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SIX EMOTIONAL STAGES OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE: CONCEPTUALISATION AND SCALE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT. This research designs, implements and validates a five-point Likert-type scale to measure the six emotional stages of organisational change. The results propose a scale with only 31 items after analysing the responses of a total of 1,220 employees and submitting the developed scale to the validity recommended in the literature in five phases and four studies: item generation, scale purification, scale dimensionality, scale validation and nomological validity. Thus, our research extends the literature and provides the first tool to measure the six emotional stages of change. Through the understanding and use of our scale, future research will be able to identify potential counterproductive and conflicting behaviours generated in organisations when implementing change and associate them with each of the six emotional stages described in the literature. Organisational changes, when perceived as unfavourable, provoke emotional changes in most employees, giving rise to behaviours that can become barriers that are difficult to overcome. Our scale will allow us to continue to expand the literature in this field.

JEL Classification: M10, M12, M54

Key words: organisational studies, change management, behaviour, scale development

Introduction

Nowadays, organisational change is synonymous with employees' work lives at companies (Dixon, 2017). We can quickly identify some examples of this fact, such as corporate relocation (Rothe *et al.*, 2015) or pay reductions (Wang & Seifert, 2017). Organisations carry out these changes to adapt to a globalised and increasingly competitive world, changes that help them regain sustainable competitiveness (Al-Haddad *et al.*, 2015). But carrying out the changes is not an easy task since the literature shows that up to 70% of the time, these changes are not made effectively (Rosenbaum *et al.*, 2018). One of the difficulties in implementing these changes is how employees react when they perceive it as unfavourable and are stressed about the new situation (Baqtayan, 2015), leading to rejection and coping strategies (Vakola & Petrou, 2018). Steigenberger (2015) suggests that these coping strategies depend on employees' cognitive perception and emotions. It is true that those responsible for carrying out the changes do not have the ability to control the reactions of their employees, but they can prevent their behaviour (Jennings & Dooley, 2007). To facilitate this understanding of

the changes, Castillo *et al.* (2018) identify six different emotional stages during an organisational change when it is perceived as negative.

However, the literature only features the exploratory study by Castillo *et al.* (2018) that identifies the six emotional stages of change. For this reason, in our paper we have validated a scale for measuring the six emotional stages of change. Without the existence of our proposed scale, it is not possible to continue contributing knowledge to the literature on the stages of organisational change and other constructs. Therefore, in the following sections we present a review of the literature on our field of research. Next, we present the methodology used to meet our research aims with the discussion of the results. Finally, we present the main conclusions of our research.

1. Literature review

1.1. Perceptions and coping strategies for organisational change

Although any strategic organisational change should direct more attention towards resource optimisation and organisational transformation, the literature shows various examples of organisational change that had the opposite effect: decreased productivity and employee job dissatisfaction (Castillo, 2022). As many organisational changes do not reach their defined aims (Burnes, 2011), in recent decades studies looking for factors of successful change have increased (Oreg *et al.*, 2011). While the change is not based on harmful intentions, it is often viewed as destructive as the adjustments are perceived to be damaging or harmful, especially for the employees. Whether positive or negative, this relationship is based on answering the question, and the response is also context dependent (Jones & Ven, 2016). It is true that there are numerous reasons why changes are not successful, but the literature shows that employees have a strong impact on this failure (Oreg *et al.*, 2011). According to Gupta and Singla (2016), different employees react differently to organisational change, but all their reactions fall under three categories: passive, honest or aggressive. The literature shows how employees' resistance to change is one of the main obstacles to its successful implementation (Dorling, 2017). The roots of stress in people experiencing challenging corporate changes influence their productivity, satisfaction, uncertainty and behaviour (Aslam *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, regardless of the various emotional challenges that employees and other organisation stakeholders might go through after organisational change, other factors define how each stakeholder will respond to the organisational change they experience (Jones & Ven, 2016).

1.2. The six emotional stages of organisational change

Like people undergoing distress, organisational stakeholders, especially employees, go through challenging times characterised by stress as they try to understand the change and, in the end, accept the change process. Castillo *et al.* (2018) explain that the six emotional stages of organisational changes include denial and anger, bargaining, depression, revising, deserting and acceptance. In their conclusion, they explain that during the first stages of denial and anger, the connection with relatives and friends is positive. At the bargaining stage, the employees must connect with their manager or organisational leaders to negotiate various issues regarding the organisational changes. There is some sense of cohesion and togetherness among the employees, especially those affected by the change as they are involved in bargaining together. The employees are desperate to return to where they were before changes occurred or bargain for better, more favourable conditions. Recent studies show the importance of this participation

since, for millennial employees, being able to participate in decision-making processes about aspects of the organisation increases their satisfaction (García *et al.*, 2019).

During the depression stage, employees feel empty, and although they have realised that the change is appropriate, they are under stress as they face a new challenging situation (Kern & Zapf, 2021). At this point, people tend to be alone and engage only with co-workers. Studies do show that the existence of a relationship with co-workers mediates the impact of human resource management based on employee satisfaction and performance (Lasisi *et al.*, 2020). At the revising stage, Castillo *et al.* (2018) explain that employees seem to be considering the terms of their job, evaluating their new positions and what the work will be like after the change. At this point, the decision to quit or leave the organisation comes in, and if that does not happen, the employees must develop a mechanism to adopt. Considering this revising stage is extremely important for the organisation since it is an indicator of the real turnover of employees at the company (Fugate *et al.*, 2012).

The deserting stage involves the employees leaving the organisation and involving themselves with other economic activities. This is a voluntary decision to change jobs; the employee's own decision (Chênevert *et al.*, 2019). They have no hope that things will change and fail to see anything positive connected to the organisational change, and thus decide to move away from the organisation. They have no hope that things will change, fail to see anything positive connected to the organisational change and thus decide to move away from the organisation. The literature shows the relationship that exists between resistance to organisational changes and employee turnover, showing how a single event can cause employees to react by leaving the organisation (Lin & Huang, 2020). According to Rahmawati *et al.* (2021), the employee comes to terms with the new reality and understands that the work they performed or a service they enjoyed is no longer there, and they must cope with that. The effects of the acceptance stage are experienced by both those who left the organisation and those who remained. Anger and blame are almost zero, and this turns out to be an excellent time to adjust and readjust.

2. Methodological approach. Scale development and discussions of the results.

To develop a psychometrically valid scale about the six emotional stages of organisational change, we followed the procedures used by prior researchers (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). The entire procedure consisted of five different phases carried out through four studies: (1) item generation, (2) scale purification, (3) scale dimensionality, (4) scale validation and (5) nomological validity.

2.1. Sample

For the validation of our scale, we conducted a total of five phases with different studies as suggested in the literature (e.g. Böttger *et al.*, 2017; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). To determine the minimum number of respondents, we followed the recommendations of Nunnally (1994) which indicates that 10 respondents should be considered for each item used. Except in the first study, which was exploratory in order to make a first scale proposal, we fulfilled this criterion for all studies. Consequently, for the first study we obtained a total of 30 individuals, for the second 400 individuals, for the third 380 individuals and for the fourth 410 individuals. All these individuals indicated that they had experienced organisational changes in their respective companies and perceived them as unfavourable. In this sense, the kind of change that took place is irrelevant for our research; we focused only on the individual perceiving it as negative. All the studies followed the same criteria for selecting the research sample: (1) undergoing or have

undergone an organisational change perceived as negative, (2) aged between 18 and 65 and (3) have access to the internet to answer the online questionnaire. For the selection of the sample, we did not apply any ethnic or racial bias and we tried to maintain equity between men and women. At the same time, we selected an age range of respondents between 18 and 65 years old, which was representative of the working age population. Similarly, in order to ensure the sample was a good representation of the population, we ensured that we had people of different academic backgrounds: from the basic level such as primary school to the highest level such as Ph.D. Finally, to maintain this level of representativeness, we selected respondents with different degrees of seniority in the company: from people with less than one year of tenure to people with more than 10 years. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants during our research.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of our research samples.

	Study 1 <i>n</i> = 30	Study 2A/2B <i>n</i> = 400	Study 3 <i>n</i> = 380	Study 4 <i>n</i> = 410
Gender				
Female	50%	65%	60%	60.98%
Male	50%	35%	40%	39.02%
Age				
18 to 32	16.67%	13.89%	10.53%	14.63%
33 to 40	33.33%	13.94%	23.68%	16.83%
41 to 52	33.33%	16.67%	39.48%	24.88%
52 to 65	16.67%	55.5%	26.31%	43.66%
Education level				
Primary school	20%	10%	5%	8.06%
Secondary school	50%	26%	22.5%	21.46%
Training course, intermediate	6.67%	3.5%	2.5%	29.76%
Training course, high level	6.67%	-	17.5%	9.51%
University degree	16.66%	35%	25%	21.95%
Master's degree	-	25.5%	25%	4.63%
Ph.D.	-	-	2.5%	4.63%
Kind of company they work for				
Private sector	50%	75%	82.5%	78.05%
Public sector	33.33%	5%	5%	7.32%
Private sector serving the public sector	16.67%	20%	12.5%	14.63%
Tenure at company				
< 1 year	-	10%	7.5%	-
1 to 3 years	33.33%	20%	17.5%	18.29%
4 to 5 years	16.67%	15%	12.5%	15.61%
6 to 10 years	16.67%	34.5%	40%	40.98%
Over 10 years	33.33%	20.5%	22.5%	25.12%

Source: own calculation

2.2. Data collection

Data collection was carried out from the end of 2018 until October 2020, and all the studies in our research followed the same data collection process. We prepared an online questionnaire hosted on Google Forms (GF), which took respondents about 25 minutes. The questionnaires we prepared in GF corresponded to the Likert scale items that we designed, as can be seen in section 2.3 (Table 2). The items appeared in the questionnaire randomly, and each questionnaire was different from the previous one: the same items but in a different order.

Respondents accessed the GF questionnaire through different devices: computers, tablets or smartphones. We decided to use this technology for our data collection because it reduces the mistakes associated with data collection, allows the collection of data from large samples at a minimal cost, increases the response rate, reduces enumerator errors, permits instant feedback and improves data collection monitoring and the ability to get more confidential data (Fanning & McAuley, 2014).

2.3. Phase 1 – Item generation (study 1: n = 30)

We generated an initial pool of potential items based on each of the emotional stages of organisational change as defined by Castillo *et al.* (2018) and the recommendations of three experts in industrial organisation as per Morgado *et al.* (2017). This procedure resulted in the generation of 36 initial items. The result was an initial scale with a five-point, Likert-type format with the following responses: Absolutely Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4) and Absolutely Agree (5). In Table 2, we show the initial questionnaire we developed with 36 items.

Table 2. Five-point Likert questionnaire with the initial 36-item scale designed on the emotional stages of organisational change.

Item	Answer				
	Totally Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Agree (4)	Totally Agree (5)
Denial & Anger					
DA1. I am not able to accept what is happening	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DA2. I am in complete denial about what is happening	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DA3. I feel like I am a coward for denying what is happening	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DA4. I am more irritable as a result of this situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DA5. I am easily irritated by anything	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DA6. I hide my emotions from others	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Bargaining					
BA1. I constantly repeat to myself that everything will be fine	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BA2. Other people are helping me to overcome the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BA3. I make promises to myself in order to get through the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BA4. I constantly think that I will be able to overcome the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BA5. I am relying on a higher entity to move forward	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BA6. I think if I continue to be demanding at work, I will end up overcoming the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Depression					
D1. I feel sad thinking about the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
D2. I have cried or been about to cry because of the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
D3. I feel that nobody supports me, or I am alone in the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
D4. Faced with the situation, I isolate myself from others	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
D5. I want to lie down all day	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
D6. I feel like it's not worth fighting for	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Revising					
R1. I constantly think about finding another job to end the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
R2. I constantly wonder if this is the job I want to be doing	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
R3. If I do not look for a job or change job, it is because of the current situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

R4. I think I would be better off in another job	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
R5. I can't really see a reason to stay	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
R6. I regret having started working for this company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Deserting					
DES1. I have decided that I will leave the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DES2. I have announced that I am leaving my job	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DES3. I'm leaving the company; I've made up my mind	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DES4. I have no doubts about the current situation. I'm leaving the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DES5. There is no going back, I'm leaving the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DES6. There is nothing that would make me change my decision to leave the company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Acceptance					
A1. By accepting the situation, I feel better about myself	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A2. I am accepting the situation without resigning	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A3. I feel like I've got over the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A4. Support from those around me is helping me accept the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A5. I think there is something good to learn from the situation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A6. I feel like I have accepted the situation and I feel good	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Source: own calculation

2.4. Phase 2 – scale purification (study 2A: n = 400)

To refine the initial scale of phase 1, the questionnaire with the original 36 questions was sent to the study group for the second study and an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on the data of these 400 individuals. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) results indicated that the sample was correct and that we could perform the factor analysis. As a next step, an iterative EFA was performed to eliminate items with low loadings below 0.6 (Hair *et al.*, 2009). This iterative EFA process eliminated a total of five items resulting in 31 items in six factors with factor loadings greater than 0.50. The items eliminated were BA5 (*I am relying on a higher entity to move forward*), R5 (*I can't really see a reason to stay*), R6 (*I regret having started working for this company*), DES5 (*There is no going back, I'm leaving the company*) and DES6 (*There is nothing that would make me change my decision to leave the company*).

On the other hand, the Cronbach's alpha values for the 31-item combined scale was acceptable (0.90) and the individual alpha values of the six factors were also above the threshold of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2009). Table 3 presents the results of the final EFA after the purification with the 31 items of the proposed scale.

Table 3. EFA results of the scale purification with final rotated component matrix (n = 400).

Items	Components					
	DA	BA	D	R	DES	A
DA1	0.8					
DA2	0.84					
DA3	0.71					
DA4	0.64					
DA5	0.69					
DA6	0.87					
BA1		0.68				
BA2		0.79				
BA3		0.78				
BA4		0.61				

BA6	0.75	
D1		0.64
D2		0.81
D3		0.72
D4		0.63
D5		0.75
D6		0.81
R1		0.86
R2		0.73
R3		0.90
R4		0.75
DES1		0.68
DES2		0.78
DES3		0.88
DES4		0.78
A1		0.65
A2		0.78
A3		0.83
A4		0.69
A5		0.63
A6		0.77

Source: own calculation

2.5. Phase 3 – scale dimensionality (study 2B: n = 400)

In this phase we wanted to confirm the factor structure obtained from phase 2. To achieve this, we used the same sample from study 2A with the same 400 people. Thus, we obtained satisfactory results from the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) performed (see Table 4), as shown below. Our scale obtained an X^2 of 92.504, an X^2/df of 1.492 below 5 (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985), GFI (0.928), NFI (0.90), TLI (0.957) and IFI (0.965) values above 0.80 (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 1986; Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Tucker & Lewis, 1973; Bentler, 1990), a CFI (0.964) above 0.90 (Bentler, 1990) and an RMSEA (0.036) below 0.08 (Steiger, 1990), demonstrating a good fit of our model.

Next, we evaluated the reliability and validity of the dimensions of the proposed 31-item scale. Thus, Cronbach's alpha values were above the minimum value of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2009), composite reliability above 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2009) and AVE above 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Convergent validity was therefore achieved. The discriminant validity of our scale was also achieved since the square root of the AVE was higher than the inter-constructive correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. CFA results of the scale dimensionality with descriptions of each item (n = 400).

Item	Standardised Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Denial & Anger				
DA1. I am not able to accept what is happening	0.80			
DA2. I am in complete denial about what is happening	0.90			
DA3. I feel like I am a coward for denying what is happening	0.90	0.88	0.92	0.67
DA4. I am more irritable as a result of this situation	0.72			
DA5. I am easily irritated by anything	0.74			
DA6. I hide my emotions from others	0.83			
Bargaining				

BA1. I constantly repeat to myself that everything will be fine	0.70			
BA2. Other people are helping me to overcome the situation	0.79			
BA3. I make promises to myself in order to get through the situation	0.72	0.83	0.86	0.56
BA4. I constantly think that I will be able to overcome the situation	0.75			
BA6. I think if I continue to be demanding at work, I will end up overcoming the situation	0.78			
Depression				
D1. I feel sad thinking about the situation	0.77			
D2. I have cried or been about to cry because of the situation	0.81			
D3. I feel that nobody supports me, or I am alone in the situation	0.72	0.85	0.89	0.59
D4. Faced with the situation, I isolate myself from others	0.75			
D5. I want to lie down all day	0.75			
D6. I feel like it's not worth fighting for	0.81			
Revising				
R1. I constantly think about finding another job to end the situation	0.86			
R2. I constantly wonder if this is the job I want to be doing	0.78	0.88	0.89	0.68
R3. If I do not look for a job or change job, it is because of the current situation	0.90			
R4. I think I would be better off in another job	0.75			
Deserting				
DES1. I have decided that I will leave the company	0.76			
DES2. I have announced that I am leaving my job	0.78			
DES3. I'm leaving the company; I've made up my mind	0.88	0.84	0.87	0.64
DES4. I have no doubts about the current situation. I'm leaving the company	0.78			
Acceptance				
A1. By accepting the situation, I feel better about myself	0.74			
A2. I am accepting the situation without resigning	0.78			
A3. I feel like I've got over the situation	0.83			
A4. Support from those around me is helping me accept the situation	0.71	0.85	0.89	0.59
A5. I think there is something good to learn from the situation	0.76			
A6. I feel like I have accepted the situation and I feel good	0.77			
CR Reliability of each construct; AVE Average variance extracted				
Note: $X^2 = 92.504$; $df = 1.492$; $RMSEA = 0.036$; $GFI = 0.928$; $TLI = 0.957$; $IFI = 0.965$; $CFI = 0.964$				

Source: own calculation

2.6. Phase 4 – scale validation (study 3: n = 380)

For the last validation of our proposed 31-item scale, we sent the questionnaire to a total of 380 people. We performed the CFA again and the values we obtained confirmed the validation and adjustment of the scale: $X^2 = 124.08$, $X^2/df = 1.88$, $p = 0.000$, $GFI = 0.902$, $CFI = 0.930$, $TLI = 0.910$, $NFI = 0.920$, $IFI = 0.964$ and $RMSEA = 0.049$.

2.7. Phase 5 – nomological validity (study 4: n = 410)

In this last phase, we tested the nomological validity of the scale to examine whether it can predict other variables (Hair *et al.*, 2009). Reviewing the existing literature, we focused on the effects of the six emotional stages of organisational change on the employees' job satisfaction.

Studies indicate that during processes of organisational change, employees' levels of job satisfaction may be affected: a negative experience with high levels of uncertainty about the changes (e.g. Lin & Huang, 2020; Nelson *et al.*, 2018). Based on these studies and considering the results for each emotional stage by Castillo *et al.* (2018), we formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: *The six emotional stages of organisational change – denial & anger, bargaining, depression, revising, deserting and acceptance – significantly affect employees' job satisfaction.*

To validate our hypothesis and pass the nomological validation phase, we incorporated MacDonald & MacIntyre's (1997) original 10-item employee job satisfaction scale into our model. The questionnaire with our scale and the job satisfaction scale was administered to a total of 410 people. Thus, the results of the CFA indicated results consistent with $X^2 = 122$, $X^2/df = 2.03$, GFI = 0.903, CFI = 0.931, TLI = 0.911, NFI = 0.921, IFI = 0.965 and RMSEA = 0.051. Convergent validity was ensured from Cronbach's alpha, factor loadings and CR values. The discriminant validity of the square root of the AVE was higher than the correlations between constructs. Convergent validity was ensured from Cronbach's alpha, factor loadings, CR and AVE values. The discriminant validity of the square root of the AVE was higher than the correlations between constructs. Table 5 shows the results for convergent validity.

Table 5. Results of convergent validity during the nomological validity of the scale (n = 410).

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Denial & Anger	0.91	0.92	0.67
Bargaining	0.86	0.86	0.56
Depression	0.91	0.90	0.59
Revising	0.90	0.89	0.68
Deserting	0.87	0.87	0.64
Acceptance	0.88	0.89	0.59
Job Satisfaction	0.88	0.87	0.54

Source: own calculation

In Figure 1 we represent the model obtained through the proposed scale for the six emotional stages of organisational change and employees' job satisfaction. Based on our results, we find that job satisfaction is negatively related to the constructs of denial and anger (-0.16, $p = 0.000$), depression (-0.12, $p = 0.000$) and revising (-0.25, $p = 0.000$), while it is positively related to the constructs of bargaining (0.24, $p = 0.000$), desertion (0.28, $p = 0.000$) and acceptance (0.33, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the results support the nomological validity of the new scale of the six emotional phases of organisational change when perceived as negative.



Figure 1. Model for the six emotional stages of organisational change and employees' job satisfaction – Study 4 (n = 410; *** $p > 0.001$)

Source: own compilation

Based on our results, we were able to determine that the hypothesis for the validation of the model was met by determining that, as the literature indicates, organisational change, and specifically the emotional stages of organisational change, are indeed significantly related to employee satisfaction. Therefore, we ended phase 5 with the nomological validation of our proposed 31-item scale. Our final validated scale is thus shown in Table 2 without items BA5, R5, R6, DES5 and DES6.

Conclusion

The aforementioned results confirm and validate our proposed scale for measuring the six emotional stages of organisational change when it is perceived as negative, becoming an extension of the exploratory analysis carried out by Castillo *et al.* (2018). Therefore, we have met our aim of presenting a five-point Likert-type scale to evaluate the emotional stages employees go through during an organisational change.

Theoretical implications

Our research is the first to propose a scale to measure the six emotional stages of organisational change when it is perceived as negative (Castillo *et al.*, 2018). Through this scale quantitative studies can be developed without problems by expanding the population sample number and facilitating the study of the six stages with other constructs already found in the literature, such as job satisfaction (MacDonald & MacIntyre, 1997). At the same time, our research tackles an existing criticism in literature such as that of Oreg *et al.* (2011), which indicates that studies on individual-level reactions to change processes are less frequent

compared to global-level reactions. Thus, our study provides future social science researchers with a tool that will favour the collection of data on the reactions of individuals, identifying the emotional stage they are in.

Practical implications

Through this scale, organisation managers will be able to identify the emotional stage of their employees when they make an organisational change. Managers can thus foresee and anticipate actions for reducing the negative impact of organisational changes. Measuring emotional states with our scale makes it possible to identify their emotional stage and act accordingly to reduce employees' stress (Kelloway *et al.*, 2005). Supervisors and human resource managers possessing this knowledge, will allow the necessary resources at each stage for employees, something that instils a positive perception of organisational support and favours the transition to changes (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, if the organisation is able to anticipate employees' negative reactions and know which emotional stage they are in, they will get workers to aim for increased productivity and performance, showing positive behaviours (Yadav & Rangnekar, 2015). Moreover, organisational changes being successful is partially achieved through the motivation of the employees (Van den Heuvel *et al.*, 2010). This motivation can be generated if the organisation shows its support to the employee through transformational leadership (Oreg & Berson, 2011). So, organisational support has positive relationships with organisational results in change processes (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and transformational leadership affects the attitudes of employees and their disposition to change positively (Herrmann *et al.*, 2012).

Knowing that some human resource management practices impact organisational performance through the influence on employees (Otoo, 2019), our research will provide a basic tool to address this management in the most efficient way. Finally, it should be noted that our scale can be used for all levels of employee; team leaders are also employees, so they can experience and resist organisational changes just like the employees within their team (By *et al.*, 2016). In this sense, our scale does not discriminate the role of the employee and focuses solely on identifying their emotional stage based on the contributions of Castillo *et al.* (2018). However, the literature shows that changes have less of a negative impact on supervisors than on other employees (Martin *et al.*, 2006).

Limitations and further research

The first limitation is the fact that the surveys were carried out on the participants after they had experienced the organisational changes. This must be considered as they are vulnerable to the reconstruction of memory (Levine *et al.*, 2012). Secondly, the fact that our research did not consider the positions held by the respondents in their organisations or the kind of change they experienced should also be taken into account. Finally, it should be noted that in our research we only confirmed and validated a scale to identify the emotional stages of organisational change when it is perceived as negative; we did not address what emotions are experienced at each stage. Therefore, we propose that future research should use our scale to identify the behaviours that workers display in each of the emotional stages of change, thus expanding the literature. In addition, by conducting more quantitative studies on the emotional stages of change using our scale, it will also be possible to conduct computer simulation studies to see the evolution of workers during a change, as proposed by Castillo *et al.* (2021).

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