

# Organizational Change: Impact of Communication on Justice and Commitment to Change

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## Abstract

Currently, there is a lack of research on communication in the context of organizational change. Furthermore, existing studies are mostly conducted in fictitious organizational change contexts, leading to a problem of generalizability. In light of these facts, some authors recommend studying the impact of change communication strategies on different dimensions of organizational justice and on workers' commitment to organizational change in real organizational change contexts. The present study aims to address these recommendations by investigating the influence of communication in a real organizational change context on the four dimensions of organizational justice and the three dimensions of commitment to organizational change. An online survey was distributed across various online platforms. Based on a sample of 185 Belgian workers, participative communication strategies were found to positively predict all four dimensions of organizational justice, as well as affective and normative commitment to organizational change, but negatively affect continuance commitment to organizational change. This study is the first to explore the relationship between these factors during real organizational changes. The findings may guide managers on communication during the management of organizational change.

## Keywords

Communication, Organizational Change, Organizational Justice, Commitment to Organizational Change

## 1. Introduction

Organizational change is essential for companies' survival as it enables them to adapt to an ever-evolving environment and remain competitive (Duterme, 2019; Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Zulkifli & Muhammad, 2019). Among the key success

factors of organizational change, communication plays a central role. Indeed, it is crucial to obtain the support and collaboration of organizational members (Helpap, 2016; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017). It also fosters positive responses from employees toward change, thus facilitating the success of organizational changes (Helpap, 2016; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017).

In the literature, two change communication strategies (CCS) are generally identified when addressing organizational change (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017). The first, “top-down”, is programmatic communication (PROC), which aims to convey a message to passive recipients (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). In this communication strategy, the manager “tells and sells” the idea of change in one-way communication (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Zulkifli & Muhammad, 2019). The second strategy, “bottom-up”, is participative communication (PARC), which encourages constructive dialogue and involves workers in the sharing of information (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). This strategy considers the perceptions, feelings, experiences, and interpretations of workers, leading to a shared understanding of the change (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). During PARC, employees can interact by asking questions, giving feedback, and actively participating in implementing the change (Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017; Faupel & Helpap, 2021).

Among the few studies on CCS, some have examined the influence of these strategies on workers’ commitment to organizational change (COC), a key factor for the success of changes (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016; Hill et al., 2012). Although CCS are based on different approaches, they share the same goal: to ensure that workers commit to and support the change (Helpap, 2016). However, the impact of CCS on COC varies from one study to another, with some showing that both strategies increase COC (Hill et al., 2012), while others demonstrate that only PARC increases workers’ COC (Helpap, 2016). Furthermore, most research has focused mainly on the affective dimension of COC, neglecting the other two dimensions (e.g., Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016).

Other studies on CCS have investigated the impact of these strategies on workers’ perceptions of organizational justice (OJ) (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Janiczek et al., 2012). Communication plays a crucial role for workers during organizational changes as it provides explanations about the reasons for the change and the context in which it occurs (Janiczek et al., 2012). Thus, the communication strategy used by managers during periods of change influences workers’ perceptions of justice (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Janiczek et al., 2012). Faupel and Helpap (2021) showed that PARC leads workers to view the procedures and decisions related to the change as more equitable.

However, despite these studies, Gamble-Smith (2021) and Helpap and Schinnenburg (2017) highlighted the lack of research on communication in organizational change contexts. Indeed, existing studies are mostly conducted in fictitious organizational change contexts, leading to a problem of generalizability (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). In light of these facts, several authors recommend studying the

impact of CCSs on different dimensions of OJ and on COC in real organizational change contexts (e.g., Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). The present study aims to address these recommendations by investigating the influence of communication in a real organizational change context on the four dimensions of OJ and the three dimensions of COC.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Communication in the Context of Organizational Change

In the context of organizational change, communication refers to any activity that allows for the exchange and understanding of information with the goal of motivating and/or achieving a change in the receiver's behavior (Helpap, 2016; Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). Communication in the context of organizational change is not just a tool but also an interpretive process that allows for the creation of meaning (Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017; Sghari et al., 2015). Indeed, change generates uncertainty, and employees need "sensemaking" to cope with it (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). Sensemaking refers to the process by which employees interpret, understand, and give meaning to an event that causes uncertainty (Helpap, 2016; Armenakis & Harris, 2002). This process involves communication and determines the evolution of the change process by helping employees perceive the necessity of the change (Sghari et al., 2015). To enable sensemaking, managers can adopt two types of CCS, namely PARC and PROC (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). PROC is often favored by managers for communicating organizational changes because it is quick and low-cost (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Russ, 2008). However, compared to PROC, PARC leads to less uncertainty and resistance to change, while fostering more positive emotions (Helpap, 2016; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017).

### 2.2. Change Communication Strategies and Organizational Justice

In the context of organizational change, OJ plays a crucial role in influencing workers' attitudes and behaviors, such as increasing trust toward their supervisors and reducing the intention to leave their organization (Arneguy et al., 2018; Bachisse, 2021). According to uncertainty management theory (Lind & Van den Bos, 2002), perceptions of fairness during times of change reduce uncertainty by providing meaning to the change. OJ refers to workers' judgments about the fairness of their work situation within their organization (Colquitt, 2001). OJ typically comprises four dimensions: procedural justice, which concerns the fairness of procedures and decision-making processes; distributive justice, which deals with the fairness of resource distribution; interpersonal justice, which refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment; and informational justice, which pertains to the quality of explanations and information provided in interpersonal interactions (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Despite the abundance of studies on OJ, there is a glaring lack of research on the relationships between CCS and OJ in contexts of organizational change. To

our knowledge, only two studies have addressed this issue. Through their qualitative study, Janiczek et al. (2012) interviewed 32 healthcare staff members from a Belgian hospital where work process changes were underway. They aimed to understand how workers perceived changes in terms of OJ. The CCS used by this hospital was primarily PROC. In other words, workers were given information on the behaviors they needed to adopt to be in phase with changes, without receiving any further explanations. The interviews revealed that workers felt a lack of causal and ideological explanations for the change project. Workers' misunderstanding of changes led to a low perception of interpersonal justice. Moreover, workers reported a negative experience with the prescriptive nature of the change, adversely affecting their perception of procedural justice. More recently, Faupel and Helpap (2021) used a quasi-experimental approach with 340 German-speaking workers. They manipulated CCS within a fictitious scenario describing an organizational restructuring. They found that PARC was associated with an increased perception of procedural justice. In other words, PARC allowed workers to view procedures and decisions related to change as more equitable. However, this study was based on fictitious scenarios and focused only on one dimension of OJ, limiting the understanding of the impact of CCS on OJ.

As previously mentioned, there is currently a lack of research on the relationships between CCS and other dimensions of OJ. Yet, it is reasonable to think that PARC might also influence the other three forms of OJ. Indeed, given that PARC promotes an environment where managers actively listen to workers (Helpap, 2016), this strategy could enhance their perception of interpersonal justice, as workers would feel heard, understood, and respected during the change process. PARC facilitates the understanding of change-related information through discussions about workers' interpretations and perceptions, contributing to "sense-making" (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). As a result, workers have access to clear and relevant information, which could increase their perception of informational justice. Finally, regarding resource allocation, workers need personal explanations to avoid misunderstandings (Diard & Hachard, 2019). By taking the time to listen to workers and inform them, PARC could improve their perception of distributive justice.

Based on this reasoning, we postulate that:

*Hypothesis 1:* The more participatory the communication strategy, the higher the levels of 1) procedural, 2) distributive, 3) interpersonal, and 4) informational justice.

### **2.3. Change Communication Strategies and Commitment to Organizational Change**

In the context of organizational change, workers' commitment to organizational change (COC) is a key factor in their supportive behavior toward the change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Indeed, organizational changes cannot succeed without willing and committed employees (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). COC refers to a state of mind necessary for an individual to

adopt a course of action perceived as essential for the success of a change initiative (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). COC is composed of three dimensions: affective commitment to organizational change, which is reflected in workers' willingness to support the change due to perceived benefits; continuance commitment to organizational change, which is reflected in the awareness of the costs associated with not supporting the change; and normative commitment to organizational change, which arises from a sense of moral obligation to support the change.

Only a few studies have investigated the impact of communication on COC. Through a longitudinal study of 531 workers from a government agency undergoing restructuring, Hill et al. (2012) highlighted that both PROC and PARC played essential roles in developing workers' affective and normative commitment to organizational change. PROC keeps workers informed about the reasons for the change, provides a clear vision of upcoming events and their impact, and clarifies workers' duties regarding the change. PARC, on the other hand, reduces workers' anxiety and uncertainty during the change process by encouraging workers to express themselves. In his experimental study, Helpap (2016) exposed 263 participants to a fictitious scenario describing the initial phase of a restructuring. Participants were asked to imagine they were experiencing the described change and then respond to a questionnaire assessing their affective commitment toward this organizational change. When the fictitious scenario described a PARC, participants exhibited a stronger affective commitment toward the organizational change. These two studies therefore reach different conclusions. Indeed, Hill et al. (2012) showed that both types of CCS increased affective engagement, whereas Helpap (2016) found that only PARC increased it.

The literature indicates that PARC influences affective commitment toward organizational change (Helpap, 2016; Hill et al., 2012). One of the main sources of anxiety for workers during organizational change is the feeling that they have little control over its impact (Hill et al., 2012). By using PARC, managers listen to workers' concerns and take their opinions into account in decision-making, which helps alleviate workers' feelings of powerlessness (Hill et al., 2012; Rogiest et al., 2015). By reducing workers' concerns and anxiety through PARC, affective commitment is strengthened. Additionally, through dialogue, managers show that they actively consider workers' concerns and encourage their contribution to the change (Hill et al., 2012). Thus, workers perceiving positive treatment from their managers strengthen their sense of moral obligation to support the change, thereby increasing their normative commitment toward organizational change.

To our knowledge, no study has investigated the link between CCS and continuance commitment toward the organizational change. However, it is reasonable to think that PARC might also influence this form of commitment. Indeed, favoring dialogue and providing feedback could help workers perceive the effectiveness of the system and the benefits of staying within their organization (Umukoro & Egwakhe, 2019). Consequently, we assume that in the context of organizational change, PARC, through feedback and dialogue, may influence continuance commitment.

Based on this reasoning, we postulate that:

*Hypothesis 2:* The more participatory the communication strategy, the higher the levels of: 1) affective, 2) continuance, and 3) normative commitment to organizational change.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sample and Procedure

Data were collected through an online survey disseminated via various platforms such as social and professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook). The survey took place from early April 2023 to late May 2023. The link to the online questionnaire was posted along with a description of the research explaining the purpose of the study and emphasizing the confidentiality of the responses (anonymous participation). The informed consent of each participant was obtained. This study received approval from the ethical committee of the Faculty of Psychology of the researchers' university. The ethical committee's final decision was positive, indicating that the study fulfills all ethical guidelines concerning methodological design.

This study was carried out on an all-round sample. The sample consists of workers who have experienced an organizational change within their current company in the past six months. A six-month recall window is frequently used in organizational studies, especially in surveys and studies of past behavior and events, because it offers a compromise between the accuracy of short recall periods and the greater data volume of longer ones, providing enough time to capture meaningful, though not exhaustive, data with a manageable level of memory error.

In total, 185 Belgian workers completed the entire questionnaire and were eligible. During the past six months, 82% of respondents reported a change in colleagues, 63% a change in salary, 56% a change in tasks, 48% a change in work processes, 45% a change in technologies or tools employed, 43% a change in role or responsibilities, 38% a change in working hours, 35% a change in reporting line, and 30% a change in immediate supervisor. Among the participants, 42% were aged between 26 and 35 years, 60% were women, 77% held employee positions, 72% had no subordinates, and 74% worked full-time.

Using the full partial covariate effects (Little, 2013), these socio-demographic variables were unrelated to our model's constructs and, consequently, were not used as control variables.

#### 3.2. Measures

As participants spoke French, the original English questionnaires were translated using a back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980).

*Change Communication Strategy (CCS).* The six-item scale developed by Helpap (2016) was used to assess workers' perceptions of the communication strategies employed by management during changes in their organization. Participants responded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A high score indicates that participants perceive the change com-

munication strategies as participative, while a low score indicates a more programmatic perception. This scale has good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Dimensions of OJ.* We used the scale developed by Colquitt (2001) to assess procedural justice (seven items), interpersonal justice (four items), and informational justice (five items). For distributive justice, we used the three-item scale developed by Elkins and Phillips (2000) and adapted by Bernerth et al. (2007) for the change context. For both scales, participants responded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal consistencies are good ( $\alpha = .73$  for procedural justice,  $\alpha = .92$  for distributive justice,  $\alpha = .89$  for interpersonal justice, and  $\alpha = .90$  for informational justice).

*Dimensions of COC.* The scale developed and validated by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) was used. Each form of commitment was evaluated with six items. Participants responded on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The internal consistencies are good ( $\alpha = .95$  for affective commitment,  $\alpha = .84$  for continuance commitment, and  $\alpha = .71$  for normative commitment).

### 3.3. Data Analyses

Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 20.0 software. Linear regression analyses were conducted.

## 4. Results

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and correlations between variables are presented in Table 1. Internal consistency reliabilities range from .71 to .95.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among variables.

| Variables | M    | SD   | CCS    | PJ      | DJ      | ITJ     | IFJ     | ACOC    | CCOC   | NCOC  |
|-----------|------|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|-------|
| CCS a     | 4.50 | .70  | (.85)  |         |         |         |         |         |        |       |
| PJ b      | 3.31 | .70  | .46*** | (.73)   |         |         |         |         |        |       |
| DJ b      | 3.44 | 1.12 | .45*** | .64***  | (.92)   |         |         |         |        |       |
| ITJ b     | 4.15 | .84  | .32*** | .68***  | .61***  | (.89)   |         |         |        |       |
| IFJ b     | 3.42 | .98  | .43*** | .72***  | .69***  | .69***  | (.90)   |         |        |       |
| ACOC a    | 5.02 | 1.54 | .47*** | .65***  | .78***  | .62***  | .69***  | (.95)   |        |       |
| CCOC a    | 4.01 | 1.46 | -.18*  | -.32*** | -.38*** | -.29*** | -.30*** | -.40*** | (.84)  |       |
| NCOC a    | 4.48 | 1.09 | .21**  | .27***  | .27***  | .31***  | .22**   | .35***  | .31*** | (.71) |

Note. N = 185. Correlations among variables are provided below the diagonal, and Cronbach's alphas are provided on the diagonal. M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; CCS = Change communication strategies; PJ = Procedural Justice; DJ = Distributive Justice; ITJ = Interpersonal Justice; JIF = Informational Justice; ACOC = Affective Commitment to Organizational Change; CCOC = Continuance Commitment to Organizational Change; NCOC = Normative Commitment to Organizational Change.  $p < .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $p < .001$ . a Ranges from 1 to 7, b Ranges from 1 to 5.

CCS is significantly and positively correlated with the four dimensions of OJ ( $r = .46, p = .00$  for procedural justice;  $r = .45, p = .00$  for distributive justice;  $r = .32, p = .00$  for interpersonal justice;  $r = .43, p = .00$  for informational justice) and with two dimensions of COC ( $r = .47, p = .00$  for affective commitment;  $r = .21, p = .00$  for normative commitment). However, results revealed a significant and negative correlation between CCS and continuance commitment ( $r = -.18, p = .02$ ).

**Table 2** presents the regression coefficients. The results show that CCS explains a significant and positive part of the variance of procedural justice ( $F(1, 183) = 49.82, p = .00, R^2 = .21, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .21$ ), distributive justice ( $F(1, 183) = 46.64, p = .00, R^2 = .20, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .20$ ), interpersonal justice ( $F(1, 183) = 20.35, p = .00, R^2 = .10, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .10$ ), and informational justice ( $F(1, 183) = 40.75, p = .00, R^2 = .18, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .18$ ). In other words, the more participative the CCS, the greater the perceptions of OJ's dimensions. These results fully support our Hypothesis 1; Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d are confirmed.

**Table 2.** Regression coefficients.

|                        | $\beta$ | Percentile 95% CI |       | t     | p   |
|------------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------|-----|
|                        |         | Lower             | Upper |       |     |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ PJ   | .46     | .33               | .59   | 7.06  | .00 |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ DJ   | .45     | .51               | .92   | 6.83  | .00 |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ ITJ  | .32     | .21               | .54   | 4.51  | .00 |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ IFJ  | .43     | .41               | .78   | 6.38  | .00 |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ ACOC | .47     | .73               | 1.30  | 7.11  | .00 |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ CCOC | -.18    | -.66              | -.07  | -2.43 | .02 |
| CCS $\rightarrow$ NCOC | .21     | .11               | .55   | 2.96  | .00 |

Note.  $N = 185$ .  $\beta$  = Standardized regression coefficient; CCS = Change communication strategies; PJ = Procedural Justice; DJ = Distributive Justice; ITJ = Interpersonal Justice; IIF = Informational Justice; ACOC = Affective Commitment to Organizational Change; CCOC = Continuance Commitment to Organizational Change; NCOC = Normative Commitment to Organizational Change.

Results also show that CCS explains a significant and positive part of the variance of affective commitment ( $F(1, 183) = 50.50, p = .00, R^2 = .22, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .21$ ) and normative commitment ( $F(1, 183) = 8.75, p = .00, R^2 = .05, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .04$ ). However, results show that CCS explains a significant and negative part of the variance of continuance commitment ( $F(1, 183) = 5.92, p = .02, R^2 = .03, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .03$ ). These results partially support our Hypothesis 2; Hypotheses 2a and 2c are confirmed, but Hypothesis 2b is not confirmed.

## 5. Discussion

Change management is a major challenge for managers involved in organizational changes necessary for the survival of organizations (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). Understanding the key factors for successful changes is therefore crucial (Ouedraogo

& Ouakouak, 2018). Although communication has been recognized as essential during organizational changes (e.g., Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017), there is limited research on workers' perceptions of communication (Gamble-Smith, 2021; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017). Furthermore, the few existing studies have mainly relied on fictitious contexts of organizational change (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016; Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017). This study attempts to address the recommendations of Faupel and Helpap (2021) as well as Helpap (2016) by examining the impact of communication on the various dimensions of OJ and COC in a real organizational change context.

Based on a sample of 185 Belgian workers, this study highlights the importance of the CCS employed by management in a real organizational change context, confirming most of our hypotheses. Firstly, our results show that the more participative the CCS, the more workers perceive OJ. Indeed, when, in a real organizational change context, communication employed by managers is perceived by workers as participative, their perception of procedural justice is enhanced (Hypothesis 1a). This result is consistent with the study by Faupel and Helpap (2021) based on fictitious organizational change cases. By involving workers in the decision-making process through PARC, managers show that they are listening to workers' opinions. Procedures and decisions are therefore perceived as more aligned with workers' values and expectations (Mahida & Dif, 2021) and as just and equitable (Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Our study also shows that PARC predicts workers' perceptions of the other three dimensions of OJ (Hypotheses 1b, 1c, and 1d). Being involved in the decision-making process makes workers feel understood and treated with dignity and respect by management. Similarly, by implementing PARC, managers encourage constructive dialogue and involve workers in information sharing, increasing workers' perception of fairness by participating in the creation of sensemaking (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). The opportunity for workers to share their interpretations and influence the change project leads to the creation of sensemaking (Rheinhardt & Gioia, 2021). By collaborating and agreeing on issues, workers and managers reach a shared understanding (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Rheinhardt & Gioia, 2021). Information exchange, by creating a common sense and reducing uncertainty, thus fosters workers' perception of fairness (Faupel & Helpap, 2021).

Secondly, our results show that PARC also has a significant impact on workers' COC. When managers use PARC in a real organizational change context, it leads to an increase in affective commitment to organizational change among workers (Hypothesis 2a). This result aligns with Helpap's (2016) study based on fictitious organizational changes. Affective commitment develops when workers align with the goals and values of the organizational change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). By actively participating in the implementation of change through PARC, workers reduce their anxiety and uncertainty about the change (Helpap, 2016; Hill et al., 2012). Additionally, PARC allows managers and workers to mutually adjust their interpretations of the change to achieve a shared

understanding (Helpap, 2016). By ensuring that employees understand the change project well, managers strengthen their commitment (Mas-Machuca & Marimon, 2019). Therefore, PARC facilitates the sensemaking process, contributing to the development of affective commitment (Helpap, 2016).

Our study also highlights that PARC positively influences normative commitment to organizational change (Hypothesis 2c). This result is consistent with Hill et al.'s (2012) study. Normative commitment arises from workers' socialization, loyalty to the organization, or the need for reciprocity generated by the feeling that the organization acts in their interest (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Hill et al., 2012). Through PARC, managers show that they consider workers' concerns and seek their input in the change process (Hill et al., 2012). Positive treatment received through PARC reinforces workers' sense of moral obligation to support the change, thereby fostering normative commitment.

Regarding continuance commitment to organizational change, our results contradict Hypothesis 2b and show that PARC leads to a decrease in continuance commitment. This negative relationship can be theoretically explained by the nature and antecedents of continuance commitment. Continuance commitment reflects employees' perception of the costs associated with not supporting a change, such as financial loss, job insecurity, or other negative consequences (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Mangundjaya & Gandakusuma, 2013). It develops when employees perceive that they have no other choice but to comply; in other words, they engage primarily out of necessity rather than choice. PARC, which emphasizes information sharing and the active involvement of employees in decision-making during change (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016), provides several mechanisms that reduce the conditions fostering continuance commitment. First, by keeping employees informed and involved, PARC reduces uncertainty and anxiety about potential negative consequences of non-compliance. Second, it enhances employees' perceived control and autonomy over the change process, allowing them to feel that they have options rather than being constrained. Third, participative practices reduce employees' perceived dependency on the organization to avoid negative outcomes, as the change is experienced as less threatening. Consequently, when PARC is high, employees are less likely to feel compelled to support the change due to perceived costs, resulting in lower continuance commitment. In other words, PARC shifts employees' engagement from being driven by necessity (continuance) toward engagement motivated by choice and active involvement, which aligns more closely with affective and normative forms of commitment.

Commitment to change is a key element of supportive behavior towards change (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). Indeed, dimensions of commitment represent the mindset necessary for workers to actively participate in the success of organizational change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). However, according to Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), only affective and normative commitment are essential to promote cooperation, advocacy of change, active supportive behavior, and compliance with the change. The negative influence of PARC on continuance commitment can be

seen as beneficial, since this type of commitment develops when workers seek to avoid potentially negative consequences for themselves. As a result, workers commit out of necessity to avoid the costs associated with resisting the change (Mangundjaya & Gandakusuma, 2013). The perception of these negative consequences can also reduce workers' motivation, leading them to comply with the change only because they have no other choice (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

## 6. Practical Implications

Managing organizational change presents a significant communication challenge (Russ, 2008). The findings of this research can guide managers in their communication strategies during periods of organizational change. Specifically, this study suggests that PARC is crucial for enhancing workers' perceptions of fairness and their commitment to change. Perceptions of fairness help reduce uncertainty and provide workers with a sense of security, thereby facilitating their adjustment during organizational change (Arneguy et al., 2020; Marzucco et al., 2014). Commitment to change is vital for fostering supportive behavior from workers and reducing resistance during organizational change (Helpap, 2016; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

PARC involves constructive dialogue and active participation by workers by considering their perceptions and interpretations (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). This approach allows workers to interact by asking questions, sharing feedback, and becoming genuinely committed to the implementation of organizational change (Helpap & Schinnenburg, 2017; Faupel & Helpap, 2021). In this way, workers participate in the design of the change project rather than passively receiving it (Russ, 2008).

Managers can deploy this communication strategy through focus groups, open forums, question-and-answer sessions, face-to-face discussions, and other interaction-fostering communication channels (Faupel & Helpap, 2021; Helpap, 2016). To promote PARC, managers can also establish mechanisms for collecting workers' ideas and feedback (Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018).

Considering workers' perceptions and interpretations is a key component of PARC (Faupel & Helpap, 2021). Achieving this involves recognizing workers' contributions, highlighting their active roles within the organization, and maintaining constant transparency (Stimec & Combes-Joret, 2019). This means that, even when workers' suggestions are not adopted or a different decision is taken, it is important to provide feedback or an explanation. Additionally, managers should encourage and listen to critical opinions, as this fosters innovation within organizations (Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). In doing so, managers demonstrate respect for workers' participation, showing that their contributions and involvement are always valued.

## 7. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the contributions of our study, it has some limitations. Our methodology

may have introduced potential response biases. Specifically, we asked participants to retrospectively recall organizational changes they had experienced over the past six months. While this approach allows for the collection of relatively recent events, it is susceptible to recall bias, as respondents may forget, misremember, or selectively report certain changes. Memory decay, event reconstruction, or the salience of particularly positive or negative experiences may also affect the accuracy of self-reports. Our results are based on a single data collection instrument, a self-reported questionnaire. Spector et al. (2019) argue that self-reported scales are better suited for assessing individuals' internal states. However, this could potentially introduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Nevertheless, we took measures to minimize this bias, such as ensuring anonymity in our questionnaire to reduce social desirability bias, and using previously validated scales to construct our questionnaire, thus reducing subjective interpretations. By using a cross-sectional method, we cannot establish causal links between CCS, OJ, and COC. Additionally, the different phases of the organizational change process were not considered. The dimensions of justice may have varying significance depending on the phase of the change process in which workers find themselves (Janiczek et al., 2012). It would be interesting to replicate this study longitudinally, incorporating the different phases of change. Finally, further research is needed on the link between PARC and continuance commitment to organizational change. This dimension of COC has been underexplored in the literature so far (e.g., Hill et al., 2012). Given that our study is pioneering in examining all dimensions of OJ and COC in a real organizational change context, reproducing our study would be necessary to strengthen the findings and better understand the relationships between these key factors of successful change.

## 8. Conclusion

Organizational change is crucial to the survival of organizations (Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to the success of organizational change initiatives is of paramount importance for organizations. This study contributes to the literature by examining the impact of communication strategies during real organizational change on workers' perceptions of fairness and commitment to change. Findings reveal that PARC positively predicts all four dimensions of OJ (procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice). PARC also positively predicts affective and normative commitment. However, PARC has a negative effect on continuance commitment. Understanding how to enhance OJ and COC among workers can help managers refine their approach when initiating organizational change. By increasing perceptions of fairness, workers' attitudes and behaviors can be positively influenced, facilitating their adaptation to change by reducing uncertainty and providing a sense of security (Arneguy et al., 2018, 2020; Marzucco et al., 2014). Commitment to change is essential for fostering supportive behavior from workers and reducing resistance (Helpap, 2016; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

## Ethics Approval

Approval was obtained from the ethical committee of the faculty of psychology of the researchers' university. The procedures used in this study adhere to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki.

## Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

## Data Availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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