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A research agenda on leaders' political intelligence for effective change management

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This paper presents a construct and model of the organizational leader's political intelligence to conceptualize the role of political intelligence in effectively managing organizational change. Pertinent approaches that scholars have taken are reviewed with the aim to build a theory. Basing our model on the dimensionality of the construct identified in light of literature, the chief proposition is that political intelligence can help facilitate organizational change effectively. The politically intelligent leader is capable of steering the stormy waters of organizational change using his political intelligence. Based on this theoretical model, a case is made for an empirical investigation. This paper also sheds light onthe implications of this theory for change leaders.

Key words: Political intelligence, change management, leadership, change leader.

INTRODUCTION

What makes a leader has always been a subject of relevance; hence, leadership has always been an area of interest for researchers. Initial studies attempted to grasp the behavioral or personality aspect of leaders, while recently scholars have focused on leadership styles (Nawaz and Bodla, 2010). Despite the abundant literature devoted to understanding leadership (Pienaar, 2009), successful leaders are deficient in organizations. Thus, more research needed to address the issue of leadership and leaders (Schafer, 2010). In recent literature, the so-called 'new-paradigm' leadership models are based on a leader's capacity to deal with the realism of persistent change (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005). The leader's role throughout the entire change process is crucial and a challenging responsibility (Yukl, 2007). In fact, it is leadership that initiates change (Owen and Demb, 2004), and plays a central role in its success (Gill, 2001; Miller, 2002; Oakland and Tanner, 2007). Organizational change is therefore a leadership goal that, may be pursued via the use of political intelligence (PI) of the leader. Yet, how change leaders may use their PI to affect organizational change is not well comprehended today.

Specifically, leadership theories today have recognized the significance of politics for leaders and organizations, yet they have failed to examine how a leader may employ PI to effect organizational change. Leader PI has been studied in relation with employee trust, organizational cynicism, job satisfaction (Treadway et al., 2004), yet, no study so far has explicitly addressed effective change management as an outcome of the leader's PI.

Additionally, several studies have highlighted the significance of emotional intelligence for leadership (Radhakrishnan and Udayasuriyan, 2010; Groves et al., 2006; Palmer et al., 2001), as well as for change management (Vakola et al., 2004; Chrusciel, 2006; Groves, 2006). Yet, PI is a leadership intelligence that holds implications for change management but has largely been overlooked in the conceptual as well as in empirical sense. This paper aims to bridge these gaps in the existing literature by offering a model that proposes how leaders may employ PI to bring change in organizations.

The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize PI and to develop a research model that proposes relationships between dimensions of PI and effective change management. The study builds on the existing literature on PI and change management and sets a research agenda for an empirical investigation. The purpose behind a construct and theoretical model in the area of PI and change

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management is three-fold. Firstly, the focus is on enhancing awareness of how PI can be used to facilitate change in organizations. Organizational leaders can use this awareness to effect change. Secondly, this study will highlight the positive side of politics.

Thirdly, this theoretical model is aimed at recommending empirical research into this area. Scholars and practitioners have realized the existence and significance of organizational politics. As well as the inevitability of organizational change. The need of the hour is to investigate how organizational change may be effected using PI. This study takes a leadership perspective on this issue, since change is primarily top-driven.

LEADERSHIP, CHANGE MANAGEMENT, AND PI: THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

Scholars have highlighted the need to re-assess our understanding of leadership in context of the technological, economic, social, and political changes of the 21st century. It is leadership that endorses change and so researchers have attempted to assimilate leadership theories and organizational change (Eisenbach et al., 1999; Yu et al., 2002). At the same time, researchers have examined leader behaviors in the context of change (Herold et al., 2008). Researchers have also turned to emotional intelligence with the pursuit of enhancing understanding of organizational change (Huy, 1999). Since leadership is complex, it has been studied in several ways (Lussier and Achua, 2010). The question that still remains today is: what makes change management leadership successful? We believe that it is the leader's PI that helps steer the squally waters of organizational change.

Leadership entails successfully influencing followers so as to achieve goals (Bass and Bass, 2008). Our main argument is that it is the political successful leader, who organizes resources to achieve goals via the use of power and influence (Lussier and Achua, 2010). Conversely, the ability to successfully manage change is a most sought-after managerial skill (Anderson and Anderson, 2001). Simply put, it is a practicing leader who facilitates an organization in adjusting to change (Mostovicz, 2009), thereby giving life to organizational change. Contemporary leaders have to be more capable on the political, amongst other, fronts (Peled, 2000). The implication for change leaders is plain - they need to be politically intelligent to be effective at bringing change (Perrewe et al., 2000). Moreover, regardless of their role and title, effective leaders need certain qualities that Cook and Macaulay (2004) term as the 'four intelligences' essential for effectively managing change. While not denying the importance of other intelligences for organizational change, the importance of PI for effective change management needs to be verified. Gill (2001) importantly points out that certain political facets of an organizational

change initiative such as self-interest and shifts in power and influence can be a cause of failure of a change initiative, yet his leadership model overlooks the political aspects of change and focuses on the cognitive, spiritual, emotional and behavioral dimensions and necessities of change only.

PI gains weight to the extent that in order to bring successful change, leaders must be able to influence others in the organization and be able to recognize the stakeholders in change and initiate ways to influence them aptly for the change. However, leaders may shy away from the reality of PI, and therefore from its usefulness; this is so because the word 'politics' bears certain negative implications such as selfish exploitation. At the same time, leaders may exemplify positive organizational politics and so lessen the dysfunctional side of politics (Vredenburgh and VanFossen, 2010). Moreover, the ability to influence others in the organization is what lies at the heart of PI and so is established the necessity of this particular intelligence in effectively bringing change in organizational settings. Hence, it is necessary to examine how PI can be deployed to effectively manage change in a dominantly changing organizational environment.

Political intelligence

Generally, the word 'politics' has an infamous undertone, since politicians are usually not well-regarded. However, in the perspective of change, the focus is on politics at the workplace rather than elections or parliamentary behavior. Politics prevails in every organization (Perrewe et al., 2000; Cook and Macaulay, 2004) and leaders work in politically sensitive roles (Schmidt, 2010). Although the word 'politics' bears a negative undertone and points to the 'unprofessional games' yet researchers believe that intelligently exercising this skill is evermore essential in organizations (Ferris et al., 2000) and is certainly not about stabbing people in the back (Lussier and Achua, 2010).

In the context of change, politics helps change leaders recognize the stakeholders in change and how to influence them appropriately (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). PI is generally compared with social intelligence(s) or skills, yet none of the social intelligences clearly addresses interpersonal interactions in organizational settings. PI represents a distinct social dexterity that specifically addresses influences behavior at work (Ferris et al., 2000). Ferris et al. (2008) identified the four dimensions of the political skill construct to be social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity. Peled (2000) views that a manager's ability to deploy his/her interpersonal relation-ships with employees, colleagues, clients, and supervisors, defines the manager's political skill.

Scholars have used the terms 'intelligence' and 'skill' interchangeably in studies (Cook and Macaulay, 2004;

Adams and Zanzi, 2005). The former have abbreviated political skill or intelligence as PQ (political quotient) and similar is the treatment by other authors. Throughout this study, the term 'political intelligence' has been abbreviated as 'PI'. In addition, coining the term 'political intelligence' has theoretical implications for various disciplines (Orbell et al., 2002). Further discussion describes these dimensions in depth and then proposes that each of these dimensions helps in facilitating organizational change effectively.

Social games

Taking an evolutionary stance, the distinct 'political brain' has evolved from our sociality, in particular, from the socio-political games that we play. Here, it is essential to distinguish PI from the Machiavellian and social intelligences. While Machiavellian intelligence specifically concerns the trickery, dishonesty, and bluff that is a part of social games, it does not involve the benevolence and compassion, which too has possibility in social games. On the other hand, social intelligence is unconcerned with conflict as well as with co-operation that are innate to social games (Orbell et al., 2002). Whereas Machiavellian intelligence employs guile and dishonorable means of leadership (Zaccaro, 2004), PI engages social as well as build interpersonal relations with their interpersonal skills (Pienaar, 2009).

From the political stance, two important social games are co-operation and competition and an individual may choose either. Here, two competencies work in favor of an individual's benefit in such games: the ability to manipulate, that is, to pass on such information to others that will result in acts of benefit to the manipulator's self-interest and the ability is to 'mind-read', that is, the ability to judge the truth of indications given by others.

In addition, these two capacities of manipulating information for self-interest and reading others' minds differ among individuals. It is also interesting to note that research in the past has demonstrated strong evidence in favor of reasoning abilities specialized to the sphere of 'cheater detection' in social exchange relationships. Cheater detection is one amongst the several political games that humans play, and an adaptable ability that can be adapted.

In fact, past research has also established that there is a relation between cheater detection and role-taking, status relationships, and even memory. The ability to make one's lies believable is what has been termed as self-deception, and falls within the parameter of manipulation (Orbell et al., 2002).

In the same context, role-taking allows one to understand others' perspectives by recognizing the dependencies, coalition needs, and alternatives that exist for others and foreseeing the outcomes of a proposed decision from an individual stance. One reflects on the possible response of stakeholders and comprehends the shifts in power during a decision making process (Adams and Zanzi, 2005). In the way, role-taking ability facilitates one in understanding others' views (Perrewe et al., 2000). Research on how to enhance PI is scarce, but it can be developed within limits and role playing is one way to enhance PI (Perrewe et al., 2000; Adams and Zanzi, 2005).

People who are politically intelligent are good at negotiations, and negotiations are helpful during change, as they enable the leader to gain buy-in from those with vested interests (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). In fact, besides deal-making and purposely exchanging favors with others that exemplify acts of PI, negotiations or bargaining also symbolize the politics that exists in organizations (Ferris et al., 2008; Lussier and Achua, 2010). To negotiate effectively, parties must have mutual respect and realize the rules of give and take. They must opt for what is desired and what can be exchanged for it (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Likewise, those high on PI are also certain about their ability to control social situations (Ferris et al., 2000). Moreover, being high on self-confidence, their confidence is not related to the self only but extended to their interpersonal relations as well (Ferris et al., 2008).

In the specific organizational context, this confidence generates a positive and optimistic attitude and manner in them, leading to effectiveness in social situations at work as well as effecting change in organizations (Ferris et al., 2000). In addition, the politically intelligent are not only capable of behaving appropriately in social situations at work, but are also capable of behaving in a manner that is apparently sincere; apparent in that they can conceal manipulative intentions if any (Ferris et al., 2008).

Ingratiation, which is defined as flattery, complimenting, and offering support to others so as to influence them, enables the actor to appear loyal and sincere for the person whom he/she intends to influence. PI also helps leaders in recognizing the stakeholders involved in change and how to influence them effectively (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Plainly, the concerns of stakeholders need to be addressed first in order to influence them.

It is interesting to note that PI includes the ability to network well, which is about forming informal as well as formal coalitions (Adams and Zanzi, 2005). In fact, networking is a dominant activity that successful managers engage in and includes socializing and politicking. Consequently, it requires effective social and political skills (Ferris et al., 2000). Reasonably, building vast network of relationships and ties across the organization allows one to create circumstances for agreement amongst persons, hence fulfilling goals and accomplishing synergy (Perrewe et al., 2000; Ferris et al., 2008).

We propose that the social games of co-operation, competition, manipulation, mind-reading, role-taking, exchanging favors, controlling social situations, appearing

sincere, and networking well, help leaders manage organizational change.

P₁: Adeptness at social games helps leaders in managing organizational change effectively.

Power dynamism

Political behavior usually refers to the acquisition, development, and use of power in relation to other entities, where power is viewed as the capacity of social actors to overcome the resistance of other actors (Boddewyn and Brewe, 1994). It has also been defined as the daily mechanism of social existence with the ability to influence behavior and change events (Adams and Zanzi, 2005).

PI requires the leader to possess either formal or informal power base and use it to exert influence. Thus, power which is exercised without PI fails to exert influence (Perrewe et al., 2000). Thus, is highlighted the importance of weighing up power dynamics or vulnerabilities for a 'politically intelligent' decision. Power dynamics are products of the way people think and act in organizations (Kleiner, 2003), though these are not apparent to all – apart from the natural politician. As organizations become more political, the need to understand power dynamics is enhanced. Since traditional concepts of authority and line of command have weakened in present times, managers tend to employ political deals to fill this power vacuum.

It is also interesting to note that a new power holder has to meet with the resistance posed by existing power holders; this happens over a considerable time period (Adams and Zanzi, 2005). Moreover, power is a relative concept as it is determined by the inequality of relationships (Weissenberger-Eibl and Teufel, 2011). In fact, it is the exercise of power in organizations that makes them what literature refers to as 'political arenas'.

As such, they are characterized by the exercise of power and influence (Ferris et al., 2000) vis-à-vis awareness of power bases and understanding sources of power. Therein, it is the politically intelligent leader who is aware of how to gain and use power (Lussier and Achua, 2010). It is essential to note that PI is not about the abuse of personal power, as those who are politically intelligent do not work for personal benefit but for the benefit of the organization.

Hence, power dynamics enables those who want to bring about change in the organization to gain buy-in to change by being aware of and building power bases (Cook and Macaulay, 2004).

Reputation is really a political concept and it has been argued that PI enables persons to effectively develop and sustain 'good' reputations. Hence, it holds that politically intelligent leaders are astute and calculating about their personal investments and aspire to enhance success

(Ferris et al., 2000). Arguably, reputation can also help in effecting organizational change through the leader's reputational capital. Since investment in one's reputation leads to success in job or career, we include reputation as a sub-dimension of power dynamics.

Power is a notion that needs to be clearly understood in order to act effectively in organizations (Kleiner, 2003). Bradshaw-Campbell and Murray (1991) highlighted an innate power structure in their study that is embedded in games of language – gestures, myths and even humor. These highlight the components of politics – the leader may gain power or the lever to influence through the use of language games for fulfilling aims. Again, power bases need to be assesses before playing games of the language to exercise influence. Since the structural elements of politics are defined through the use of language, information, metaphors, symbols, myths and humor, then is may be argued that politically intelligent leaders are aware of how to use language, information, and humor to their advantage. This is consistent with the views of Orbell et al. (2002) who suggest that information is manipulated by the politically intelligent for their advantage – specifically to effect change; hence power is exercised over the powerless even without their knowledge (Bradshaw-Campbell and Murray, 1991). Moreover, apart from the traditional bases of power, the inter-unit dependency that has emerged in organizations as a consequence of complexity in the environment is also a power base. While defining power in terms of dependency, an actor would have power over another actor to the extent of the latter's dependency upon the former, whereas this dependency can be for resources or for defining problems and solutions (Adams and Zanzi, 2005). Moreover, upwards appeal (Cook and Macaulay, 2004; Ferris et al., 2008) also assigns power to an actor; in that if an actor is difficult to convince, the other actor can overcome his resistance by influencing his boss.

Thus, we propose that power dynamism that comprises of overcoming others' resistance, awareness and understanding of power bases, reputation, using language, information and humor to derive benefit, inter-unit dependency, and upwards appeal help leaders manage organizational change effectively.

P₂: The leader's understanding of power dynamism helps in effecting organizational change.

Political persona

While studying political behavior from the bio-cognitive perspective of humans, Peterson (1985) asserts that situational factors are often overlooked while arriving at conclusions about behavior. Since situational factors relate to the political side of decisions, (Adams and Zanzi, 2005) they gain weight while studying PI. Moreover, since PI has to do with interpreting the political situation in the

organizational milieu (Cook and Macaulay, 2004), the ability to read or interpret the situation is significant. Thus, the role of the situation in drawing political judgments has also been discussed in literature (Marcus et al., 2005). To describe politically relevant personality traits and behaviors, it may be argued that the underlying political psychology of leaders, political as well as managerial, can be expected to be at least comparable.

Hence, the content and style of political decision making is influenced by the elements of motives, beliefs, decision style, and interpersonal style that may be applied to the realm of PI in light of the above argument. From the motives and beliefs standpoint, politically intelligent leaders work with integrity for the collective good of the organization rather than for individual benefit (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Hence they are altruistic, focus on the good of the organization and are not selfish. Whereas, interpersonal style defines the manner in which people relate to others, specifically how their dealings - deliberate or not, - affect others and their underlying attitudes and how they cater to their own needs through others (Immelman, 1993). Notably, the politically intelligent have a distinct interpersonal style that is appealing (Ferris et al., 2000) and that enables them to grow while working with and through others (Perrewe et al., 2000). Indeed, the leaders of today openly connect with others, proactively seeking change to improve things (Ng, 2011). Such leaders view interpersonal interactions as carrying prospects, and in turn are able to inspire trust and confidence in others. Owing to the interpersonal influence capability of the politically intelligent, they have an overpowering persuasion ability, which has also been referred to as 'flexibility' (Ferris et al., 2008).

This makes sense as politics is a game of language and persuasion (Hillygus, 2005). Hence, to be able to persuade with success, one must be able to use one's language skills for one's aim. We conclude therefore that, to influence others, the actor's communication - of which language, tone and words are an important part - must be fitting with the preferred impact as incongruent messages are sent to others if the impact and intention are different (Cook and Macaulay, 2004).

Interestingly, a proactive nature has been found to be relevant to political skill (Ferris et al., 2008). The focus of the politically intelligent is proactive, which helps them in managing change (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Thus, we contend that proactive nature is an attribute of politically intelligent leaders. The locus of control concept tells about an individual's attribution of rewards and punishments to either self (internal locus of control) or others (external locus of control). Past research provides evidence that individuals with an internal locus of control perceive more social support, are skilled at influencing others, initiating social relationships, etc. Further, the internals develop enhanced relations with their supervisors, have more favorable work outcomes, and positive social experiences. Thus, locus of control has been shown to relate with political skill (Ferris et al., 2008).

Focused attention gains importance here since it helps the leaders in understanding the stances of stakeholders as well as in recognizing and identifying the information revealed via symbols, conduct and remarks (Liu et al., 2007). Therefore, it may be argued that politically intelligent leaders have the ability to keep their attention focused.

We propose that a political persona that comprises of the ability to interpret a political situation, persuasion, using language to one's benefit, pro-active focus, internal locus of control, and focused attention ability help leaders in effecting organizational change.

P_3: The leader's political persona contributes to effecting organizational change.

Effective stress management

Politically skilled leaders are capable of working with flexibility in changing environments, especially those that implicate stress. PI has been rendered as being an antidote to stress at work. While sources of stress at work may be rising competition, scarcity of skills and resources, and varying technology, PI allows for a certain interpersonal control that helps prevent stress and manage things successfully. Additionally, those high on PI believe they can make effective use of resources. Such individuals have a sense of confidence and they predict success for themselves. Their confidence extends to controlling impressions and interactions at work. In fact, stress at work is reduced for them as they enjoy showing their political skill. Arguably then, the ability to effectively manage stress at work characterizes an individual's PI, which reduces strain (Perrewe et al., 2000).

We propose that effective stress management that comprises of interpersonal control, belief in effectively using resources, confidence in controlling impressions and interactions, helps leaders in effecting organizational change.

P_4: The leader's effective stress management ability helps in effecting organizational change.

Practical knowledge

Tacit knowledge pertains to the individual and is difficult to verify (Alwis and Hartman, 2008). It is action-oriented relevant knowledge that allows people to achieve goals they personally value. One acquires this knowledge on one's own, it is procedural and relates directly with one's goal. Moreover, it is the knowledge one acquires without being aware of it. It guides people's behaviors and certainty in those behaviors (Alwis and Hartman, 2008; Janson and McQueen, 2007), whereas practical
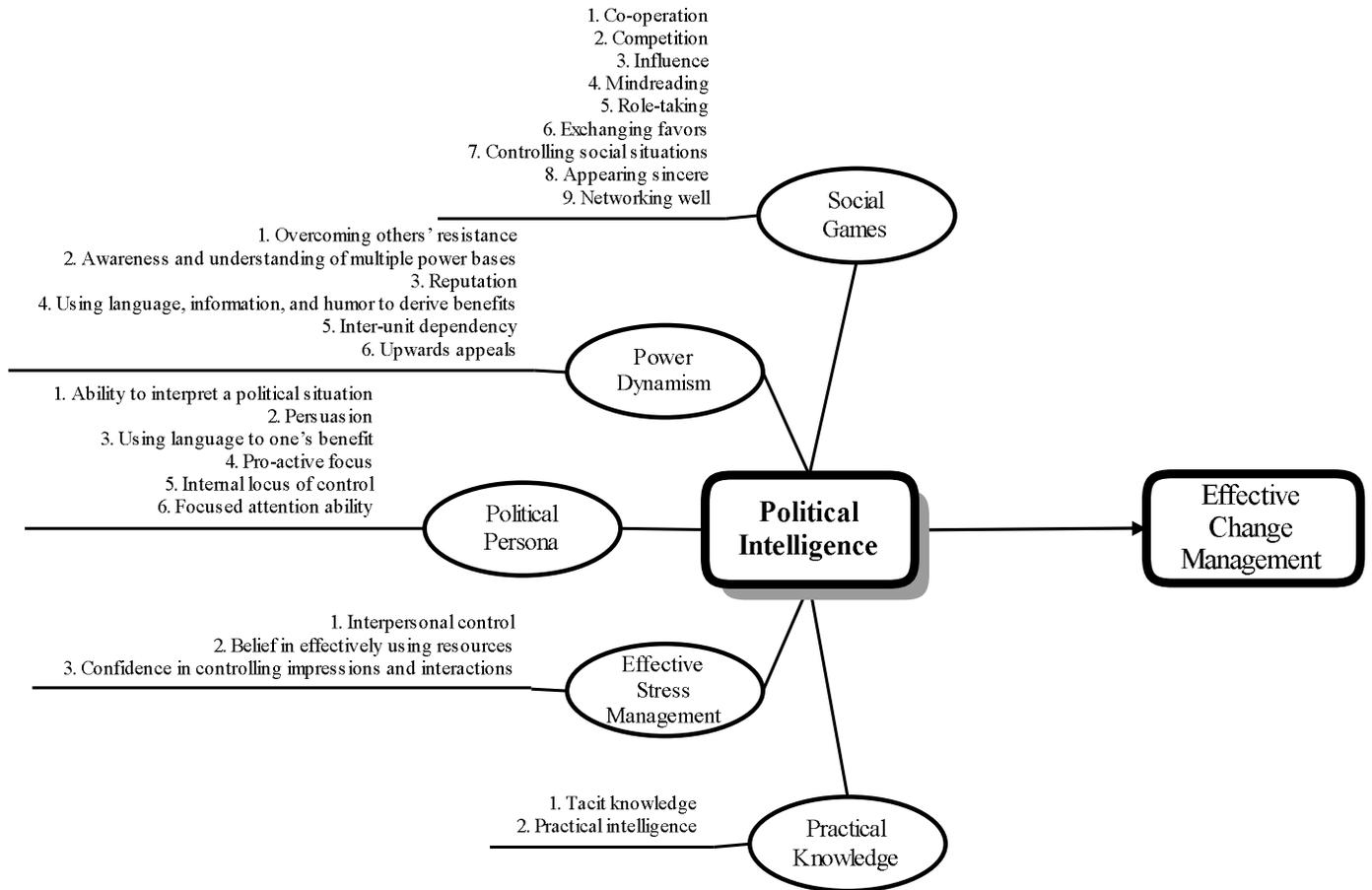
Figure 1. The proposed research model depicting relation between PI and effective change management.

intelligence is about counting on the implicit guidelines at work (Ferris et al., 2000). Moreover, tacit knowledge has been deemed important for leadership (Janson and McQueen, 2007). Since it has been advised that in order to build PI, managers must recognize potentially conflict - laden exchanges and then develop and prepare political responses. From reason, this requires tacit knowledge (Perrewe et al., 2000). Given that tacit knowledge relates to practical intelligence and both tacit knowledge and practical intelligence relate to PI (Ferris et al., 2000), arguably then, tacit knowledge and practical intelligence form part of the PI construct.

Hence, we propose that practical knowledge, comprising of tacit knowledge and practical intelligence, can help bring organizational change.

P₅: Practical knowledge of the leader helps in effecting organizational change.

The proposed research model

Following exploration of pertinent literature, we propose a research model (Figure 1) that attempts to study the

link between dimensions of PI and their relative importance for managing organizational change. On the left side are dimensions of PI that are proposed to be helpful in effectively facilitating change.

The political theory of organizations views that human activity revolves around negotiating, forming coalitions, game playing, power struggles, and differences in interests (Pondy, 1966; Schirmer, 2007). Decisions made in organizational settings are political in nature and are made so as to achieve a desired result (Gray and Ariss, 1985). Change in particular, entails political pursuits as it disrupts the status quo (Agboola and Salawu, 2011). For change leaders, it implies that to promote change in an organization, power assessment is essential to grasp the political side of things (Adams and Zanzi, 2005). Specifically, change leaders use PI so to manage change in the preferred manner (Ferris et al., 2000). Moreover, though politically intelligent leader may employ differing approaches to bringing organizational change – from flattery and exchanging favors with others, to using upwards appeal and forming coalitions, to logically arguing for the management of change, yet their under-lying motive is to bring organizational change (Cook and Macaulay, 2004).

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We have rendered power as being a crucial feature in organizations and have therefore described its importance. Hence change leaders need to contemplate the aspect of power when considering resistance to change (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Power has been defined as a skill for changing events and is certainly not about misuse. It may be argued then, that change leaders can skillfully use power effectively to alter events. Moreover, aptly using power can lessen resistance to change (Agboola and Salawu, 2011).

Since the motives of the politically intelligent are to work for organizational benefit, power can be used to bring organization change with success (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Owing to the fact that power is unequally distributed in organizations and those holding power have different interests, change leaders can have their views accepted by others by exercising influence to bring organizational change. By analyzing and achieving social leverage within organizational settings, change leaders can bargain and exert influence to lead change. Likewise, the more the power imbalance, the more the reliance upon decisions through influence and forming social coalitions during change (Gray and Ariss, 1985). Considering the contemporary turbulent environments that are characterized by downsizing, restructuring and redesign, and rapid technological change (Perrewe et al., 2000) there exists competition for important and scarce resources of the organization. Here, one significant power base is achieved via the skill to deliver or manage resources. This power base includes the reputational aspect as well (Adams and Zanzi, 2005).

In the context of change, PI can help change leaders in reducing negative social outcomes such as conflict (Cook and Macaulay, 2004; Adams and Zanzi, 2005) and hence ease the change process. Social adaptability is also boosted by PI that enhances the capability to work in changing work settings. The confidence in one's ability to control social situations at work leads to an optimistic, assured manner that logically helps change leaders in being successful at bringing change (Ferris et al., 2000). It is therefore strongly indicated that PI is a necessary skill for change leaders in that it gives support in decision making through assessing the environment (Cook and Macaulay, 2004). Moreover, change leaders may resort to manipulation tactics to foster change when other options have failed or are unfeasible (Agboola and Salawu, 2011).

Executives continue to face more stress, given the intensified competition, scarce skills and resources, and added responsibility (Perrewe et al., 2000). Simply, the ever-changing environment has created stress for change leaders and PI is really a mechanism that serves as a remedy for the post-change stressful work environment. The more change an organization experiences, the more the predicted level of stress for those undergoing change. This is especially true for the stress that ensues from role conflict, which is an in-built outcome of change. in coping with stress, enabling them to survive in a highly changing environment.

DISCUSSION

This paper aimed at presenting a theoretical model of the organizational leader's PI to conceptualize the role of PI in effectively managing organizational change. We reviewed relevant approaches to the construct to build our model, which is based on the dimensions of PI identified in light of literature, while the chief proposition was that PI can help facilitate organizational change.

Though there have been studies that have related the two streams of organizational politics and organizational change (Gray and Ariss, 1985) our study proposes that dimensions of PI are valuable in predicting the effectiveness of organizational change. Additionally, the conceptualization of PI is not totally new. Ferris et al. (2005) identified four dimensions of the political skill construct to be social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity.

They initially developed and validated political skill (Ferris et al., 2005), and then refined the same and further validated it (Ferris et al., 2008). Whereas, our five-factor model of PI measures the construct from the change leadership perspective, on basis of dimensions established in light of relevant literature of PI with the aim to build theory, as pointed out earlier. As per our definition, our five-factor model of PI comprises of adeptness at social games, power dynamism, political persona, effective stress management, and practical knowledge.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Implications that result from an enhanced scholarly understanding of PI, and specifically how PI relates with effective change management are several and exist for scholars as well as for practitioners. For the organizations, an increased understanding of PI enhances organizational success, lessens anxiety, and improves external relationships. For organizational leaders, the implications is that with change as a persistent phenomenon, it becomes ever more necessary for them to develop their skill to read employees and be capable of persuading them to act in ways so as to meet organizational objectives.

Politically intelligent leaders have the ability to enhance their team's performance (Ferris et al., 2005). Adams and Zanzi (2005) provided the implications of PI for organizational decision making, and suggested its implications for and career planning. As for employees, we believe that PI is essential for those who aspire to thrive in organizations. Specifically, PI helps the employee in understanding the dynamics of power, conflict, and values during change ((Waddell et al., 2000).

A limitation of this paper is that it does not offer empirical evidence for the research model it suggests,

since it employs theory-based exploration of the literature. Moreover, empirical research is essential to examine the role of PI in effective change management. Research in organizations where change has recently occurred, or is a persistent happening, can address whether their leaders use PI in facilitating effective organizational change. Empirical research should focus on testing the propositions put forth in this paper. Confirmation of the suggested propositions in an empirical investigation would provide evidence for the present conceptual framework that our study suggests. Moreover, since PI can help achieve flexibility in terms of resources and demands, thereby reducing conflict, future research needs to investigate if PI reduces conflict in organizations since change situations carry conflict.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how change leaders may use their PI to facilitate organizational change – an issue overlooked in literature. We have proposed a model that addresses effective change management as an outcome of the leader's PI. Our research model has conceptualized PI and offered relationships between dimensions of PI and effective change management. We respond to relevant and important views as those of Agboola and Salawu (2011), that organizational change in particular involves political pursuits, while the leader's responsibility during the change process is a test (Yukl, 2007).

In addition, our research puts forth an agenda for empirical research to focus on the issue. Change leaders must exhibit adeptness at social games, grasp of power dynamism, have a political persona, be capable of effectively managing stress, and expend practical knowledge, in order to effectively manage organizational change. PI is an important leader intelligence that is short of attention in literature, and this paper has emphasized the significance of PI for effective change management. Leaders may be provided with PI through training and workshops to create awareness of, and enhance their PI skills. In addition, human resource managers may prefer to identify change leaders who are high on PI, while training may be imparted to those executives who are low on this intelligence. These efforts would help ensure maximal organizational performance.

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