elsewhere, Brockner & Higgins (2001) have discussed some of the organizational factors that may contribute to the work climate that employees experience as promotion-focused. For example, leaders may influence members' regulatory focus through using language and symbols. The more the rhetoric of authorities focuses on ideals (for example, continuously reminding employees of the exciting vision the organization is trying to achieve), the more likely will organization members develop a promotion focus. Reward systems in which the emphasis is on recognizing people for a job well done (and withholding recognition when the job is not well done) is likely to elicit a promotion focus (Brockner et al., 2004).

Another implication of the present study is increasing police officers' transformational leadership awareness is associated with a rise in their organization commitment. Police leaders may be able to increase followers' levels of organization commitments by improving transformational leadership behaviors. Marisa Silvestri (2007) argued, despite this recognition, there is little evidence to suggest police leadership styles are changing. On the contrary, the police organization continues to cling firmly to a style characterized more by transaction than transformation. Prior researches reported transformational leadership was positively related to organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Podsakff et al., 1996). In addition, Avolio, Bass, & Jung (1999) revealed transactional leadership is insufficient to develop the trust and full potential of an organization's members. However, if coupled with individualized consideration, it may provide a foundation for higher levels of transformational leadership that positively affect follower motivation and performance.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study. This research was conducted in a public sector organization. Public and private sector organizations differ in their business environment, management practices, and staff attitudes (Bordia & Blau, 1998). Thus, employees' regulatory focus orientation and its effect on leadership, and organizational commitment should be generalizable across the sector. Moreover, most of this research data were collected at one point in time. Unfortunately, almost no study, including this one, has used a longitudinal design for regulatory focus, although this would be valuable.

This study suggests several directions of future research. First, the current study is conducted in a Chinese cultural context. An interesting question is whether the relationships found in this study in a Chinese context also hold true for other cultures. Thus, future studies may examine non-Chinese cultural settings. Such research will delineate how individual and cultural differences in regulatory focus may affect transformational leadership, and organizational commitment. Also, the present study in regulatory focus theory measures how employees' regulatory orientation affects their preference for the leadership style. However, another aspect of an individual's regulatory orientation that influences their preference for leadership style is their regulatory mode. Regulatory focus represents preferences for goal pursuit, whereas the regulatory mode represents preferences for goal attainment. Regulatory mode theory distinguishes between self-regulatory-assessment and locomotion (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Higgins, Kruglanski, & Pierre, 2003; Benjamin & Flynn, 2006). People high in assessment critically evaluate different states or entities, such as in relation to alternatives. In contrast, locomotion is an aspect of self-regulation concerned with movement from state to state, with a preference for initiating goal-directed movement (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Higgins et al., 2003). People with more of a locomotion mode were more motivated by transformational leadership than by transactional leadership (Benjamin & Flynn, 2006). Future research might find it worthwhile to test this other aspect of self-regulation focus closely. Lastly, researchers may further examine the particular circumstances under which leadership behaviors may influence the organization. Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda (1994) suggested this relationship could vary based on employees' perceptions of their ability to find another job with similar characteristics. Insight into this area could affect leaders' ability to have a positive effect on employees who stay with the organization because they feel have no other choice.

REFERENCES

- Allen, N.J., & Meyer, J.P. (1993). Organizational Commitment: Evidence of Career Stage Effects? *Journal of Business Research*, 26, 49-61.
- Antonakis, J., Avolio, B.J., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). Context and leadership: A examination of the nine-factor full-range leadership theory using the multifactor leadership questionnaire. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(3), 261-295.
- Avolio, B.J., & Bass, B.M. (1988). Transformational Leadership, charisma, and beyond.. In J.G. Hunt, B.R. Baliga, H.P. Dachler, & C.A. Schriesheim (Eds.), *Emerging leadership vistas* (pp. 29-49). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Avolio, B.J., Bass, B.M., & Jung, D.I. (1999). Re-examining the components of transformational and transactional leadership using the Multifactor leadership Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 72(4), 441-463.
- Avolio, B.J., Zhu, W.C., Koh, W., & Bhatia, P. (2004). Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: mediating role of structural distance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25 (8), 951-968.
- Bass, B.M. (1981). *Stogdill's handbook of leadership*. NY: Macmillan.
- Bass, B.M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectation*. NY: Free Press.
- Bass, B.M. (1997). Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *American Psychologist*, 52(2), 130-139.
- Bass, B.M., & Avolio, B.J. (1990). *Transformational Leader Questionnaire*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.
- Benjamin, L., & Flynn, F.J. (2006). Leadership style and regulatory mode: Value from fit? *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process*, 100 (2), 216-230.
- Bentler, P.M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 238-246.
- Bentler, P.M., & Bonett, D.G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88, 588-606.

- Bordia, P., & Blau, G. (1998). Pay referent comparison and pay level satisfaction in private versus public sector organizations in India. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 9, 155-167.
- Brockner, J., & Higgins, E.T. (2001). Regulatory Focus Theory: Implications for the study of emotions at work. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 61 (1), 35-66.
- Brockner, J., Higgins, E.T., & Low, M.B. (2004). Regulatory Focus Theory and entrepreneurial. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 19, 203-220.
- Brockner, J., Paruchuri, L.S., Idson C., & Higgins, E.T. (2002). Regulatory Focus and Probability Estimates of Conjunctive and Disjunctive Events, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 87, 5-24.
- Crowe, E., & Higgins, E.T. (1997). Regulatory focus and strategic inclinations: Promotion and prevention in decision-making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 69, 117-132.
- Dubinsky, A.J., Yammarino, F.J., Jolson, M.A., & Spangler, W.D. (1995). Transformational leadership: An initial investigation in sales people. *Journal of Personal Selling Sales Management*, 15(2), 1-19.
- Dunham, R., Grube, J., & Castaneda, M. (1994). Organizational commitment: The utility of an integrative definition. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 370-380.
- Freidman, R., Higgins, E.T., & Shah, J.Y. (1997). Emotional responses to goal attainment: Strength of regulatory focus as moderator. *Journal of Personality and Psychology*, 72, 515-525.
- George, J.M., & Brief, A.P. (1996). Motivational agendas in the workplace: The effects of feelings on focus of attention and work motivation. In B.M. Staw, & L.L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (18, pp. 75-109). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- House, R.J., Spangler, W.D., & Woycke, J. (1991). Personality and charisma in the U. S. presidency: A psychological theory of leadership effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36, 364-396.
- Higgins, E.T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, 52, 1280-1230.
- Higgins, E.T. (1998). Promotion and prevention: Regulatory focus as a motivational principle. In M. P. Zanna(Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*(30, pp.1-46). New York: Academic Press.
- Higgins, E.T., Kruglanski, A.W., & Pierre, A. (2003). Regulatory mode: Locomotion and assessment as distinct orientations. In M. P. Zanna(Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*(pp. 293-344), New York: Academic Press.
- Idson, L.C., Liberman, N., & Higgins, E.T. (2000). Distinguishing gains from non-losses and losses from non-gains: A Regulatory focus perspective on hedonic intensity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36, 252-274.
- Kark, R., & Van Dijk, D. (2007). Motivation to lead, motivation to follow: The role of self-regulatory focus in processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (2), 500-528.
- Kruglanski, A.W., Thompson, E.P., Higgins, E.T., Atash, M.N., Pierre, A., Shah, J.Y., & Spiegel, S.(2000). To “do the right thing” to “just do it”: Locomotion and assessment as distinct self-regulatory imperatives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (79), 793-815.
- Leone, L., Perugini, M., & Bagozzi, R. (2005). Emotions and decision Making: Regulatory focus moderates the influence of anticipated emotions on action evaluations. *Cognition and Emotion*, 19(8), 1175-1198.
- Leung, C.M., & Lam, S.F. (2003). The effects of regulatory focus on teachers’ classroom management strategies and emotional consequences. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 28, 114-125.
- Liberman, N., Idson, L.C., Camacho, S.J., & Higgins, E.T. (1999). Promotion and prevention choices between stability and change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (77), 1135-1145.
- Lockwood, P., Jordan, C.H., & Kunda, Z. (2002). Motivation by positive or negative role models: Regulatory focus determines who will best inspire us. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 854-864.

- Markman, A.B., Baldwin, G.C., & Maddox, W.T. (2006). The interaction of Payoff Structure and Regulatory Focus in Classification. *Psychological Science*, 16(11), 852-855.
- Marisa Silvestri. (2007). "Doing" Police Leadership: Enter the "New Smart Macho". *Policing and Society*, 17(1), 38-58.
- Meyer, J.P., & Allen, N.J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management*, 1, 61-89.
- Meyer, J.P., & Allen, N.J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication.
- Meyer, J.P., Becker, T.E., & Vandenberghe, C. (2004). Employee Commitment and Motivation: A Conceptual Analysis and Integrative Model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89 (6), 992-1007.
- Moss, S.A., McFarland, J., Ngu, S., & Kijowsha, A. (2007). Maintaining an open mind to closed individuals: The effect of resource availability and leadership style on the association between openness to experience and organizational commitment. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41 (2), 259-275.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed). NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenize, S.B., & Bommer, W.H. (1996). Transformational leader behaviors and substitutes for leadership as determinants of employee satisfaction, commitment, trust, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 22 (2), 259-298.
- Rafaeli, A., & Sutton, R. (1989). The expression of emotion in organizational life, In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol.11, pp.1-42), Greebwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Robbins, S.P. (1992). *Essentials of organizational behavior*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Scandura, T.A., & Williams, E.A. (2004). Mentoring and transformational leadership: The role of supervisory career mentoring. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 448-468.
- Shamir, B., House, R.J., & Arthur, M.B. (1993). The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organization Science*, 4, 1-17.
- Staw, B.M., & Barsade, S.G. (1993). Affect and managerial performance: A test of the sadder-but-wiser vs. happier-and-smart hypotheses. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 304-331.
- Whittington, J.L., Goodwin, V.L., & Murray, B. (2004). Transformational leadership, goal difficulty, and job design: independent and interactive effects on employee outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15 (5), 593-606.
- Yukl, G.A. (1989). Managerial leadership: A review of theory and research. *Yearly Review of Management*, 15, 251-289.