Examining a Moderated Serial Mediation Model of the Relationship between Phoenix Leadership Characteristics and Organizational Change

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the social exchange approach and an accompanying sub-theory pertaining to upper echelons theory, which are the most influential theories for describing the behavior of workers in the workplace, this study empirically investigates some corresponding moderated serial mediation variables, such as affective commitment, work meaningfulness, and perceived organizational support, which impact the relationship between Phoenix leadership and organizational change. A total of 150 employees working in the Sudanese Electricity Company participated in the questionnaire survey. The response rate was 88%. The results revealed that Phoenix leadership significantly influences organizational change and affective commitment. Affective commitment significantly influences work meaningfulness. Affective commitment and work meaningfulness mediate the relationship between Phoenix leadership and organizational change. Affective commitment mediates the relationship between Phoenix leadership and work meaningfulness. Work meaningfulness mediates the relationship between affective commitment and organizational change, but perceived organizational support does not moderate the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational change. By testing the mediated moderation effects on the relationship between Phoenix leadership and organizational change, this research proposes a new framework for assessing the impact of mediators and moderators on teams of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Research on organizational change has not concluded what has been written on this topic due to the new circumstances regarding the business environment, which have forced firms to confront different situations. As long as firms work in changeable business environments, organizational change is inevitable in any workplace (Von Devivere, 2018). By the term organizational change, we refer to any process that involves putting new ideas into practice (Lewis, 2019). Organizational change refers to any change in the structure, strategy, procedures, or culture of the organization (Quattrone & Hopper, 2001). Dunphy and Stace (1993) argued that the method used to manage the change process and the surrounding environment governs the selection of the best model for organizational change management. Many researchers have highlighted the pivotal role that the leader can play in preparing for change (Chrusciel, 2006; McKay et al., 2013). Phoenix leaders are authentic leaders who promote an empowered workforce and are inspirational, resilient, and innovative (Gokenbach, 2018). The characteristics that Gokenbach identified as associated with Phoenix leaders are correlated with one another and elicit interactive, required behaviours from employees during the organizational change process. When working under Phoenix leaders, workers perceive that their employers value their giving, meet their social and emotional needs and promote their well-being (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Thus, the Phoenix leader is a leader associated with renewal who thus successfully manages the change cycle in the work environment.

Some authors have suggested the need for different types of leaders who can influence various components of organizational change such as feelings and beliefs (Fox & Amichai-Hamburger, 2001; Rafferty et al., 2013). Jiang et al. (2015) noted that positive leadership empowers workers to establish healthy work environments that promote organizational retention.

The success of organizational change depends on the availability of certain characteristics in leaders, such as those associated with Phoenix leaders, the leaders' ability to employ an effective method of managing change, the emergence of affective commitment, and the presence of work meaningfulness with regard to workers' performance of the tasks assigned to them. Affective commitment is considered to be an important field with regard to the study of organizational behavior because of its role in reflecting employees' attachment to the goals and values of their organization in addition to its impact on the firm's survival and employees' loyalty to employees to the company, acceptance of decisions and participation in organizational change. Affective commitment refers to the positive psychological commitment to a firm based on identification (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Robinson et al. (1992) suggested that employees with high levels of emotional commitment are happier with their jobs, spend less time performing jobs irrelevant to their work, and are less likely to leave their jobs. The meaningfulness of work has become an important aspect of the sense of calling in the workplace and the internal work motivation of employees (Guo & Hou, 2022). Han et al. (2021) found that the meaningfulness of work significantly enhances in-role performance and work engagement. When employees have a strong sense of the significance of their work, it is easier for leaders to motivate them to complete their work and participate actively in their organization's work teams.

Organizational change requires an atmosphere of perceived organizational support with respect to the people working in the organization. In addition, it is important to support positive behaviors in the workplace. Perceived organizational support focuses on employees'

commitment, the meaningfulness of their work, their enthusiasm for helping the company achieve its goals, and their expectation of rewards in return for better performance (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008; Gavino et al., 2006). Shore and Wayne (1993) showed that perceived organizational support is positively associated with the AFFC. However, less research has focused on the links between organizational change and Phoenix leadership (Pavlic, 2021).

The significance of our study lies in its attempt to reveal certain interesting relationships including two components of the development of psychological empowerment (affective commitment and work meaningfulness) and its use of an organizational support perspective on the relationship between Phoenix leadership and organizational change. This experimental research is a thorough analysis that aims to test the impacts of a cluster of team leaders who we expected to have the five characteristics associated with Phoenix leadership as a second-order variable affecting organizational change in the Sudanese Electricity Company via both mediators and a moderator according to a serial mediation model. The following section discusses the theoretical background and conceptual framework of this research, followed by its methodology and results as well as a concluding discussion.

## Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework

The procedural definitions of the study axes are as follows. Authenticity reflects the leader's ability to achieve harmony with themselves and their followers and to have a positive effect on them that can ensure cooperation within the company. Authenticity refers to the quality of being genuine and implies being fully trustworthy and delivering what is claimed (Covelli & Mason, 2017). Resilience entails optimistic coping with adversity and direct efforts to overcome negatives and study them carefully (American Psychological Association, 2016; Cole, 2016). Inspiration refers to a feeling of enthusiasm and a motivational response that generates new and creative ideas and the ability to see possibilities in the midst of difficulties; inspiration thus encourages individuals to bring ideas to fruition (Chan et al., 2014; Oleynick et al., 2014). An inspiring leader is a leader who has good communication skills, can use their vision to motivate people to achieve organizational goals, dares to make fateful decisions, and is a brilliant strategic planner who always looks towards the future. Such inspiration allows the leader to advocate new values that are included in the firm's values. Innovative leadership refers to providing opportunities for staff to develop their collaborative skills and promoting innovation that aligns with the company's vision (Amabile, 1988). An innovative leader is able to develop and implement a new idea that emerges when they engage in work activities that lead to the attainment of high levels of performance quality that distinguish them from competitors. An empowered workforce entails giving team members permission to take action and make decisions within their scope of work within the organization due to the presence of trust and an understanding that ensures that those actions are aligned with the organization's goals (Cowie, 2017). "An affective commitment is an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in an organization" (Kumari & Afroz, 2013, p. 25). Work meaningfulness indicates the level of worthiness, value, and significance with which the worker experiences their job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Spreitzer, 1995). Perceived organizational support refers to a company that cares for its workers' needs and appreciates their contributions during the period of change. Erdogan and Enders (2007) and Wang and Xu (2019) identified perceived

organizational support as a moderating factor. We expect perceived organizational support to moderate the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational change.

Previous theories on this topic have indicated that since the emergence of "nice guy" leadership at the beginning of the twentieth century, dozens of approaches to leadership have been developed; however, the concept of Phoenix leadership has not been studied in sufficient detail. Therefore, our current research seeks to improve our knowledge of this approach using the social exchange approach. The social exchange approach has frequently been identified as one of the most effective philosophical models of organizational behavior. It is also one of the most prominent conceptual perspectives in management and related fields, such as leadership research and other related sciences. Therefore, outstanding leaders display their personal values and ethical credibility through their leadership style, which generates commitment and higher levels of self-motivation and confidence in employees (Kuczmarski & Kuczmarski, 1995). The social exchange approach explains why persons who understand Phoenix leadership embrace a sense of commitment in exchange for enhanced performance (Blau, 1964). Furthermore, UECT focuses on evaluating the impact of the strategic leadership of the senior management team in light of the overall collective characteristics of that team rather than the individual characteristics of each senior manager (Qiao et al., 2020). Thus, this theory helps us test the characteristics of Phoenix leadership in team leaders in our study. The change in the environmental conditions surrounding an organization requires it to review its goals constantly because it requires a contemporary vision to adapt to such changes. Based on the assumptions made by these theories, it is possible to visualize the relationships among the proposed variables included in the conceptual structure of the current research in Figure 1:

Figure 1

Conceptual Structure of the Research.
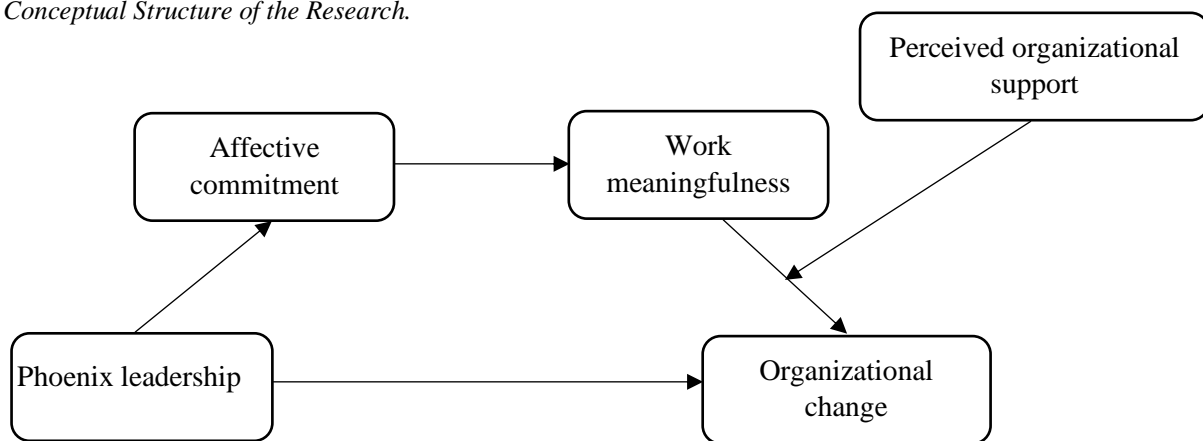
Previous researchers such as Kokitsawat and Clapp (2015), O'Connell Rust and Freidus (2001), and Rossman et al. (1998) have shown that leadership plays a fundamental role in the achievement of organizational change, particularly the leadership style associated with the Phoenix leader. The Phoenix leader is broad-minded and might frequently reinvent themself to fulfill the requirements of the constantly changing landscape of their business and organization; such leaders boost productivity, creativeness, and monetary returns and frequently reinvent themselves once they sense that a change is needed. The Phoenix leader establishes an atmosphere of authorization to participate that encourages creativeness and the ability of the workers to perform and can thus open the door to the attainment of the organization's declared

vision. Phoenix leaders are genuine and sincerely sympathetic. They walk in the shoes of workers and customers and adapt their broader ecosystems and thought processes to fulfill the needs of the constantly changing environment (Armknecht-Miller, 2014; Güntner et al., 2020). Gokenbach (2018) identified the skills of Phoenix leaders as a-authenticity, b-building an empowered workforce, c-inspiration, d-resilience, and e-innovation. The field of organizational behavior research integrates transformational leadership and ethics within a broader framework and refers to it as authentic leadership. A flexible or agile leader is a person who exhibits greater openness to ideas and innovations, focuses on developing people and has both a strong ability to communicate and the creative vision necessary to adapt to difficult times at work. Numerous leaders seek to empower their people to fulfill leader's desires, share information with them, and give them the power to make decisions that enable them to be creative when performing their jobs (Oreg et al., 2018). An inspiring leader can also generate change in employees and society (Oleynick et al., 2014). Campbell-Sills et al. (2006) concluded that a highly resilient person is able to adapt to critical conditions and transform them into an opportunity to learn and develop their skills. Innovation focuses on how to develop and implement a new idea. Employees can observe leaders' innovative behavior when identifying a problem or generating, promoting, or executing a new idea. Therefore, we propose the first hypothesis of our study:

H1a: Phoenix leadership significantly influences organizational change.
H1b: Phoenix leadership significantly influences affective commitment.

The Mediating Effect of Affective Commitment on the Relation between Phoenix Leadership and Organizational Change

Many researchers have confirmed the significant benefits that an organization can obtain from affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Maltin, 2010). In addition, the close relationship between affective commitment and desired behavior at work has also been demonstrated (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Social Identity Theory (SIT) is also important for establishing affective commitment as an important part of an individual's social identity (Tajfel, 1979). Affective commitment is a very important antecedent of Phoenix leadership (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2011; Duarte et al., 2021; Odoardi et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2018). Allen (2016) considered an affective commitment to refer to employees' emotional attachment to their organization.

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) noted that affective commitment is based on the need to create support for a change that supports acceptance of its potential benefits. Braun et al. (2013) indicated that an organization's affective commitment increases with employees' emotional attachment to their leaders. Affective commitment has many fascinating outcomes for organizations, such as relative transparency, justice, honesty, knowledge, courage, and perseverance. Kuczmarski & Kuczmarski (1995) argued that the extent of coherence between the leaders' core worth and employees' commitment to the organization was relevant (e.g., consistent values facilitate alignment with the organization and the interaction of the workers within the mission and vision to achieve the organization's goals). Many researchers have highlighted the association between compliance management and organizational change (Cohen & Caspary, 2011; Mangundjaya, 2019; Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018; Zhou et al., 2020). Furthermore, Ning and Jing (2012) found that employees' commitment plays a major

role in appropriately implementing changes in the administrative structure. Thus, we expect the discover relationships among Phoenix leadership, affective commitment, work meaningfulness, and organizational change and propose the following hypotheses:

H2: Affective commitment significantly influences organizational change.
H3: Affective commitment mediates the association between Phoenix leadership and organizational change.

The Mediating Role of Work Meaningfulness in the Relation between Phoenix Leadership and Organizational Change

According to Hackman and Oldham (1976), work meaningfulness refers to the degree of merit, strength, and value of work for an employee. Work meaningfulness entails several benefits and positive results in terms of job satisfaction, productivity, commitment and participation, fulfillment, loyalty, and retention (Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Rosso et al., 2010). Meaningfulness of work significantly mediates the relationship between job crafting and tour leaders' work engagement (Guo & Hou, 2022). Meng et al. (2022) found that both meaningfulness in work and meaningfulness at work positively mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement. Work meaningfulness affects various job-related performance outcomes, such as engagement, motivation, satisfaction, authority, and career development (Wang & Xu, 2019). The Social Exchange Approach (SEXA) explains the impacts of leadership on work meaningfulness in terms of promoting employees' feelings of affiliation and job significance (Jiang et al., 2015; Wang & Xu, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). These findings lead us to predict that work meaningfulness mediates the association between affective commitment and organizational change and influences organizational change as follows:

H4: Work meaningfulness significantly influences organizational change.
H5: Work meaningfulness mediates the relationship between affective commitment and organizational change.

Building on Hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5, we propose Hypothesis 6 as follows:

H6: Affective commitment and work meaningfulness mediate the relationship between Phoenix leadership and organizational change.

The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support in the Model

Perceived organizational support refers to employees' perceptions and adoption of their company's characteristics to the extent that they understand that their organization values their efforts, prosperity, and related interests, which leads to positive attitudes and work outcomes (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Djurkovic et al., 2004; Hao et al., 2016; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Wijk, 2017). Kurtessis et al. (2017) found that perceived organizational support boosts an employee's ability to handle the responsibilities associated with their job. When employees have positive perceptions in the workplace, they behave positively in response to these perceptions (Yildiz et al., 2017). Based on SEXA, which was developed by Blau (1964), one reason for good mutual relations between an employee and their company is the employee's

feelings of appreciation and care. Thus, the work outcomes are stronger when workers work under an efficient and constructive leader, and they anticipate that the leader will support them in their endeavors. Integrating perceived organizational support into the complete serial mediation model, we theorize that perceived organizational support can moderate the direct relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational change. Thus, we propose Hypothesis 7 as follows:

H7: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational change.

Method

Like other service sectors, the Public Authority for Electricity relies heavily on practical knowledge and on its employees' creative and mobile participation (Wang et al., 2022). Therefore, using a quantitative survey, the current study investigated the role of Phoenix leadership in organizational change via affective commitment and the moderating effect of perceived organizational support in this context. Our questionnaire comprised two parts. The first part focused on participants' personal characteristics, while the second section focused on the main variables included in the study, which were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale. The Sudanese Electricity Company, which includes three companies, i.e., Sudanese Thermal Power Generating Company Ltd. (STPG), Sudanese Electricity Transmission Company Ltd. (SETCO), and Sudanese Electricity Distribution Company Ltd. (SEDC), was established in 2010 and was chosen for this field study due to a large number of work teams it includes. These electricity companies are among the best Sudanese companies, and they are characterized by good management of human resources, which is what prompted the researchers to make them the object of study. A letter was submitted to the secretariat of the Sudanese General Electricity Company Administration explaining our desire to conduct research and its purpose and assuring them that we would use the information provided to us solely for this research and maintain its confidentiality. The administration gave us oral consent to allow their people to participate in our study. Subsequently, they directed us to meet with the Human Resources (HR) department. This study includes five variables, and according to the statistical convention, the sample size should not be less than ten times the number of study variables. Therefore, the appropriate sample size was determined to be 150. We discussed the details with the HR Department, and they agreed to distribute 150 questionnaires to full-time employees working in teams in the administrative and technical departments. Employees are the foundation of any successful organizational change (Fugate et al., 2012; K. Holt & Espelage, 2007). One hundred and two valid questionnaires were received, and the response rate was 88%. The data referenced by this study were collected in the first and second weeks of October 2021. SPSS and Smart PLS software were used to check the measured items and their relationships in the proposed research because they offer precise estimates of the pathways among constructs by simultaneously explicating the structural and measurement scales (Chin, 1998). Furthermore, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is preferred for analyzing complex relationships among variables and investigating the corresponding mediating and moderating effects in research (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

Measuring Variables

We measured Phoenix leadership in terms of five dimensions, each of which included three items as follows: an authenticity measure developed by Kliuchnikov (2011), a measure of building an empowered workforce developed by Cowie (2017), a measure of inspiration developed by Chan et al. (2014), and a measure of innovation and resilience developed by Cole (2016). Organizational change was assessed using a six-item model developed by Judge and Douglas (2009) and Boudreau (2006). Work meaningfulness was assessed using a three-item model that has previously been employed (Peng et al., 2015; Spreitzer, 1995). Affective commitment was assessed using eight previously employed items (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Merritt, 2011). Finally, perceived organizational support was assessed using eight items drawn from the study conducted by Eisenberger et al. (1986).

Results

Table 1 shows the personal information of the respondents included in the study. Men represented a majority of respondents at 57%, and the age groups of less than 30, 30 to 40, and 40 to 50 were the largest groups. In terms of marital status, participants nearly exhibited equality. More than half of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, and most had 15 or more years of experience.

Table 1

Participants' Personal Characteristics (N = 132)

		Frequencies	Percentage%
Sex	Men	76	58.0
	Women	56	42.0
Age	Less than 30 years	20	15.2
	30 to 40 years	56	42.4
	40 to 50 years	49	37.1
	50 years or older	7	5.3
Marital status	Married	40	30.3
	Single	49	37.1
	Other (divorced/widow)	43	32.6
Level of education	Secondary	2	1.5
	Diploma	20	15.2
	Bachelor's	67	50.8
	Higher Diploma	20	15.2
	Master's	23	17.4
	Ph.D.	0	0
Experience	Less than 3 years	10	7.6
	3 to 5 years	10	7.6
	5 to 10 years	6	4.5
	10 to 15 years	27	20.5
	15 years or more	79	59.8

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

We conducted an EFA, which detected five factors with a total variance explained of 45.1%, indicating that the model variables, i.e., Phoenix leadership, affective commitment, meaningfulness, and perceived organizational support, account for approximately 45% of the overall effect on organizational change, whereas the other variables that were not studied account for approximately 55% of this effect. The eigenvalues are greater than one (Hair et al., 2009). Among the forty items included, only 25 exhibited scored loadings greater than 70 in the main factor tests and thus fulfilled the conditions for the scree plot (Brakus et al., 2009).

Therefore, fifteen items that did not meet the test conditions were deleted. This step served as preparation for subsequent analyses.

Common Method Bias

To ensure that this study was free from Common Method Bias (CMB), we pretested those questions by presenting them to a group of ten faculty members specializing in business administration in universities located in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq to ensure the compliance, clarity, and ease of understanding of the items used. Accordingly, we made slight revisions to those items. Furthermore, we used previous studies' questions to design the questionnaire items. In addition, participants included both employees in nonadministrative jobs (e.g., engineering and IT positions) and employees in administrative jobs (e.g., HR and financial positions). Moreover, we used Kock's (2015) test of Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for the hidden constructs. Table 2 shows that the VIFs ranged between 1.336 and 2.933 for the study items and between 1.000 and 2.292 for the variables, which were lower than the standard of five (Hair et al., 2006). Thus, these procedures and VIFs indicated that our study data were free of CMB.

Table 2

The Results of VIFs

	Items-VIFs	Variables-VIFs
AFFC2	1.33	1.00
AFFC3	1.33	
Authenticity1	1.95	2.11
Authenticity2	2.70	
Authenticity3	2.60	
Empowered1	1.42	2.22
Empowered2	1.42	
Innovative1	2.12	1.24
Innovative2	2.88	
Innovative3	2.00	
Inspiration1	2.03	1.10
Inspiration2	2.03	
ORGC1	2.11	1.18
ORGC2	2.18	
ORGC3	1.88	
ORGC4	1.80	
ORGC6	1.56	
PEOS1	2.50	1.73
PEOS2	2.66	
PEOS3	1.91	
Resilience1	1.55	1.41
Resilience2	2.93	
Resilience3	2.27	
WMFN1	1.63	1.29
WMFN2	1.63	

Note. AFFC= affective commitment, ORGC=organizational change, PEOS= perceived organizational support, WMFN= work meaningfulness.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity Measurement

The model measurement fit assessment uses the Composite Reliability (CR) of the internal consistency evaluation, the reliability of only one indicator, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to test Convergent Validity (CV). The reliability and validity of our model were measured utilizing Cronbach's alpha (CA) and CR. Table 3 shows that CA ranges from .70 to .87 and CR ranges from .86 to .92. These values are far larger than the accepted value of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The rho_A values are between CA and CR, thus indicating good reliability, and the AVE exceeds .50. Hair et al. (2019) set the evaluation threshold for CV at

.5. Next, we tested the Discriminative Validity (DV). DV refers to the degree to which the measurement index is not a mirror image of other variables, which is indicated by low correlations between the interest index and other construct indices (Cheung & Lee, 2010). The DV can be checked by matching the Squared Correlations (SC) among the constructions and the AVE of the construction Heterogeneity-Element-Mass Ratio (HTMT). As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the SC of each structure is smaller than the AVE of the index when measuring the structure, indicating that it exhibits sufficient DV. Accordingly, the study measurement items indicated sufficient CV and DV.

Table 3

CV Test

	(CA)	(Rho_A)	CR	AVE
AFFC	.79	.80	.90	.83
Authenticity	.87	.89	.92	.79
Empowered	.70	.84	.86	.76
Innovative	.85	.85	.91	.77
Inspiration	.83	.89	.91	.84
ORGC	.82	.83	.87	.59
PEOS	.86	.89	.91	.78
Resilience	.80	.84	.88	.72
WMFN	.76	.81	.89	.80

Note. AFFC= affective commitment**,** ORGC=organizational change, PEOS= perceived organizational support, WMFN= work meaningfulness.

Table 4

The DV Test

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-AFFC									
2-Authenticity	.09								
3-Empowered	.12	.87							
4-Innovative	.20	.43	.49						
5-Inspiration	.04	.22	.29	.11					
6-ORGC	.52	.39	.40	.22	.13				
7-PEOS	.23	.43	.38	.29	.07	.43			
8-Resilience	.14	.49	.62	.41	.33	.34	.15		
9-WMFN	.52	.32	.27	.10	.22	.73	.54	.20	0

Note. AFFC= affective commitment**,** ORGC=organizational change, PEOS=perceived organizational support, WMFN= work meaningfulness.

## SmartPLS Test for the Model Fit

Figure 2 illustrates the research model in partial least squares (PLS) form, and Table 5 depicts the measures used in this study for the model fit test as follows: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Correct Match Basis Squared Euclidean Distance (d _ULS) and Geodesic Distance (d_G), Chi², and NFI. We used the standard and Bollen-Stine bootstrapping procedures to estimate model fit by reference to the d_ULS, d_G, and SRMR criteria. According to Hu and Bentler (1999) and Dijkstra and Henseler (2015), an SRMR value of less than .10 or .08 is viewed as a valid fit, and our model met this threshold. The suitability of the study was determined by comparing the differences between the saturated values of (d_ULS and d_G) with the estimated values of (d_ULS and d_G) at a confidence interval of 95% (Filimonau et al., 2022). There were no differences between the saturated values and the estimated values, thus indicating the suitability of our study model (Hair et al., 2017). The NFI outcomes are scored between zero and one. The closer the NFI is to one, the more adequate the fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Lohmöller, 1989). Thus, the NFI value found in this study highlights the incremental match of our research measures.

Table 5
Model fit of All Model Constructs

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.07	0.07
d_ULS	3.40	3.40
d_G	1.50	1.50
Chi-Square	1740.66	1740.66
NFI	0.75	0.75

Note. SRMR= standardized root mean square residual, d_ULS=squared Euclidean distance, d_G=geodesic distance/distributed generation, NFI=normed fit index.

Figure 2
Research Model in PLS Form
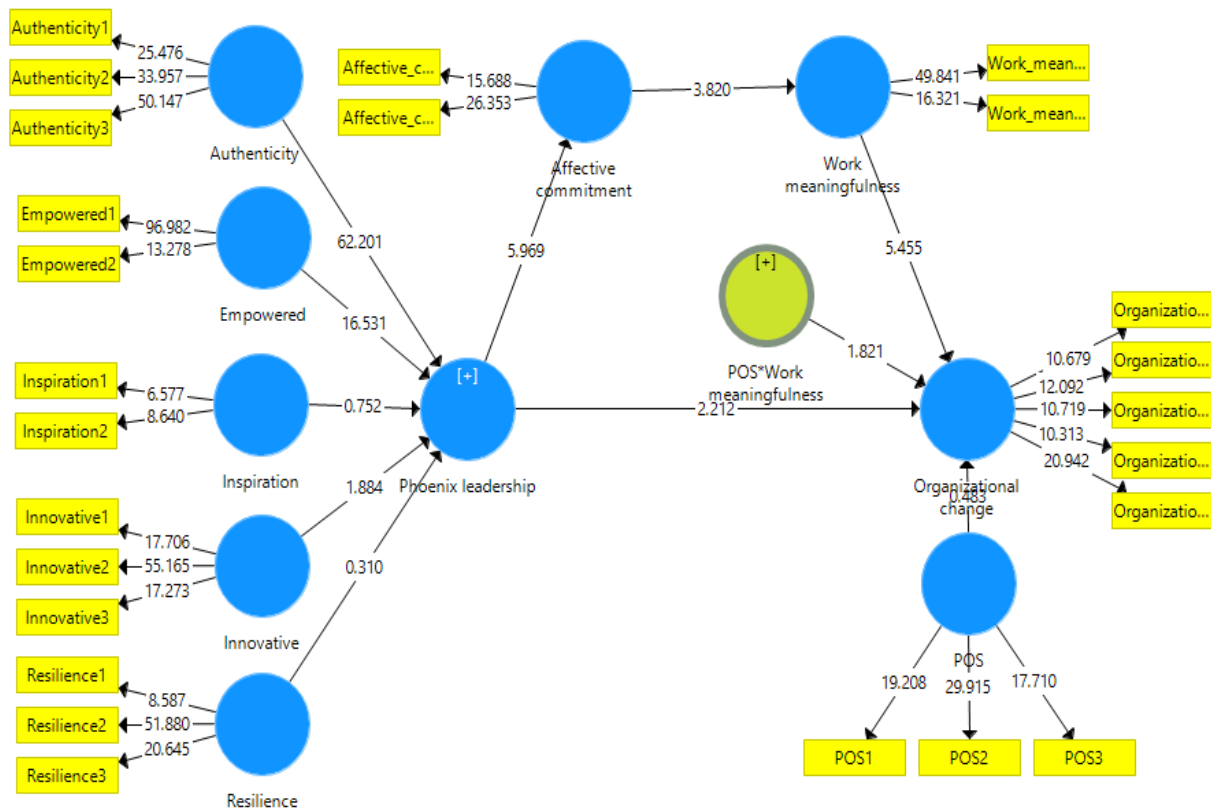
○ ***Assessment of the Structural Model Relationships***

 The proposed hypotheses were examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM has an immediate impact on the unstandardized and standardized outcome box. A hypothesis is accepted or supported if the values of the T statistics are < 1.96 at a significance level < .05 (typically ≤ .05), which is common in the social sciences. As shown in the direct path results in Table 6, Hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2, and H3 were positive and significant: (t = 2.21 > 1.96, p =.02), (t = 5.96 >1.96, p = .000), (t = 3.82 > 1.96, p = .000) and (t = 5.45 >1.96, p = .000), respectively. Thus, the proposed hypotheses were supported.

 In addition, moderated serial mediation paths were tested using the bootstrap approach with PLS-SEM to analyze these paths instead of relying on the PROCESS analysis model paths to avoid the limitations of regression analysis and factor-based SEM analysis in complex mediation models, which can be overcome by using composite-based SEM methods (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Therefore, we used the 5,000 bootstrap approach with a 95% confidence interval to investigate the circuitous impacts (Bollen & Stine, 1990, Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout &

Bolger, 2002), an approach that differs from the strategy suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). Furthermore, Table 5 shows the outputs of the moderated serial mediation tests, which support Hypotheses H5, H6, and H7 as follows: ($t = 2.83 > 1.96$, $p = .000$), ($t = 3.20 > 1.96$, $p = .001$) and ($t = 2.55 > 1.96$, $p = .01$), respectively. In addition, a statistically nonsignificant influence was observed in the pathway of H5 ($t = 1.82 > 1.96$, $p = .06$). Therefore, this hypothesized moderating relationship was rejected.

Table 6

Examining the Moderated Serial Mediation Model (MSMM) Paths

Hypotheses	Parameters	T Values	P Values	Result
H1a	PHLS ----> ORGC	2.21	.02	Supported
H1b	PHLS ------> AFFC	5.96	.00	Supported
H2	AFFC -----> WMFN	3.82	.00	Supported
H3	PHLS ----> AFFC ----> WMFN	2.83	.00	Mediated
H4	WMFN -------> ORGC	5.45	.00	Supported
H5	AFFC ----> WMFN ----> ORGC.	3.20	.00	Mediated
H6	PHLS -----> AFFC ----> WMFN ----> ORGC.	2.55	.01	Mediated
H7	PEOS *WMFN ----> ORGC	1.82	.06	Did not moderate

Note. Phoenix leadership (PHLS), organizational change (ORGC), affective commitment (AFFC), work meaningfulness (WMFN), and perceived organizational support (PEOS).

Discussion

The principal purpose of this research was to examine the effect of Phoenix leadership on organizational change based on a MSMM. This use of the MSMM yielded significant results for most of our proposed hypotheses. The major outcomes of this research aimed to improve our understanding of the positive influence of various forms of Phoenix leadership (authenticity, empowerment, inspiration, innovation, and resilience) on organizational change.

The outcomes highlighted that Phoenix leadership significantly influenced affective commitment and organizational change. This finding was in line with the contributions of Cole (2016) and Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), who found that Phoenix leadership promoted strong organizations with committed employees who shared an organization's vision and goals and thus achieved more than they would achieve if working in their own self-interest. Furthermore, followers who share the Phoenix leader's values and beliefs were positively correlated with organizational commitment (Evanschitzky et al., 2006; Gellatly et al., 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Phoenix leaders with transformational and transactional leadership attributes ultimately motivated employees to change (Nordin, 2012). Phoenix leadership is associated with employees' work significance and plays a decisive role in successful acclimatization and organizational change (Oreg et al., 2018; Shulga, 2021). Through their actions and words, Phoenix leaders allocate loyalty to team members in the organization to ensure that the organization's mission is achieved. This type of leadership ensures that the leader makes sacrifices and expends extra effort. When leaders adhere to principles, honor team codes, and continue to do what is right, and when they have the ability to create a broad-minded and empowered workforce, they may regularly reinvent themselves to meet the dynamic requirements of the effective direction of change efforts (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998; Putra et al., 2021).

The results indicated that affective commitment significantly influenced work meaningfulness and mediated the association between Phoenix leadership and work meaningfulness. Thus, the emotional commitment represented in the employees' enjoyment of discussions of their organization with people from outside the organization and their sense that

the problems of the organization are their problems played the greatest role in those results. To ensure the appropriate management of organizational change, management should take into account affective commitment and business meaning, which inspire positive behaviors directed toward change operations. Affective commitment reflects the worker's attitude towards the organization where they work and not their current job.

The results confirmed that work meaningfulness significantly influenced organizational change and mediated the association between affective commitment and organizational change. The work meaningfulness of the employees surveyed in this study represented their view of the work as very important and beneficial to them. Work meaningfulness highlights the importance and benefit of organizational change as well as the corresponding affective commitment, which affects an organization's future performance. Workers value their jobs, increase their engagement and accomplish their tasks due to the work's meaningfulness. According to Kim et al. (2016), when employees believe in their company values and care about their well-being, they give back to the firm by helping it succeed. Finally, the results proved that affective commitment and work meaningfulness mediated the association between Phoenix leadership and organizational change.

One result of this research is that the variable Phoenix leadership did not modify the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational change. Some studies have highlighted the inability of this variable to play the role of a moderating variable, such as Desta et al. (2022), who found that perceived organizational support had a nonsignificant moderation effect on the association between workforce optimization and employee job performance, and Chen and Jin (2014), who found that it had a nonsignificant moderation effect on the relationship between organizational justice and teacher performance.

Implications

The theoretical contributions of our research findings have remarkable implications regarding the direct relationships among Phoenix leadership, affective commitment, and work meaningfulness in the context of organizational change research. In addition, the discovery of serial mediation and moderation relationships between Phoenix leadership and organizational change has been included in a few studies in the literature.

The administrative contributions of the study can be seen in the role played by Phoenix leadership and affective commitment alongside work meaningfulness in organizational change for companies, which can be used to achieve the following benefits. First, companies can be encouraged to develop the necessary planning and vision for work and communicate them to employees while unifying their efforts to achieve the desired goals and mitigate various work problems. Second, the success-seeking leader can acquire multiple qualities related to Phoenix leadership characteristics to implement the change strategy appropriately for the time and place at hand and to overcome the obstacles that resist change. Third, the leader's ability to deal with human nature in a way that ensures that they win the team members' obedience, respect, and loyalty and motivates them to make changes can be increased. Fourth, relationships can be established to ensure cooperation between the leader and their work team, thereby making the leader interested in developing and improving these relationships and willing to listen to team members' opinions. Fifth, the leader's access to the stage of integration at the level of administrative excellence can be facilitated. In this context, they respect their achievements and

the corresponding major transformations to improve employees' work. Sixth, effective communication can be ensured, and the benefits and advantages of the process of organizational change can be explained to the workers affected by it in a way that ensures that leadership drives them in a positive direction. Seventh, access to different groups of workers who resist and attack the change process or who stand against it and seek to ruin or disrupt it can be facilitated. Finally, team members who are passionate about organizational change can be chosen.

Limitations of Findings and Directions for Future Research

The results of this study cannot be generalized to other service companies. In the future, new studies should be conducted to validate our model in the context of firms that also use teams of employees, such as financial institutions and hospitals. Moreover, we generalize a model that can be tested on companies in the commercial and industrial sectors and different countries. Second, it is noteworthy that our combined predictive study variables explained only 45% of the total variation in organizational change. Thus, more variables should be tested in future research. Third, this study examined the impacts of Phoenix leadership, affective commitment, work meaningfulness, and perceived organizational support on organizational change by considering a small sample of 132 employees drawn from work teams in the Sudanese Electricity Company group of companies. In the future, broader study, this model should be investigated by reference to a larger sample. Fourth, we did not find that perceived organizational support plays a role in the relationship between work meaningfulness and organizational change; therefore, additional studies are required to uncover the variables that modify this relationship.

Conclusion

This study addresses the preeminent gap in Phoenix leadership and organizational change by investigating how affective commitment and work meaningfulness function as mediators in this context when perceived organizational support functions as a moderator. The originality of the study is that it proved that Phoenix leadership, affective commitment, and work meaningfulness are among the most important elements of essential success to organizational change in management. By using appropriate procedures quickly enough when fruitful new opportunities arise for the organization, these elements creating leadership in performance for the studied companies, achieving good adaptation of companies to changes in financing, innovative management decision-making, and institutionalization of organizational change processes. Moreover, the company's appreciation of employees' contributions to its well-being, extra efforts, and choice not to ignore complaints promotes perceived organizational support. Additionally, the values and trends in the structure of employee work teams should be changed to enable those teams to adapt to the social, economic, and technological changes around which change revolves and to keep pace with the latest innovations.

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