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# The Moderating Effects of Past Change Experience on the Relationship Between Change Related Self-Efficacy and Employee Commitment to Change

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**Abstract**

*Organizational change is a common occurrence in today's dynamic business environment, and employee commitment plays a crucial role in its successful implementation. However, the factors influencing employee commitment and the role of past change experience in this process are underexplored in the context of Malaysian Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs). This paper aims to propose a conceptual framework for the moderating effects of past change experience on the relationship between change related self-efficacy on employee commitment towards organizational change in Malaysian GLICs. This paper employs a qualitative approach by reviewing all pertinent literature on the subject from various databases and relating it to the current environment, which attempts to bring the entire concept of organizational change into focus based on the findings of previous research and a proposed conceptual framework that can be used for future research. This research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing a thorough comprehension of the factors of change related to self-efficacy influencing employee commitment towards organizational change. The findings will have practical implications for GLIC leaders and change managers, providing insights on how to effectively engage employees during periods of change, increase their commitment, and ultimately increase the success of organisational change initiatives.*

## Introduction

The 21st century business environment is marked by rapid change due to technological, economic, political, and social developments. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it crucial for businesses to adapt and profit from change (Chima & Gutman, 2020). Organizational change is an unavoidable part of any organization (van Dam, 2018), and it is essential for Malaysian businesses to remain competitive and relevant in today's rapidly changing business environment. Change management is a systematic approach to managing and guiding the transition associated with organizational change (Gosnell et al., 2019). Organizational change refers to any alteration in an organization's structure, processes, strategies, or culture, aiming to improve performance, adapt to market dynamics, enhance competitiveness, or address internal or external challenges (Silvestre & Fonseca, 2020). It is essential for executives to mitigate the negative consequences of large-scale structural changes, as businesses that fail to adapt risk being left behind.


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Change is important for any organization because without change, businesses would lose their competitive edge and fail to meet the ever-changing needs of customers (Kheng & Muthuveloo, 2019; Karpunina et al., 2020). However, every change must be deliberate and well-planned to avoid being destructive. The problem of staff commitment to support organizational change is a common challenge that many organizations face. Lack of commitment can lead to resistance, poor communication, and decreased productivity (Banerjee & Lowalekar, 2021). One of the major challenges faced by organizations when implementing changes is to get staff commitment and support for the changes. According to Aujla and Mclarney (2020), employee involvement and participation in the change process can increase their commitment and reduce resistance to change.

Individual and organizational factors can both influence staff commitment to change. An individual's belief in their ability to successfully adapt to change can increase their commitment to the change process (Gfrerer et al., 2021). Self-efficacy is positively related to employee commitment to change, and individuals who are resilient and can adapt to change are more likely to be committed to the change process (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2019). Employees who are involved in the change process are more likely to support change and actively participate in the process (Akhtar et al., 2020). However, most change initiatives fail (Gigliotti et al., 2019). Employee resistance (Pieterse et al., 2019) in the absence of change acceptance (Gigliotti et al., 2019) indicates poor change readiness (Rimita et al., 2020). Resistance is a major obstacle to organizational change, causing 70% of efforts to fail (Yue et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2021). Due to organizational members do not welcoming change, organizational changes may have failed. Employees resist change (Stouten et al., 2018). Due to the high failure rate of change programmes, it is necessary to identify the factors that can help or hinder their implementation (Akbar et al., 2018).

In Malaysia context, the preceding historical developments and the economic turbulence shaped the landscape and influenced especially GLICs' ability to adapt to the uncertainty. According to the Ministry of Finance in the blueprint of Perkukuh Pelaburan Rakyat, 2021, the government has already taken initiatives to strengthen the governance and performance of the GLICs, including the introduction of a new oversight body, the Council of Eminent Persons, in 2018. The report states that these efforts aim to improve public investment and promote sustainable economic growth in Malaysia. GLICs must grow and perform well (https://www.asianinvestor.net). As a result, GLICs must implement organizational change as well as a sufficient number of change management initiatives. Employees must be able to support and commit to the corresponding organizational change. It is very important as GLICs are considered a growth engine for developing economies (Dixon, 2022). However, there has been little research on employee commitment to change in Malaysia.

Ruhana (2021) identifies self-efficacy as one of the primary constructs of organizational commitment. As reported, self-efficacy refers to employees' beliefs in their own capabilities. Bandura (2017) and Fahmi et al. (2019) explore self-efficacy as the force that drives employees to organize and further execute the appropriate set of actions required to achieve prospective organizational goals. Higher levels of self-efficacy led to increased motivation, engagement, and commitment during change processes (Renko et al., 2021). Therefore, committed workers are less likely to leave, more likely to attend and participate in events, perform well, and behave well within the organization, according to meta-analytic reviews.

Despite that, exploring how past change experience interacts with change-related self-efficacy can provide insights into how employees' previous change encounters shape their confidence and belief in their ability to adapt, which, in turn, influences their commitment to change within Malaysia GLICs. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap by investigating the moderating effects of past change experience on the relationship between change-related self-efficacy and employee commitment to change within Malaysia GLICs. The insights gained will advance our theoretical understanding of employee commitment to change and provide practical

recommendations for effectively managing change processes within the unique context of Malaysia GLICs.

## Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### Social Exchange Theory (SET)

In this research, the social exchange theory (SET) was utilized as the basis to postulate the relationships of variables for the present study. Social exchange theory is a crucial framework for analyzing interpersonal relationships at work (SET). Its fundamental tenet is that human relationships are created based on subjective cost-benefit analysis, which leads to the tendency for people to repeat behaviours that have been rewarded in the past (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). According to (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018), SET aims to explain behaviour rather than just describe it.

The term SET refers to the behavioural interactions among two or more people and how one person's behaviour is reinforced by another. In a study by Zainun et al. (2018), the authors explained the social exchange concept by examining internal communications between higher management and employees in the workplace. The researcher proposed that this concept might lead employees to feel more committed to change when there is effective communication within the company. This theory has been applied to this framework as the exchange of relationship between the employers and the employees are extremely important for the development of the employee's commitment to organizational change.

### Commitment to Change

There is a growing interest in the employees' experiences of organizational change. Knowledge about employee commitment to change initiatives is obtained from findings from the organizational behavior literature and it is stated by several sources that commitment is one of the most important factors involved in the employees' support for change initiatives (Askolani & Maulid, 2019; Yuesti & Adnyana, 2022; Ramaditya et al., 2020; Gajda, 2018). When attitudes of a person toward an organizational change are positive, you can say there is commitment (Gajda, 2018). Several studies have shown that commitment to the organization contributes to the motivation of employees, increases employee performance, reduces absenteeism and ensures that employee turnover rate stays at a minimun (Daba & Dessalegn, 2022; Paruzel et al., 2021; Hayat et al., 2019; Sergio & Rylova, 2018).

Commitment to change can be described as "the glue that provides the vital bond between people and change goals" (Prastiti, 2021). When a change occurs within an organization, it is important that employees go along with this change. Kareem and Kin (2018) conceptualized commitment to change as a "specific attitude towards change". By explaining the concept of commitment to change, it is shown that people may have various motivations to support a change (Indriastuti & Fachrunnisa, 2019). Some people are committed to their organization because they love what they do, or because the organizational goals are in the same line with their own goals. Other employees might be afraid of the things they lose when they quit working or feel obligated to the organization, or to their manager.

Affective, Continuance and Normative commitment were identified by Allen and Meyer as the three elements of organizational commitment. Employees with higher degrees of affective commitment stay with their companies because they wish to, those with high levels of continuation commitment continue with their companies because they must, and those with higher levels of normative commitment stay because they believe they should (Berberoglu, 2018). The idea of organizational commitment, as described by Meyer and Allen, is a psychological condition that describes the employee's relationship with the organization and has an impact on the choice of whether to remain a member or leave (Paruzel et al., 2021).

Employees may exhibit all three of these commitment types at once, indicating that overall organizational commitment is the cumulative sum of these three psychological states (Ramaditya et al., 2020). The organization is related to all three psychological states, demonstrating that commitment is an attitude whereas the organization is just an object (Ismail et al., 2019). Finally, loyal employee will act in a way that is beneficial to the company and relevant to it. Those three components together will be used as a guideline to indicate a degree of commitment to change.

**Self-Efficacy and Employee Commitment to Change**

Research on self-efficacy and commitment to change is widely recognized as a central component of Bandura's (1986) social learning theory (Hpn et al., 2019). According to this framework, individuals assess their capacity to carry out specific patterns of behavior. Self-efficacy has been shown to strongly predict behaviors such as self-regulation, achievement striving, academic persistence and success, coping, career choice, and career competence (Oriarewo et al., 2018; Bandura, 1997). A key contribution of the construct is its well-documented empirical link with subsequent performance (Keskin, 2020; Zhao et al., 2020). Importantly, self-efficacy should be understood as distinct from ability; while both skills and beliefs are essential for achieving functional competence in any given behavior, they operate as separate yet interrelated factors.

Research by Ruhana (2021) identify self-efficacy as one of the primary constructs of organizational commitment. Bandura (2017) and Fahmi et al. (2019) explore self-efficacy as the force that drives employees to organize and further execute the appropriate set of actions required to achieve prospective organizational goals. Janah (2021) further notes that self-efficacy affects the efforts exerted on a task, persistence, the level of employee interest, and employee classification of task difficulty. Employees with higher self-efficacy demonstrate higher task effort, increased persistence, maximized interest, and a higher tolerance for difficult tasks.

The study by Syabarrudin et al. (2020), found that self-efficacy significantly influences employee's organizational commitment, and in fact self-efficacy also influences organizational commitment with job satisfaction as an intervening variable. According to Budhiraja (2020), Change-efficacy is an important outcome of interactions between employees and their line managers. The researcher introduces change-efficacy as the most important investment for employee readiness for change and suggests how organizations should channelize their change management efforts to successfully implement change.

Numerous research studies investigated the impact of self-efficacy on commitment (Renko et al., 2021; Akhtar et al., 2020; Fatima et al., 2020; Maria et al., 2021; Yokoyama, 2019). Putri and Syah (2018) reported in their study that occupational self-efficacy is positively related to career and organizational commitment. Further, Zhu (2018) and Lee (2019) also stated similar results that self-efficacy has a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment. Extant literature has examined the impact of self-efficacy for one of the components of commitment, i.e. affective commitment (Fatima et al., 2020; Erum et al., 2020; Guoyan et al., 2021; Dwyer, 2019). Fatima et al. (2020) reported in their study that affective commitment to change has the strongest relationship with change related behaviors than the other two components of commitment to change.

Nakir et al. (2020) found a positive correlation between task-specific self-efficacy and organizational commitment. In contrast, Hameli and Ordun (2022) contend that self-efficacy primarily reflects employees' self-beliefs within societal or organizational contexts. Accordingly, when employees hold strong and comprehensive self-beliefs regarding organizational tasks, they tend to exhibit higher motivation and improved performance, which in turn fosters and sustains organizational commitment. Khuong and Mai (2022) correlate self-efficacy and organizational commitment in their studies of the impact of task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership. Al-Mawali et al., (2021) suggest that there is now a substantial

body of evidence that demonstrates the organizational benefits of a strongly committed workforce. The meta-analytic reviews on this topic demonstrate that employees who are committed to an organization are less likely to leave, are more likely to attend and participate in events and to perform effectively and are good organizational citizens. As a result of the aforementioned discussions on change-related self-efficacy and employee commitment to change within Malaysia GLICs.

**Past Change Experience, Self Efficacy and Employee Commitment to Change**

Studies of the behavioural theory of business and strategic management have long been interested in the ideas of historical performance and organizational desire (Manuti & Giancaspro, 2019). The outcome of events in the past in an organization can serve as an effective type of feedback for current behaviours and tactics (Manuti & Giancaspro, 2019). This is known as a backward-looking factor. Readiness for change has been found to be influenced by the track record of successfully implementing major organizational changes (Matthysen & Harris, 2018). In their research about organizational change, Alene and Kassa (2023) have found that the history of change is correlated with the motivation to keep on trying to implement changes. Ullah et al. (2023) observed that a positive experience with previous change projects will stimulate employees' readiness; a negative experience will inhibit their readiness.

According to Ozawa (2020) change experience studies based on organizational learning research have focused on the change experiences of entire organizations and shown that previous change increases the likelihood of further change. The findings show that the manager's successful experience in implementing large change decreases the possibility of large change in the future, although change experience studies have little examined the influence of the results of previous change on further change, assuming instead that the results of prior changes do not influence further change, regardless of the degree of success. Also, employees' prior experience with organizational change can have an impact on commitment to change (Islam et al., 2021). It is possible that before a change initiative is introduced, an employee has a positive or negative attitude about the willingness to change by prior experiences.

According to Thompson and Parent (2022), negative experiences (or lack of positive experiences) with change may contribute to the development of a negative attitude towards an upcoming change. However, employees who have experiences in the field of change did learn something from previous changes and can help to increase the confidence of other employees by means of stories and anecdotes (Magalios, 2022; McCabe, 2020). This attitude to organizational change is a mental construct that can be changed so commitment to change can emerge. Employees who have prior experiences do have more knowledge with changing environments, which can cause more commitment when it is a similar or comparable change.

**Malaysian Government Linked Investment Companies**

Malaysian Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs), which encompass both Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) and major Institutional Investors, have long played a pivotal role in driving the nation's socioeconomic progress and overall economic development. Over the decades, these entities have acted as key institutional anchors, mobilising large-scale financial resources to support national priorities and long-term growth agendas. At present, GLICs collectively oversee investments exceeding RM1.7 trillion, positioning them as among the most influential investors in the Malaysian economy. Their investment activities extend across a broad spectrum of industries, contributing not only to the expansion of strategic economic sectors but also to the establishment of vital enabling infrastructures that underpin sustainable development. In terms of scale, the total assets managed by GLICs amount to more than 120 percent of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while their holdings account for over one-quarter of the total market capitalization of BURSA Malaysia (PERKUKUH, 2021). This underscores their

central role not merely as financial investors but also as developmental agents with significant influence over Malaysia's economic trajectory and institutional landscape.

Each Government-Linked Investment Company (GLIC) operates not only with an economic agenda of generating sustainable investment returns but also with an important social mandate (Gomez, 2017). These organizations were established at different points in time to fulfil specific purposes, and each carries a mandate that reflects broader government policy objectives. For instance, Lembaga Tabung Haji (LTH) was entrusted with managing public savings to facilitate Muslims in fulfilling the fifth pillar of Islam, namely the pilgrimage to Makkah (Tabung Haji, 2017). Similarly, Kumpulan Wang Persaraan (KWAP) was established to support the Federal Government in addressing its pension liabilities (KWAP, 2017), while the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) was mandated to ensure optimal retirement savings and financial security for Malaysians (KWSP, 2017). On the other hand, Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) was created as part of the Government's New Economic Policy (NEP) to serve as an investment vehicle for promoting equity ownership in the corporate sector among the Bumiputera, or "sons of the soil" (Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia, 2017; PNB, 2017b).

The resources managed by these GLICs are derived largely from public contributions, underscoring their responsibility to act in ways that align with societal expectations and values. In recent years, increasing public awareness and demand for Shariah-compliant investment returns has further shaped the investment strategies of these institutions, encouraging them to prioritize compliance with Islamic principles in their operations. However, unlike Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs), GLICs do not fall directly under the regulatory frameworks that mandate Shariah governance standards. This regulatory gap creates a pressing need for the establishment of robust Shariah governance mechanisms within GLICs to ensure that investment transactions are conducted in full accordance with Shariah principles, thereby enhancing both public trust and institutional accountability

## Methods

### Research design

This research employs a quantitative method that use descriptive research design. Descriptive research is a study designed for depicting the participants of research in an accurate way. Quantitative research describes the situation where data is collected in numerical format and analysed mathematically (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). This research uses quantitative research measurement as it focuses on examining the hypotheses testing in order to achieve research objective and outcome. Descriptive statistics were used in conducting this study for statistical data analyse on means, ranking and frequency of the research.

Quantitative research method allows researcher to investigate several samples to determine the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables. Questionnaires will be adopted to be used as a research instrument. The reason that the questionnaire is adopted in this research is because questionnaire is a way of interviewing people in a much more simple and straight forward method, where the questions are also designed to be easy for the respondent to understand (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Besides that, this questionnaire would be designed in both English and Malay language. The questions are close-ended questionnaire. Close-ended questionnaires are used by researchers because it is easier and quicker for respondents to answer, and they reduce the amount of irrelevant or uncertain answers to the questions.

### Target Population and Sampling

The target population of this research comprises managerial, executive, and non-executive employees working in Malaysia's Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs). This

population is particularly relevant because GLICs, which include both Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) and major Institutional Investors, have played a pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's socioeconomic development and economic growth. Collectively, these entities manage investment portfolios valued at over RM1.7 trillion, positioning them as leading institutional investors in the national economy. Their investment activities extend beyond financial returns, contributing significantly to the development of critical infrastructures and the expansion of key economic sectors. The scale of their influence is substantial, with total assets under management exceeding 120 percent of Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and representing more than one-quarter of the total market capitalization of BURSA Malaysia (PERKUKUH, 2021). Given their dual role as economic drivers and agents of national development, the perspectives and experiences of employees within GLICs are central to understanding the dynamics that underpin their organizational effectiveness and broader contribution to the Malaysian economy.

For the purpose of this study, four institutional investors under the category of GLICs are selected, namely the Employees Provident Fund (Kumpulan Wang Simpanan Pekerja, KWSP), Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB), Lembaga Tabung Haji (LTH), and Lembaga Tabung Angkatan Tentera (LTAT). The respondents of this research will consist of employees from these four organizations. These institutions are chosen because, collectively, they account for approximately RM1.4 trillion of the total investments managed by all seven GLICs, thereby exerting a substantial impact on Malaysia's overall economic development (PERKUKUH, 2021).

In research methodology, a sample refers to a subset of a larger population selected for the purpose of making generalizable conclusions (Hosseini et al., 2018). By focusing on employees from these four GLICs, the study ensures that the sample provides a meaningful representation of the broader target population. As noted by Hew et al. (2016), selecting a well-defined sample helps guarantee that the findings reflect the characteristics of the larger hypothetical population under investigation, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of the research outcomes.

**Proposed Conceptual framework**

Based on the discussion above, this study has proposed a conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1 which developed based on the literature review and current environment.

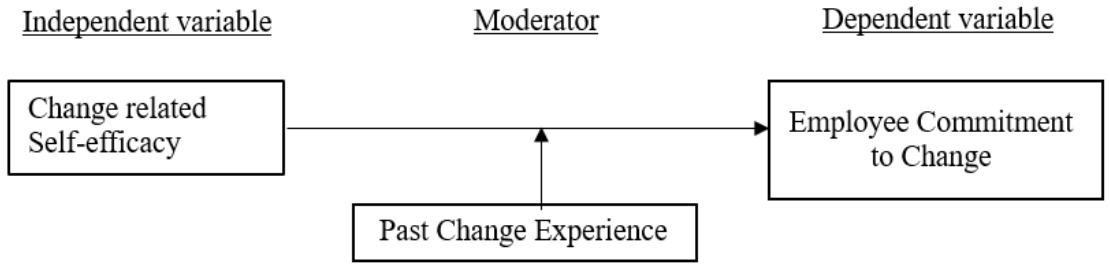


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

This framework illustrates the relationship between an independent variable (Change-related self-efficacy), a dependent variable (Employee commitment to change), and a moderating variable (Past change experience). The framework hypothesizes that change-related self-efficacy directly influences employee commitment to change. Past change experience acts as a moderator, meaning that the impact of self-efficacy on commitment may vary depending on the nature of employees past experiences with change.

The framework posits that change-related self-efficacy positively influences employee commitment to change. When employees believe in their ability to handle change successfully,

they are more motivated, confident, and willing to support organizational change efforts. This direct link emphasizes the psychological foundation of change acceptance. Past change experience is proposed as a moderating variable that can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between self-efficacy and commitment. Employees with positive past change experiences may develop trust in the organization's change process, thereby amplifying the positive effect of self-efficacy on commitment. Conversely, employees with negative past change experiences may approach new changes with skepticism, reducing the extent to which their self-efficacy translates into commitment. The framework recognizes that employees do not respond to change uniformly. Instead, the impact of their psychological resources (self-efficacy) depends on their prior experiences. This highlights the importance of contextual and experiential factors in shaping employee attitudes toward change.

Self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks, has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of behavior and attitudes. In the context of organizational change among Malaysian GLICs, change-related self-efficacy refers to employees' confidence in their ability to cope with new demands, learn required skills, and adapt to changing circumstances. It is expected GLICs employees with high change-related self-efficacy are more likely to perceive change as an opportunity rather than a threat, which fosters a positive mindset toward organizational initiatives. This belief in their own competence enhances their commitment to change, as they feel empowered to contribute to the successful implementation of change. While self-efficacy is expected to directly influence commitment, the strength of this relationship may vary depending on GLICs employees past experiences with organizational change. Past change experience shapes how employees interpret current change efforts. When employees have encountered positive change experiences in the past such as supportive leadership, transparent communication, or successful outcomes, they are more likely to develop trust in the change process. In such cases, it is expected that employees with high self-efficacy will likely translate their confidence into stronger commitment, since they anticipate favorable outcomes.

On the other hand, negative past change experiences such as poorly managed change, job insecurity, or failed initiatives may foster skepticism and resistance. In these situations, even employees with high self-efficacy may hesitate to fully commit, as their confidence could be undermined by doubts about the organization's ability to implement change successfully. Therefore, past change experience can either strengthen or weaken the self-efficacy commitment relationship, acting as a critical contextual factor.

## Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it is crucial for Malaysian GLICs to explore how past change experiences interact with change-related self-efficacy. This interaction can provide valuable insights into how employees' previous encounters with change influence their confidence and belief in their ability to adapt, ultimately shaping their commitment to change. Therefore, this research seeks to address this gap by examining the moderating effects of past change experience on the relationship between change-related self-efficacy and employee commitment to change within Malaysian GLICs. The findings from this study will contribute to a deeper theoretical understanding of employee commitment to change and offer practical recommendations for managing change processes effectively within the unique context of Malaysian GLICs.

Further empirical study is needed to examine other factors do contribute significantly to the employee commitment to change in Malaysian GLICs. Future researchers will also include other Social Exchange Theory factors affecting employee commitment, such as training and development, and work environment to enrich the field's literature.

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