

**Perceived supervisor support, regulatory focus, and intellectual stimulation during a change initiative: Evidence from Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

Previous research on individual differences has revealed that individuals' response to change will vary based on their regulatory focus indicating that perceived supervisor support during organisational change will vary across employees. Perceived supervisor support is a key belief that underlies individuals' motivation to change and is defined as the extent to which employees perceive that their supervisor cares about their well-being and values their contributions. Owing to the supervisor's influence on the subordinate during times of change, the influence of the supervisor's intellectual stimulation on the subordinates' perceived supervisor has been evaluated in past studies and found significant.

This research focused on the effect of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support as well as the mediating role of individuals' situational regulatory focus (promotion and prevention orientation) on the stated relationship. The research hence evaluated the direct effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support as well as the indirect effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support when mediated by promotion and prevention orientation. The study constituted a quantitative, cross-sectional online survey of employees in a Kenyan organisation undergoing a planned change initiative with 174 complete responses. The surveys constituted items of the appropriate validated scales and the appropriate control variables.

The analysis was done using SPSS and AMOS, with the findings revealing that while promotion focus orientation is linked to increased perceived supervisor support during a change initiative, prevention focus orientation is not linked in any way. In addition to promotion focus, the test of mediation revealed the likelihood of omitted mediators between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. The main contribution of this study lies in extending and testing the organisational support theoretical framework by introducing regulatory focus as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity norms. Future research should focus on identifying the possible missing mediators as well as identifying which gender composition of the supervisor-subordinate dyads would lead to higher perceived supervisor support.

**Key Words:** perceived supervisor support, situational regulatory focus, promotion focus, prevention focus, intellectual stimulation, organisational support theory, change initiative

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The study is situated in the field of organisation development and focuses on how supervisor support is perceived by different individuals in an organisation during change initiatives. Perceived supervisor support is a key belief that underlies individuals' motivation to change (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Collins & Browning, 2019; Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Perceived supervisor support is “the degree to which an employee perceives that his or her supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (Gordon et al., 2019, p. 2). To understand how perceived supervisor support works we draw from the organisational support theory (OST). Organisational support theory proposes that for employees to meet their socio-emotional needs and gauge the organisation's willingness to reward increased work effort, employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation cares about their well-being and equally values their contributions (Kim et al., 2016; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Organisations are continually faced by the need to carry out changes to adapt to pressures from the environment for them to survive (Wee & Taylor, 2018). Despite numerous initiatives undertaken to guarantee survival in a changing environment, there are examples from the literature indicating that many established firms are unsuccessful in their attempts to adjust to the changing environment (Hoppmann et al., 2019). For example, change strategies that involve the implementation of information systems have encountered high failure rates of up to sixty per cent (Lai et al., 2016). In cases where such firms have been successful in adopting the information systems, they have failed to achieve the full benefits that were envisioned at the onset. It is reported that the high failure rates of such change initiatives can be attributed to the complexity involved in such organisational changes (Burnes, 2015).

Changes within organisations may trigger a sense of insecurity among some organisational members prompting them to make efforts to mitigate the effects of the anticipated change (Barbars, 2017; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). Effective communication of planned changes remains an effective intervention that is used to enact changes within the organisations, since it mobilises and persuades employees to embrace change by influencing the beliefs, feelings, goals and eventually the behaviour of the individuals targeted by the change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Petrou et al., 2018). Such communication of changes ought to increase the followers awareness and interest in the problems that the institution seeks to solve, inspire their predisposition and ability to think through the problems in different ways as they seek to solve

them, a phenomenon referred to as intellectual stimulation which is one of the key constructs of transformational leadership (Zhou et al., 2012).

Armenakis and Harris (2009) identified five key beliefs that underlie individuals' motivation to change namely discrepancy, appropriateness, efficacy, principal support, and personal valence. Based on the five key beliefs that underlie individuals motivation to change, the study sought to bring insight on principal support which is highlighted as one of the key elements that need to be addressed during a change initiative (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Principal support is defined as "an individual's belief that support is provided by formal organisational leaders such as senior leaders and immediate supervisors as well as one's peers" (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019, p. 1626). In this research, we focus on the support provided by one's supervisors which is referred to as perceived supervisor support during change initiatives. The study is hedged on the proposition that organisational change leaders need to ensure the employees perceive a high level of supervisor support during change initiatives (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019).

Previous research has examined the significance of perceived supervisor support in the context of organisational change efforts, shedding light on its pivotal role. This is evident in several notable studies. Ng (2023) contributed to this understanding by revealing a strengthened causal relationship between a change intervention and employees' behaviour during change when accompanied by perceived supervisor support. Similarly, Kebede and Wang (2022) highlighted the intricate connection between organisational justice and employee readiness for change, emphasizing the mediating influence of perceived supervisor support. Their study emphasized that the quality of communication and support from supervisors significantly influences employees' perceptions and reactions to substantial organisational changes. Additionally, Neves (2011) demonstrated that perceived supervisor support serves as a full mediator in the positive correlation between competence and affective and normative commitment to change. Notably, despite the wealth of research in this domain, investigations into the underlying mechanisms of supervisor behaviour leading to perceived support during change initiatives have been relatively limited. Research on these intricate mechanisms remains an avenue for further scholarly inquiry.

Organisational support theory, which highlights how perceived supervisor support works, highlights that supervisors bear the role of being agents or gatekeepers of the organisational policies and practices and in turn provide feedback on organisational operations to top management (Swanberg et al., 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2019). During change initiatives, supervisors are viewed as change agents since they have a mandate to help others overcome

any challenges thereby motivating them to embrace the change (Neves, 2011). Organisational support theory is pegged on the fundamental assumption of the norm of reciprocity, meaning that the employee has an obligation to pay back positive treatment received from the organisation and its agents (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This may be by way of showing support to the organisation and its agents during a change initiative.

While reciprocity is viewed as a norm, meaning that it applies to all individuals, unfortunately, all individuals do not value reciprocity to the same extent, a variation that can be attributed to employee individual differences (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Despite the expected variations, Chae et al. (2019) argue that individual differences can be suppressed depending on the behaviours demonstrated by the supervisor. This is pegged on the proposition that since supervisors have substantial legitimate authority and control over various resources and outcomes that are perceived important by their subordinates, it is expected that strong support from supervisors would demand the same reciprocity from subordinates and therefore hinder the expression of individual differences inducing consistent behaviour across most employees (Chae et al., 2019; Vandenberghe et al., 2019).

On the contrary, while supervisor support has been shown to reduce employee stress levels during change initiatives (Gordon et al., 2019), stress theorists have shown that individuals' psychological states do serve as boundary conditions on the impact of stressors such as organisational changes on employee outcomes. Based on the employees' psychological states, they will elicit different behaviours and attitudes during change initiatives. In line with this, work stressors such as change initiatives may either be perceived as a challenge or a hindrance to employees as different employees will respond differently based on their different psychological states.

One such psychological state is individuals' regulatory focus which illustrates employees' different motivational styles (Kark et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2018). Previous research on individual differences has revealed that individuals' response to change will vary based on their regulatory focus (Kark et al., 2015). This is in line with Petrou et al., (2018) who claim that from the individual differences literature organisational change does not elicit the same responses from all employees. This implies that the perceived supervisor support ought to vary based on differences in individuals' regulatory focus.

Individuals regulatory focus proposes two forms of motivational systems through which individuals either use approach or avoidance tactics to accomplish a goal namely, promotion focus and prevention focus respectively. The key differences between promotion and

prevention focus are attributed to the basic elements of regulatory focus namely: the nature of needs individuals seek to gratify, the kind of goal or standard that they are aiming to attain and the emotional states that matter to them (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Wallace et al., 2016). During a change initiative, promotion focus causes individuals to seek opportunities to pursue their growth and development needs (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Wallace et al., 2016; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). On the other hand, prevention focus causes individuals to pursue the minimum obligations and duties as they seek to restore the status quo or equilibrium (Burnes, 2015; Ng & Lucianetti, 2016; Petrou, Demerouti, & Häfner, 2015).

Based on the stress theorists' arguments, we expect that the perceived supervisor support ought to vary based on differences in subordinates' regulatory focus (Gordon et al., 2019). However, subordinates are susceptible to the influence of leaders since supervisors are salient figures in work contexts and employees view them as the face of the organisation (Johnson et al., 2017). In addition, pegged on the dyadic nature of the supervisor-subordinate relationship we anticipate that perceived supervisor support will be influenced by the individual characteristics of both parties (Baran et al., 2012; Škerlavaj et al., 2014). The conducted research focused on how the subordinate perceives their supervisor, which is a unidirectional approach to this dyadic interaction and is in line with the organisation support theory which views the employee-subordinate relationship based on the subordinates' point of view (Kurtessis et al., 2017). However, various aspects of this dyadic relationship were factored in the conducted research including intellectual stimulation behaviours demonstrated by the supervisors which is a pivotal aspect of communication during organisational change that would have an impact on the subordinate (Johnson et al., 2017; Wu, McMullen et al., 2007). Additionally, the duration of such influence will have to be considered (Landry & Vandenberghe, 2012; Škerlavaj et al., 2014).

This research was initiated in response to Kurtessis et al., (2017) call for focused quantitative research on aspects that guide employee attributions of the organisation's support towards them and the perceived severity of stressors, such as change initiatives, indicating how the different employees' emotional needs and goals would impact on the support offered to employees. Organisational support theory will hence be a stronger theory if it took into consideration the role of individuals regulatory focus in determining the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative. In addition, the research contributes to the ongoing debate on whether prevention motivated employees would be predisposed to change (Petrou et al., 2020) by highlighting the role of a necessary antecedent to this process, namely, the supervisors' intellectual stimulation. The key study constructs are hence intellectual

stimulation, subordinates' promotion and prevention focus and perceived supervisor support. It is essential to note that while reciprocity is a key underlying assumption of the organisational support theory, it does not constitute one of the key constructs evaluated in this study.

Figure 1 below shows the key constructs addressed in the study and the underpinning theory.

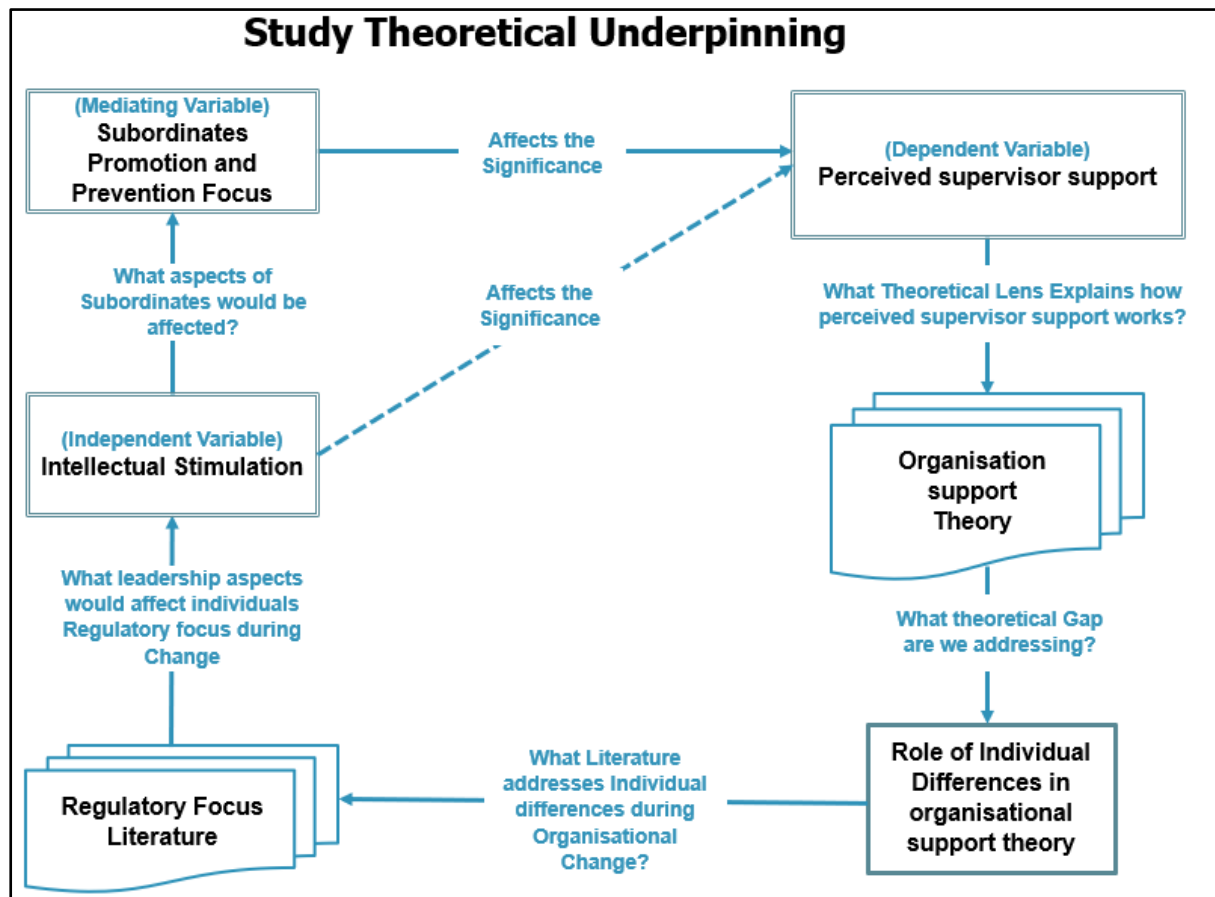


Figure 1: Variables of the study and the underpinning theory

## 1.2 Problem statement

During change initiatives, supervisors are viewed as change agents since they have a mandate to help subordinates overcome any challenges thereby motivating them to embrace the change (Neves, 2011). In line with organisational support theory, the employee has an obligation to pay back positive treatment received from the organisation and its agents, an assumption referred to as the norm of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Chae et al. (2019) argues that individual differences can be suppressed depending on the level of support offered by supervisors. However the researcher argues that since reciprocity is not universal owing to the evidence supporting the existence of individual differences (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), intellectual stimulation which is a form of support during change initiatives will

not elicit the same level of perceived supervisor support across all subordinates. It is hence essential to identify the kinds of individual differences that will affect the level of perceived supervisor support. While supervisor support has been shown to reduce employee stress levels (Gordon et al., 2019), stress theorists have shown that individuals' psychological states serve as boundary conditions on the impact of stressors such as organisational changes on employee outcomes. Previous research on individual differences has revealed that individuals' response to change will vary based on their regulatory focus indicating that organisational change does not elicit the same responses from all employees (Kark et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2018).

However, the problem is that while the effect of transformational leadership on perceived supervisor support has been evaluated in previous research (Liaw et al., 2010), the mediating role of individual's regulatory focus on the relationship between intellectual stimulation and their perceived supervisor support has been neglected. Subsequently, this has created a knowledge gap on whether employees of greater orientation towards promotion focus as well as their prevention focus counterparts will perceive supervisor support in the same way. There is hence little clarity on how perceived supervisor support works when subordinates are either promotion or prevention motivated which would in turn stimulate or limit the effectiveness of change initiatives. To bridge this gap, the researcher therefore conducted an online cross-sectional survey study that investigated the mediating role of regulatory focus differences on the effect of intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the proposed relationship between Intellectual Stimulation and Perceived Supervisor Support. Furthermore, the investigation aims to explore the mediating roles of prevention focus and promotion focus within this relationship.

### **1.4 Research Question**

The primary research question is: "What is the mediating role of regulatory focus orientation on the relationship between supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour and the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?"

The research sub-questions are:

- i) What is the direct effect of a supervisors' intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?

- ii) What is the effect of a supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour on the subordinates' promotion and prevention focus during a change initiative?
- iii) What is the effect of subordinates' promotion and prevention focus orientation on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?
- iv) What is the indirect effect of a supervisors' intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support when mediated by the subordinate's regulatory orientation during a change initiative?

## **1.5 Key Study Constructs**

### ***1.5.1 Perceived supervisor support***

There are two main definitions of perceived supervisor support. The first definition of perceived supervisor support is "the degree to which an employee perceives that his or her supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Gordon et al., 2019, p. 2). The same definition is shared by various authors all bearing the same meanings but some with variations in wording (Bhatnagar, 2014; Chen et al., 2016; Gordon et al., 2019; Paterson et al., 2014; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017; Probst et al., 2020; Straub et al., 2018; Tian et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2020). The second definition is perceived supervisor support is viewed as "characteristic of the work environment that provides a social, psychological and tangible resource that influences the psychological state of engagement" (Swanberg et al., 2011, p. 616). The key difference in the definitions is that while the first definition emphasises supervisory support as a characteristic of the individual, the second one emphasises the workplace. Since this study seeks to focus on the individual the first definition is preferred.

As indicated earlier, for a change message to create readiness for change, it calls for deliberate interventions to create intellectual stimulation so as to influence the beliefs, feelings and eventually the behaviour of the individuals targeted by the change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2018). One of the key beliefs that needs to be addressed is the perceived supervisor support (Armenakis & Harris, 2009; Holt & Vardaman, 2013). Perceived supervisor support is grounded in the organisational support theory framework, as first introduced by Eisenberger et al. (1986). This theory asserts that employees' formation of perceptions about organisational support mirrors the process through which they shape perceptions of support in relation to their supervisors (Fikile & Neil, 2017).

Supervisors bear the role of being agents or gatekeepers of the organisational policies and practices thereby providing feedback on organisational operations (Swanberg et al., 2011;

Vandenberghe et al., 2019). As organisational change agents, supervisors have varied avenues through which they can offer help to their subordinates (Neves, 2011). The kind of support offered is referred to as social support and is of varied types including informational, instrumental, appraisal and emotional support (Chen et al., 2016; Hoppe et al., 2017; Škerlavaj et al., 2014; Swanberg et al., 2011; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Tu et al., 2019).

### ***1.5.2 Intellectual stimulation by supervisors***

Subordinates are susceptible to the influence of leaders since leaders are salient figures in work contexts and employees view them as the face of organisations (Johnson et al., 2017). It was hence expected that the supervisor's regulatory focus would have an impact on the subordinate's regulatory focus. However, Johnson et al. (2017) showed that supervisors regulatory focus did not directly lead to subordinates' regulatory focus but rather works through the leadership behaviour which then has an effect on the subordinates' regulatory focus. In line with this, previous research has shown that the particular leadership behaviour that influences subordinates regulatory focus emanates from the supervisors' transformational leadership behaviour (Johnson et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2007).

Transformational leadership is defined as an ongoing process whereby "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation beyond self-interest to serve collective interests" (Hoch et al., 2018). Such collective interests are ascribed to higher levels of reciprocity. In line with this, transformational rather than transactional leadership has been shown to inspire subordinates to have higher perceptions of supervisor and consequentially organisational support (Johnson et al., 2017; Liaw et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2007).

Transformational leadership demonstrates four dimensions of behaviour supervisors can display namely, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Johnson et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2007; Gong et al., 2009). Through idealized influence, leaders provide an example to follow demonstrating commitment to achieving high standards as well as the organisation's vision. Through inspirational motivation, leaders appeal to the subordinates emotionally to provide a persuasive vision of the future and motivate their subordinates to commit to the organisation's shared vision. Individualized consideration prompts leaders to address the individual needs of followers through listening to their needs, mentoring and giving them feedback during this process.

To create a sense of urgency during a change, leaders must get the attention and interest of their subordinates by highlighting the discrepancy between the old and desired new state



(Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). Consequently, for subordinates to shift from the old way of doing things during times of change, leaders employ intellectual stimulation to challenge the status quo and generate ideas to solve the problems at hand (Dust et al., 2014). In addition, during times of change subordinates are called upon to display creative behaviour as they seek to navigate from the old way of doing things to the new way of doing things which only addresses the demonstration of intellectual stimulation by the leaders (Walk & Handy, 2018; Zhou et al., 2012). Moreover from a previous study it is expected that intellectual stimulation will have an effect on individuals promotion and prevention focus (Johnson et al., 2017).

Therefore, while transformational leadership is conceptualized as a set of the four behaviours, this research only focused on evaluating the effect of supervisors' intellectual stimulation on subordinates' regulatory focus and the perceived supervisor support in the context of a change initiative. This is in line with Tepper et al. (2018) who illustrated that intellectual stimulation rather than the aggregate transformational leadership construct is a better predictor of the attentiveness and interest required to enact new ways of doing things during organisational changes stating "Organisations prize leaders who can inspire followers to meet and exceed high performance standards and embrace needed change" (Tepper et al., 2018, p. 1343). Attentiveness and interest have been shown to influence the information that is noticed, interpreted, and focused on during a change initiative (Wee & Taylor, 2018). This further justifies that intellectual stimulation is crucial and therefore the researcher choose intellectual stimulation as the only component of transformational leadership that was included in this research.

Owing to the dyadic nature of the supervisor subordinate relationship it may be argued that the supervisors' regulatory focus will have an impact on the followers' regulatory focus. However, based on the supervisor's influence on the subordinate, rather than evaluating whether supervisors' regulatory focus will have an impact on the followers' regulatory focus, the impact of the supervisor's influence will be evaluated based on the supervisor's intellectual stimulation. This meant that in the conducted research it was not essential to evaluate the supervisors' regulatory focus but rather the extent to which they displayed intellectual stimulation behaviour.

### ***1.5.3 Individuals' Regulatory focus***

Previous research on individual differences has revealed that individuals' response to change

will vary based on their regulatory focus (Kark et al., 2015). Regulatory focus was propositioned by Higgins (1998) and is based on the principle that people seek pleasure and avoid pain thereby proposing two different ways in which people regulate the two emotions. The forms of regulation are either through promotion focus or prevention focus (Petrou et al., 2018). The key differences between promotion and prevention focus are attributed to the basic elements of the regulatory focus theory namely the nature of needs individuals seek to gratify, the kind of goal or standard that they are aiming to attain and the emotional states that matter to them (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Wallace et al., 2016; Wanberg & Banas, 2000).

Those who seek to avoid pain are referred to as prevention focused individuals and are driven by their security needs to ensure they achieve their duties and responsibilities. In contrast, individuals who seek to maximize pleasure are referred to as promotion focused individuals and are motivated by their growth and development needs to try and achieve their wishes and aspirations (Barbars, 2016; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). A summary of the differences in promotion and prevention focused individuals is represented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Promotion vs Prevention Regulatory Focus  
(Brockner & Higgins, 2001)**

	<b>Promotion Focused</b>	<b>Prevention Focused</b>
Nature of needs they seek to satisfy	The needs pertain to growth and development needs.	The needs pertain to safety, protection, and security.
Nature of goal / standard one is trying to achieve	Reflection of your “ideal self” reflecting your hopes, wishes and aspirations.	Reflection of your “ought to self” regarding your felt duties, obligations, and responsibilities
Emotional / psychological states that matter	Presence or absence of positive outcomes (gains): The preference is pleasure of accomplishment	Presence or absence of negative outcomes (losses). The preference is avoidance of failure

Regulatory focus is observed in two forms namely situational regulatory focus as well as chronic regulatory focus (Kark et al., 2015). The two are differentiated based on their applicability and temporal stability, situational regulatory focus is considered a response to certain environmental demands as it is context dependant and can vary across situations

based on the immediate goals, supervisor cues as well as task characteristics (Kark et al., 2018). On the other hand, chronic regulatory focus is tied to an individual's personality as it refers to an enduring and stable motivational orientation that is consistent over time and across various situations (Kark et al., 2018). Since this research focuses on a change initiative that has specific unique demands on an individual and the mediating role of regulatory focus as depicted in the study by Kark et al. (2015), this research is based on situational regulatory focus as a mechanism that helps to explain how intellectual motivation works to influence perceived supervisor support.

In many studies, boundary conditions are typically seen as moderators but however, it is important to recognize that mediators can also serve as boundary conditions (Busse et al., 2017). By enhancing the accuracy or reducing the simplicity of the theory being examined, mediators contribute to refining causal relationships. In this study, situational regulatory focus serves as a mediating boundary condition that seeks to refine the causal relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. Additionally, while moderators are employed when the moderating variable demonstrates stable traits, such as chronic situational focus, mediation is utilised when the variable is likely to be influenced based on environmental cues, as observed in situational regulatory focus (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). Since situational regulatory focus is bound to be influenced, this reinforces the justification for employing situational regulatory focus as a boundary condition that mediates the causal relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support.

#### **1.5.4 Change initiative**

A change initiative is viewed as movement from one state to another of which literature dictates that employees' responses to change will vary depending on the type of change the organisation is undergoing (Belschak et al., 2020; Pettigrew et al., 2001). The various dimensions of organisation change include the magnitude of the organisation change, the organisational level at which the change occurs, the content or nature of the change itself and whether the change is a response to internal or external factors (Bareil et al., 2007; Boyce et al., 2015; Battistelli et al., 2014; Dunphy & Stace, 1993). Four types of change have been defined in literature including fine-tuning change, incremental adjustment, modular transformation and corporate transformation (Gover & Duxbury, 2018; Rafferty & Simons, 2006; Vleugels et al., 2022). Since this study focusses on perceived supervisor support, the change initiatives referred to in this research are those where supervisors who are mainly departmental leaders are required to play a fundamental role in supporting their subordinates.

The study was conducted in the context of an organisation-wide transformational information system change that led to the re-engineering of various business processes compelling the organisation staff to learn new ways of doing things. The planned changes were a response to top management strategic realignments that supervisors and staff had no control over, thereby affecting the employees across all organisation levels and led to both administrative and technological changes. Being a rather flat organisation hierarchically, the top management closely worked with the supervisors to ensure they get proper direction on how to go about various processes. The change equally presented a number of opportunities for promotion focus oriented employees to show mastery of the new system and teach it to their fellow colleagues. On the flip side, the change potentially upset the prevention-oriented individuals due to the extensive changes imposed on their day-to-day processes.

This called for the organisation under study to handle the desired changes in line with Lewin's three phases of change namely unfreezing, moving and refreezing (Collins & Browning, 2019; Cummings et al., 2016; Soumyaja et al., 2011). The unfreezing phase called for supervisors to help their subordinates realise that the status quo could no longer hold by creating a sense of urgency around the need for a change and providing psychological safety amidst the anxiety posed by the fear of not achieving the set key performance indicators (Soumyaja et al., 2011). The second phase of change, moving, called for cognitive restructuring triggering the supervisors mandate to help subordinates integrate the new actions needed for survival and show that the change is an appropriate way of working and indeed produces the desired results (Van den Heuvel et al., 2013). In the third phase of change, refreezing, the new state was enforced to avoid falling back to the old ways of doing things which required providing necessary resources such as training and guidance needed to support the change effort (Collins & Browning, 2019). Owing to the essence of supervisor support across all the three change phases, by conducting the research a few months after the implementation of the new information system, the conducted study hence employed a cross-sectional design to evaluate the subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors at the end of the three stages.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

### ***1.6.1 Theoretical contributions***

This thesis sought to advance the organisational support theory by introducing individuals' regulatory focus as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations between subordinates and supervisors in the context of change initiatives. This is demonstrated by showing how the perceived supervisor support varies based on individual regulatory focus in

the context of organisational change. The study theorised that subordinates' regulatory focus has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between intellectual stimulation by the supervisor and the perceived supervisor support (Chae et al., 2019; Gordon et al., 2019; Kark et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2018).

The study tested a model for the hypothesised relationships between intellectual stimulation, situational regulatory focus (promotion and prevention focus), and perceived supervisor support specifically examining the mediating role of promotion and prevention focus on the relationship between intellectual stimulation and the perceived supervisor support. The research findings revealed that subordinates' promotion focus has a significant and positive effect on the relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. The findings further revealed the likelihood of additional mediators in the conceptual framework that could be investigated in future research. The research hence introduced individuals' regulatory focus as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations between subordinates and supervisors in the context of change initiatives. This research contribution therefore lies in the literature on organisational support, particularly in exploring the role of individuals' regulatory focus in shaping the perception of supervisor support within the context of change initiatives.

In addition, to demonstrate how the supervisor's leadership behaviour would influence the subordinate's promotion or prevention orientation, the study theorised that supervisors who exhibit intellectual stimulation behaviour, have a significant effect on their subordinates' promotion and prevention focus motivation. The relationship between intellectual stimulation and both promotion and prevention focus were found to be significant indicating the supervisor's intellectual stimulation is an antecedent to promotion and prevention focus motivation. Finally, this research provides further evidence to an ongoing debate concerning the propensity of prevention focused individuals to change (Petrou et al., 2020). The findings show that prevention motivated individuals would be apathetic to the support offered by their supervisors.

### **1.6.2 Practical contributions**

The study results will provide insight to supervisors on the appropriateness of demonstrating intellectual stimulation during a change initiative demonstrating in turn how supervisors feel supported when such behaviour is demonstrated. This research findings will help practitioners realise that perceived supervisory support will vary based on the motivated regulatory focus of their subordinates. This will hence give guidance on the appropriate regulatory motivation

that supervisors should stimulate for them to be perceived as supportive during a change initiative.

Building on these findings, leaders will have the capability to customize their strategies according to the desired situational orientations of their subordinates. This will enable them to implement effective interventions, like training, that creates intellectual stimulation that triggers the desired subordinate's regulatory orientation. Such guidance will empower leaders with specific strategies to effectively foster and maintain perceived supervisor support within the organisation.

Owing to the varied perceptions of supervisor support across different cultures (Cheng et al., 2015), in the context of African workplaces, the study's practical implications extend beyond mere awareness of tribal and ethnic dyadic differences. The research will delve into actionable recommendations for supervisors seeking to mitigate the adverse effects of these disparities during change initiatives.

## **1.7 Conclusion and organisation of the research thesis**

Chapter 2 discusses the importance of the research setting in studies investigating the role of perceived supervisor support during a change initiative. Chapter 3 presents a review of relevant literature, establishes the research gap, develops the study's hypotheses, and proposes a conceptual model. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology as well as the approach to data analysis. Chapter 5 presents the empirical results obtained from the data collected and analysed. Chapter 6 discusses the main findings of the hypotheses formulated for the study while Chapter 7 provides a conclusionary summary of the entire thesis highlighting how contributions made as well as recommendations for future studies.

## **Chapter 2: Study Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research setting as a unique factor in the research of perceived supervisor support. It begins by briefly highlighting how the research setting has impacted on previous studies on perceived supervisor support, and then discusses features of the Kenyan research setting that have the potential to affect the concept of perceived supervisor support during organisational change. The chapter concludes with a summary of the discussion.

### **2.2 Relevance of the research setting**

Perceived supervisor support is based on the norm of reciprocity which is a social exchange relationship between supervisors and their subordinates (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The exchange rules used in various cultures may be different (Cheng et al., 2015). Cheng et al. (2015) demonstrated that American and Chinese employees have different perceptions of supervisor support, a difference attributed to their different cultures. This brings us to question whether the processes by which supervisor support work are representative of the Kenyan setting, the country in which the proposed study was conducted. There is hence a paucity of research in the Kenyan setting and at a broader level, countries in developing markets to facilitate the development of theory on how contextual factors may influence the relationships perceived supervisor support, subordinates' regulatory focus and supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour during organisational change.

### **2.2 Geo-Cultural Context**

The construct of perceived supervisor support which was developed in the United States shows sensitivity to its geo-cultural context (Newman et al., 2012). The universality of reciprocity which underpins the organisational support theory has been questioned across different contexts of supervisor-subordinate relationships as well as various organisational and cultural settings (Shore et al., 2009). Swayampakala et al. (2017) defines six cultural dimensions that are used to define national cultures and below is how the United States and Kenya compare based on their established culture survey. These are shown in Figure 2 below.

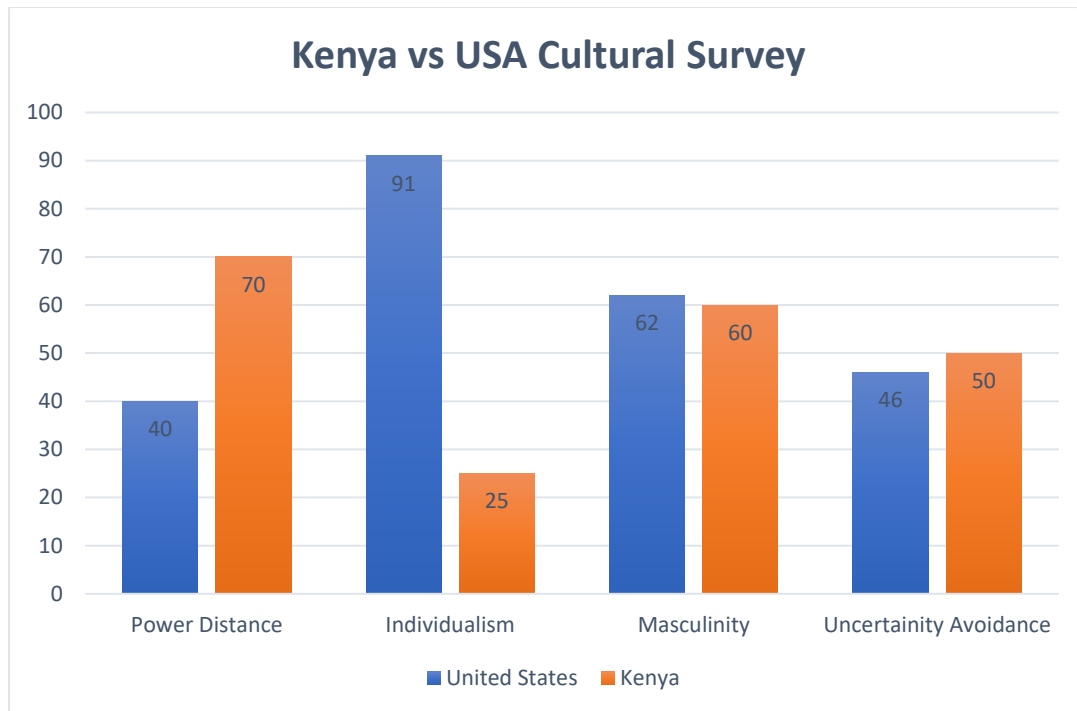


Figure 2: Kenya vs United States cultural survey

Out of the six culture dimensions defined by Hofstede (2011) only four dimensions have been surveyed in both countries out of which only two have notable differences namely power distance and individualism. Power distance is defined as “the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organisations is distributed unequally” (Schilpzand et al., 2013, p. 351) while individualism is “the extent to which personal identity is separate from the social context and is associated with a desire for personal autonomy and uniqueness and the pursuit of self-interest” (Schilpzand et al., 2013, p. 349). Kenya has a relatively high power distance compared to the United States but on the contrary, much lower levels of individualism as presented in the global culture survey (Swayampakala et al., 2017). On the contrary, the United States, where the perceived supervisor support scale was developed, exhibits low power distance and high individualism (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). We hence anticipate perceive supervisor support will vary with respect to the geo-cultural context hence providing an opportunity to contribute theoretically.

### **2.2.1 Emerging markets culture comparisons**

The two culture components namely power distance and individualism for the USA and a few emerging countries compare as shown below (Swayampakala et al., 2017)



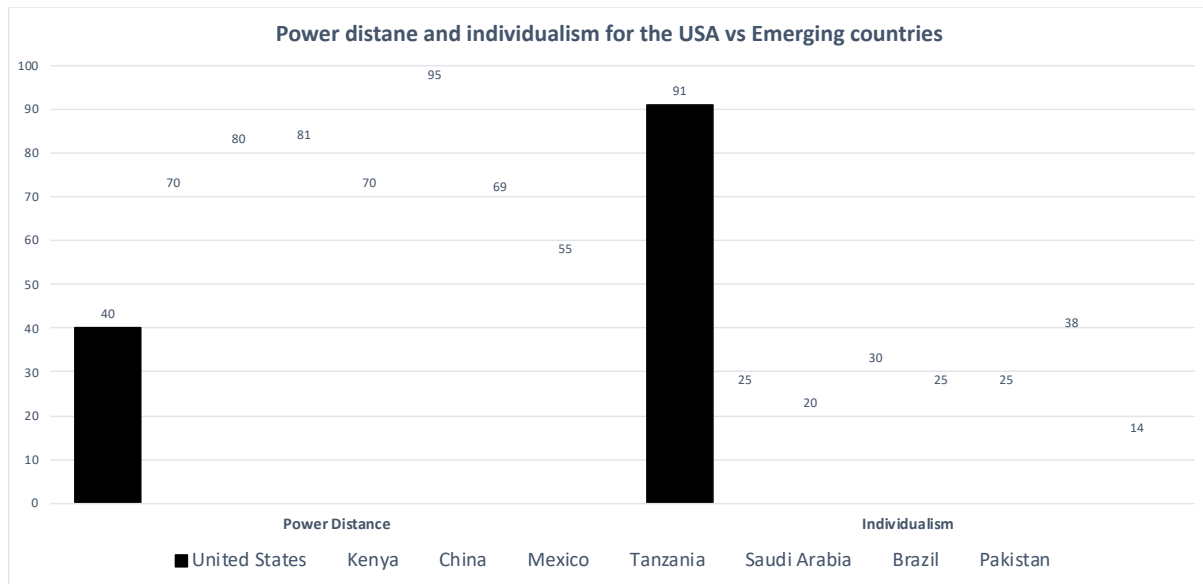


Figure 3: USA verses Emerging countries culture comparisons.

It is notable that emerging countries have a relatively high power distance compared to that of the United States but on the contrary, much lower levels of individualism as presented in the global culture survey as is the case with Kenya (Swayampakala et al., 2017). This provides a basis for generalisation of the study findings from the African setting to the broader emerging markets context with similar cultural orientation.

### 2.3 Kenya's Social and Political Landscape

Kenyan election periods have always been accompanied by heightened tensions that are fuelled by the tribal and ethnic inclinations as ruling tribes are perceived to get more resources than those out of power (Miguel, 2004). The post-election violence of December 2007 (Brown & Sriram, 2012) and nullification of the presidential elections in 2017 (Kanyinga & Odote, 2019) are testament to the tribal and ethnic inclinations remain a persistent force in the country. Elections are seen as moments of change whereby the electorate show support for their candidates most of which happens along tribal lines (Miguel, 2004; Shilaho, 2018). It is believed that such tribal oriented support is not only shown at the national level but also in the workplace.

Balaton-Chrimes (2021) indicates that during independence Kenya inherited a highly centralised, divisive, and exclusionary state that was built on a foundation of ethnic groupings. Consequently, the postcolonial period has been characterized by frequent intense inter-ethnic competition marred with repeated conflict. Ethnic groups seek to benefit either privately or publicly from controlling the state through political tribalism whereby tribal groups compete for

public resources with ethnic identity being the battle lines along which groups form and compete.

Previous research on the supervisor and subordinate relations have shown that demographic similarity is often associated with higher levels of perceived supervisor support and hence make a case for the inclusion of various demographic control variables such as ethnicity and gender (Bernerth et al., 2008; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017). In line with the tribal alignment during elections, it is anticipated that tribal and ethnic inclinations will play a role in the workplace as well and as such higher levels of dyad ethnic similarity are expected to be associated with higher perceived supervisor support. It is expected that tribal and ethnic inclinations will impact the outcome of the proposed study, hence will need to be controlled for in the proposed study.

## **2.4 Organisation under study**

The proposed study was carried out in a single organisation which is a large firm in the Kenyan water and energy sector. The organisation is a family-owned business that was founded in 1940's and had hence been in existence for over 75 years by the time of the survey. The organisation shareholders have ensured the organisation's survival through consistent transformations as is represented by its core value that embodies the need for constant change. This core value has constantly allowed the organisation to initiate significant change initiatives to guarantee its survival. Such changes have included the upgrading of its software systems every five years, structural changes, and numerous process enhancements. Figure 3 below is a map of Kenya indicating the locations of various outlets as shown in the blue circles. The distribution of the various outlets across the country would cover various ethnic groups which are largely distributed across the country.

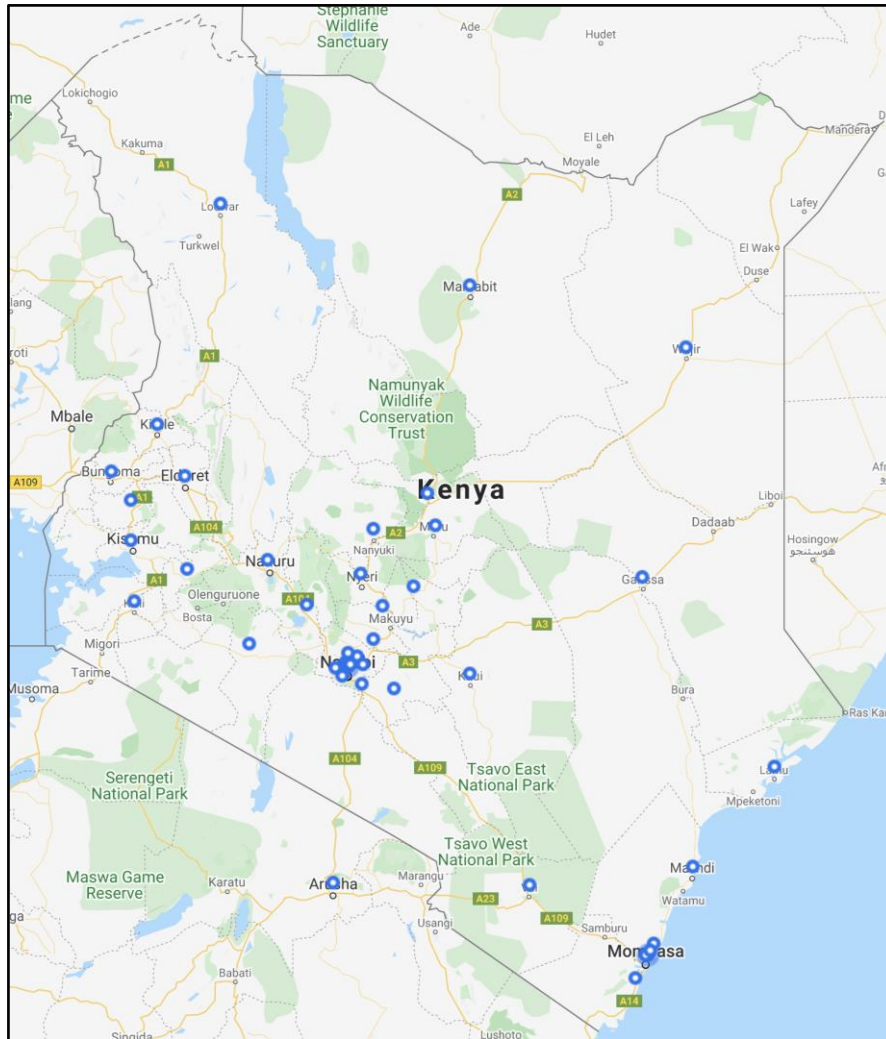


Figure 4: Map of Kenya Showing outlets of the company under study.

In addition, the organisation's favourable company culture is demonstrated by its annual voluntary and anonymous staff survey that it carries out with response rates of up to 75%. Notably, over the past 10 years, the item that has consistently had the lowest score is the item that measures the extent to which the organisational members believe the organisation does not show favouritism which is ideally translated to a measure of tribal and ethnic inclinations. The low scores on this item are hence a demonstration of the claims made on the tribal and ethnic inclinations that are highlighted in section 2.4. The low score on tribal and ethnic concerns provided a further justification for the need to control for ethnicity in the conducted study.

Finally, besides the theoretical, practical, and methodological contributions envisioned, when conducting this research, it was essential to identify an additional motivation to the organisation under study to participate by identifying a practical benefit the study will provide to the organisation. The organisation recently initiated a leadership program for its supervisors

to further enhance the quality of leadership within the organisation. The conducted research hence contributed to the organisation's objectives by providing an assessment of its supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour and their perceived supervisor support thereby helping evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership program.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

While most studies on the requisite beliefs for perceived supervisor support have been carried out in the Western and Asian contexts it is essential to replicate the findings in a different geo-cultural context. This includes studies conducted to create and validate scales for measuring the relevant constructs. This research hence provides an opportunity to examine the various constructs in a developing African context. This will show the extent to which any variations in the perceived supervisor support can be explained in the Kenyan context. Based on the findings of the conducted research, the researcher affirmed that the existing scale fits the Kenyan setting and contexts that are culturally similar.

## **Chapter 3: Literature review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This research aimed to investigate the mediating role of subordinates' regulatory focus orientation on the relationship between supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour and perceived supervisor support during a change initiative? The researcher first provides a summary of the research carried out in the organisational support domain. Consistent with its original conceptualization, organisational support theory addresses how "employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being in order for them to determine the organisation's readiness to reward increased work effort and meet their socioemotional needs" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 698). To elaborate the theoretical gap in the organisational support theory, the researcher draws from the regulatory focus literature which addresses how individuals' self-regulation affects their response to change initiatives (Petrou et al., 2018). Based on arguments from the literature the research hypotheses are then developed, and a conceptual model is presented and discussed.

### **3.2 Organisational Support Theoretical Framework**

This section first argues for the choice of organisational support theory as an appropriate lens for investigating perceived supervisor support. A brief chronological account of the research that has been done in the organisational support domain is then provided. A justification for this research is then provided by drawing from previous literature thereby positioning it in an ongoing debate.

#### ***3.2.1 Appropriateness of the Organisational Support theory***

Perceived supervisor support emanated from the organisational support theory developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) on the basis that the same way employees form perceptions of support about their organisation so do they form perceptions about their supervisors (Fikile & Neil, 2017). Since supervisors are viewed as agents of the organisation (Swanberg et al., 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2019), there is hence considerable conceptual overlap between perceived supervisor support and perceived organisational support. Organisational support theory highlights that employees within an organisation need to meet their socio-emotional needs as well as determine how willing the organisation is to reward their increased work effort (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Justin & Robert, 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). For employees to do this, they make a judgement of how much the organisation is concerned about their well-being as well as how much it values their contribution.

Organisational support theory is based on the social exchange norms, meaning that employees feel obligated to help the organisation achieve its goals and objectives and believe that their increased effort will be rewarded (Dysvik et al., 2014; Kurtessis et al., 2017). In the context of this research, it is paramount to unveil the obligations that both supervisors and subordinates bear during a change initiative. A change initiative would demand cooperation and support from subordinates with the anticipation of realising various promised benefits (Phillips, 2017). A supervisor being an agent of the organisation has the obligation to drive the change and in turn achieve their goal of coordinating organisational initiatives. This shows there is a dependence between the supervisor and subordinates that paves way for the social exchange to occur.

For the social exchange to be motivated both supervisors and subordinates must be clear about the benefits they stand to gain. As a result, in offering the support needed by subordinates, supervisors are then able to achieve their goals as expected by the organisation (Bozionelos et al., 2020; Dysvik et al., 2014; Gordon et al., 2019). On the other hand, change initiatives provide an opportunity for growth, development, and recognition for subordinates through promised rewards that inevitably call for increased work efforts. This shows that during change initiatives both supervisors and subordinates have objectives they need to achieve as well as the cooperation they need from each other to fulfil their obligations. Organisational support theory is therefore appropriate for this study as both the supervisors and the subordinates are bound to benefit from offering support to one another.

Organisational support theory elaborates the kind of support offered is referred to as social support and is of varied types including informational, instrumental, appraisal and emotional support (Chen et al., 2016; Hoppe et al., 2017; Škerlavaj et al., 2014; Swanberg et al., 2011; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Tu et al., 2019). Emotional assistance helps the subordinates to appraise and cope with the stress associated with change situations by helping them to reframe the situation (Tian et al., 2014). In addition, emotional support can be shown when supervisors show they care about the welfare of the employees and acknowledge their contributions. Instrumental support refers to tangible assistance that can be offered in the form of resources, training and development opportunities (Bozionelos et al., 2020; Dysvik et al., 2014). In line with this, employees will perceive support when they are shielded from excessive workloads during such times of training. Informational support is offered by indicating to the staff the importance of the change initiative and how it would impact on the employee's growth or promotion (Gordon et al., 2019). Since organisational support theory elaborates the kind of

support that supervisors can give, it demonstrates the appropriacy of the theory in understanding perceived supervisor support.

During a change initiative, leaders have the mandate of guiding employees through the three key phases of any change identified as readiness, adoption and institutionalization (Armenakis et al., 2007; Collins & Browning, 2019). In line with this, organisational leaders are responsible for directing organisational members' motivation, creating positive attitudes towards the change namely support and readiness or, on the contrary, dispelling negative attitudes namely resistance towards the change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Baard et al., 2014; Rafferty et al., 2013). Such perceptions may be driven by favourable or unfavourable assessments of the support they receive which makes them decide how to engage, a process referred to as employee attributions within the Organisational support theory (Kurtessis et al., 2017). While this affirms the fact that individuals have a choice to interpret the support offered as favourable or unfavourable, there is a need to investigate the psychological processes that influence such attributions. This partly highlights the appropriacy of the organisational support theory to the extent that it gives room for individual differences while on other hand pointing to the gap in the theory (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Organisational support theory has been used in the organisation development field to evaluate how various aspects of employees organisational commitment are enhanced through various forms of organisational support (Chae et al., 2019; Gordon et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). Also, organisational support theory has been applied in disciplines of leadership and organisational behaviour to study various constructs such as organisational and supervisor support, training and development, moral disengagement, organisational commitment, workplace interventions among other areas (Dysvik et al., 2014; Hammer et al., 2019; Probst et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020). The organisational support theory hence fits the profile of theories that are suitable for understanding change mechanisms as well as the leadership aspects involved.

While there is considerable conceptual overlap between Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organisational Support Theory (OST) for the study, the researcher contends that Organisational Support Theory (OST), provides a more apt framework for explaining the study's dynamics for the following four reasons. Firstly, the constructs of the study align inherently with the tenets of OST rather than SET, ensuring a more coherent conceptual fit. Secondly, the primary focus of the research is centred around the dependent variable of supervisor support, a facet that harmonizes seamlessly with the conceptual realm of OST,

thus enhancing the overall explanatory power of the theory. Thirdly, it is noteworthy that the study does not explicitly measure costs and rewards, which aligns with the distinctive nature of OST's emphasis on perceived support without delving into the intricacies of cost-benefit analyses. Lastly, the study's primary contribution lies in shedding light on the antecedents of supervisory support, aligning squarely with OST's central objective of deciphering factors that shape perceived support within organisational contexts. Thus, based on these considerations, OST emerges as the more suitable theoretical framework to comprehensively expound on the intricacies of the study's domain.

### ***3.2.2 Development of the Organisational support theory***

Organisational support theory was introduced as a distinct topic by Eisenberger et al. (1986) while conducting research on employee dedication or commitment to organisations. Commitment is defined as a “sense of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action” (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 500). On the other hand, employment was generally defined as “the trade of effort and loyalty for material commodities or social rewards” (Kurtessis et al., 2017, p. 3). The author attributed organisational commitment to its readiness to reward increased work effort and to meet the employees’ needs for praise and appraisal. Based on this the employees develop global beliefs regarding how much the organisation is concerned in their well-being as well as whether the organisation values their contributions. This led to the introduction of the concept of perceived organisational support which “reflects global beliefs on the part of employees regarding the extent to which their employing organisation values their contributions and cares about their overall well-being” (Probst et al., 2020, p. 347).

Kottke and Sharafinski (1988) introduced perceived supervisor support by using the same format of the perceived organisational support scale only changing the wording by replacing the word “organisation” with “supervisor” in the scale items. Dysvik et al. (2014) indicate that perceived organisational support differs from perceived supervisor support by way of proximity to employees indicating that perceived supervisor support is more proximal to employees. Several authors highlight that employees who receive higher levels of supervisor support will feel their organisation supports them more (Dysvik et al., 2014; Neves, 2011; Yang et al., 2020) because supervisors are perceived as agents of the organisation who act on its behalf (Bhatnagar, 2014; Yang et al., 2020).

Despite perceived organisational support and perceived supervisor support having high construct overlap the basis on which employees make the assessments of the support offered differ. While supervisors provide individualised and more personal forms of support such as



mentorship, openness to criticism, providing feedback, listening, coaching among others, organisational support on the other hand is more tangible including aspects like provision skills, training, resources and time (Cramm et al., 2013; Probst et al., 2020). While some distinctions may be made between the two constructs, perceived supervisor support is considered a part of perceived organisational support and hence when evaluating perceived organisation support one must also include the perceived supervisor support (Probst et al., 2020).

### ***3.2.3 Assumptions of Organisational support theory***

Organisational support theory has three key assumptions that it emphasises namely employee attributions, social exchange, and self-enhancement. These are highlighted in this section.

Employee attributions refer to how employees make judgements of favourable or unfavourable treatment within the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Employees have different needs and their perceived supervisor support is enhanced when employees are provided with benefits that meet their specific needs (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Whenever the employee's needs are met, they are likely to have a higher perception of organisational support. For a higher perception of organisational support to be realised, employees are keen on attributing the favourable treatment received to a positive intention by the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Since supervisors act as agents of the organisation, employees equally evaluate their favourable or unfavourable treatment as representative of the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 2002). This happens when supervisors convey their evaluations of subordinates to upper management thereby contributing to the subordinates' favourable or unfavourable treatment. This may lead to praise and recognition whenever they perform well or a call out of the employees' complacency when they don't meet the anticipated expectations (Chen et al., 2016).

The social exchange process has its roots in social exchange theory underpinned by norms of reciprocity (Baran et al., 2012; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Probst et al., 2020). Reciprocity which refers to payment in kind is regarded as the most widely known exchange rule (Gouldner, 1960; Wayne et al., 1997; Yang et al., 2020). For there to be reciprocity there must be interdependence which entails complementary and mutual arrangements between two parties (Kurtessis et al., 2017). A change initiative involves an exchange between subordinates and the organisation whereby the subordinates are expected to help the

organisation achieve its objectives while the organisation, through its agents, are expected to provide certain expected rewards (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Neves, 2011; Probst et al., 2020).

Organisation support theory allows the reciprocate supervisor-subordinate relationship to be evaluated from the perspective of the party receiving the support which in this case is the subordinate (Kurtessis et al., 2017). The reciprocity between the supervisor and subordinate entail a series of linear relationships that show while the supervisors actions are triggered by their perception of organisation support, the subordinates actions are triggered by their perception of supervisor support (Eisenberger et al., 2014). Firstly, supervisors who perceive high organisational support will display supportive behaviours such as concern for the subordinate. The subordinate will then notice this and reciprocate by way of in-role and extra-role behaviours which are viewed as organisational support. Organisation support theory hence does not support an over-arching matching logic but rather a series of linear relationships and finally back to the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 2014).

The norms of reciprocity demand that each party must offer something the other party sees as valuable and each party must see the exchange as reasonably equitable or fair (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This highlights the importance of valence whereby the organisation through its agents explicitly state out how their employees stand to benefit from the anticipated change (Holt & Vardaman, 2013). While reciprocity as a norm infers that it is considered to be a cultural mandate and that those who don't comply are punished, reciprocity is considered an individual orientation, meaning that individuals differ in their level of exchange orientation with those high in exchange orientation found to be keen in tracking obligations (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This shows the role of individual differences in the organisational support theory cannot be overlooked.

Through self-enhancement, organisational support and subsequently supervisor support is assumed to fulfil socio-emotional needs such as approval, affiliation, and self-esteem. Self-enhancement leads to organisational identification that leads to affective organisational commitment through shared values (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Since supervisor support provides both instrumental and socioemotional support it is deemed to be a resource at the interpersonal level thereby connecting employees to the resources and support they need (Tafvelin et al., 2019). The researcher envisions that supervisor support is deemed essential for creative times such as during change initiatives as it is through such support that employees can engage in innovative behaviours and make new gains (Tu et al., 2019).

### **3.2.4 Gap in the Organisational support theory**

The norm of reciprocity is considered a cultural mandate thereby expecting people universally to ascribe to this norm (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This means that all who follow this norm are obliged to behave reciprocally. However, concerns of the universality of this norm have been raised as highlighted by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) stating that there is strong evidence showing the existence of individual and cultural differences. For instance, Gordon et al. (2019) indicate that while supervisor support has been shown to reduce employee stress levels, stress theorists do show that individuals' psychological states do serve as boundary conditions on the impact of stressors on employee outcomes. Consequently, work stressors such as change initiatives, may either be perceived as a challenge or a hindrance to employees as different employees will respond differently. Employees who perceive organisational changes as challenges would reciprocate through increased effort in the amount of work they put in during a change as successfully meeting the demands of the change translates to a level of attractiveness or value as they would promote prospects for personal gain (Dysvik et al., 2014). The different appraisal of change initiatives by individuals therefore puts a case for the role of individual differences in the organisational support theory.

Having mentioned the above, supervisors have substantial legitimate authority and control over various resources and outcomes that are perceived important by their subordinates (Chae et al., 2019; Vandenberghe et al., 2019). Consequently, and in line with the reciprocity between supervisors and subordinates, Chae et al. (2019) argue that strong support from supervisors would hinder the expression of individual differences inducing consistent behaviour across most employees. Such claims are contrary to Petrou et al. (2018) who state that from the individual differences literature organisational change does not elicit the same responses from all employees.

Organisation support theory is underpinned by norms of reciprocity. Neves, (2011) indicates that personal characteristics of the supervisor, such as when supervisors are regarded as competent, subordinates will perceive them to be more supportive and will hence be obliged to reciprocate the positive treatment by supporting change initiatives. However, Ackermann, Fleiß, and Murphy (2016) notes that reciprocity is an individual difference that will be governed by different antecedents depending on the context as well as the relationship under study. The universality of reciprocity has been questioned across different contexts of supervisor-subordinate-relationships thereby creating new avenues of research on reciprocity that seek to explain the variance of relationships in various organisational and cultural settings (Shore et al., 2009). From the organisation support literature however, there is little clarity on what

antecedents play a key role in determining the perceived supervisor support during times of change. This hence calls for the researcher to draw from the change literature to identify the particular individual differences that would be significant during times of change.

Previous research on individual differences has revealed that individuals' response to change will vary based on their regulatory focus (Kark et al., 2015). This implies the perceived supervisor support ought to vary based on differences in individuals' regulatory motivation. This research argues that perceived supervisor support is not a one size fits all as it is subject to individuals' regulatory focus. There has however been little or no research to test this relationship. The research intends to introduce individuals' regulatory focus as an antecedent that governs reciprocity relations between subordinates and supervisors in the context of change initiatives.

The researcher posits that organisational support theory will hence be a stronger theory if it takes into consideration the role of individuals' regulatory focus in determining the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative. This research is hence a response to calls for future research within the organisational support domain examining the perceived severity of stressors such as change initiatives indicating how the different employees' emotional needs and goals would impact on the perceived organisation support and by extension the perceived supervisor support (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This is in line with Kurtessis et al. (2017) who specifically call for focused quantitative research on aspects that guide employee attributions of the organisations favourable or unfavourable treatment which impact on their well-being. In addition, the research contributes to the ongoing debate on whether prevention focused employees would be predisposed to change (Petrou et al., 2020) by highlighting a necessary antecedent to this process namely, the supervisors' intellectual stimulation.

### **3.3 Hypotheses and conceptual model development**

The aim of this research is to investigate the mediating role of subordinates' regulatory focus orientation on the relationship between supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour and perceived supervisor support during a change initiative. In this section, we develop the research hypotheses based on various arguments from literature.

### **3.3.1 Research Hypotheses**

#### **3.3.1.1 The direct effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support**

Intellectual stimulation behaviour challenges subordinates to be creative and hence it is expected that during change initiatives supervisors who demonstrate intellectual stimulation behaviour motivate their subordinates to perform beyond the expectation as they seek new ways of performing their tasks (Hoch et al., 2018). Supervisors who demonstrate intellectual stimulation behaviours allow their subordinates to challenge assumptions, promote and encourage creativity among subordinates, encourage subordinates to identify and solve various problems through guidance or applying their own perspective (Dust et al., 2014), create opportunities for growth and development, foster a learning environment where subordinates can learn and equally share their new insights, encourage and stimulate curiosity among subordinates, create a safe space for subordinates to take risks and equally experiment various new ideas even if it involves the possibility of failure and finally provide feedback as they recognize the efforts of subordinates in coming up with new ideas and engaging in critical thinking (Zhou et al., 2012).

On the other hand, subordinates feel supported when they receive emotional support which includes being listened to and understood (Škerlavaj et al., 2014), instrumental support which includes providing training and information as well as removing obstacles that hinder progress, career support in the form of exposure to challenging assignments that lead to long-term career growth (Bozionelos et al., 2020), recognise and reward subordinates efforts, trust and respect their subordinates opinions and ideas, are accessible and available to provide guidance as well as feedback and finally promote fair and constructive resolution of conflict (Lai et al., 2016). To complete the cycle, supervisors ought to provide feedback as well as recognise subordinates who take up the challenge and contribute to generation of new ideas. Recognition and reward are essential in subordinates feeling supported. Additional ways of providing such support include encouraging the subordinates to share insights with the rest of their peers on their learnings (Wallace et al., 2016).

It is hence expected that through intellectual stimulation, supervisors will encourage subordinates to challenge the status quo by questioning assumptions, norms and practices which makes subordinates feel supported as they feel their opinions and ideas are valued (Xiaoxiao & Seth, 2015). In addition, subordinates feel respected and trusted when they are encouraged to get involved in innovate thinking beyond their current responsibilities encouraging subordinates to explore new areas and ideas. While supervisors are challenging

their subordinates to solve their own problems, for subordinates to feel supported, the supervisors must be available and accessible to provide guidance and simultaneously give room for independent problem solving equally fostering a sense of trust (Holtz et al., 2020).

During conflicts, subordinates feel supported when their supervisors are fair and constructive in problem solving which makes subordinates emotionally supported when their concerns are listened to. Intellectual stimulation aids this process by allowing different perspectives of subordinates to be heard and hence broadening the thinking frame which is essential for constructive resolution of problems. Intellectual stimulation equally involves exposing the subordinates to challenging tasks as well as generating interest for the subordinate to be intrinsically motivated (Xiaoxiao & Seth, 2015). During such challenges, supervisors provide instrumental support by removing obstacles as well as encouraging subordinates to ask questions. This gives subordinates a sense of career support which is a core element of perceived supervisor support.

When a leader offers intellectual stimulation to their members the subordinates feel their leader is providing them an opportunity to play essential roles in the future of the organisation and has been shown to lead to subordinates effectiveness as it drives interest and attentiveness (Tepper et al., 2018). Such intellectual stimulation pushes the subordinates to think innovatively and critically with the aim of developing or implementing imaginative solutions. Therefore, during change initiatives, change oriented supervisors encourage followers to be innovative through intellectual stimulation behaviour (Lin et al., 2019). The researcher hence anticipated that intellectual stimulation from the supervisors will lead to increased perceived supervisor support. The researcher hence hypothesised that:

***H1: The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the perceived supervisor support.***

### **3.3.1.2 Intellectual stimulation and Regulatory Focus**

During times of change supervisors demonstrate intellectual stimulation behaviour by calling upon subordinates to display creative behaviour as they seek to navigate from the old way of doing things to the new way of doing things (Walk & Handy, 2018; Zhou et al., 2012). From previous studies it is expected that intellectual stimulation will have an effect on individuals promotion and prevention focus (Johnson et al., 2017). During a change initiative, both employees of promotion focus orientation as well as those of prevention focus orientation are

aware that things have to change. During the change employees of both orientations will seek ways of achieving their desired end states.

For promotion focus oriented individuals they would seek opportunities to maximize pleasure as they are motivated by their growth and development needs to try and achieve their wishes and aspirations (Barbars, 2016; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). During times of change they desire to be seen as champions of the change and as part of those coming up with the innovative ways of doing things. They adopt approaches that would be deemed as exploratory and risky by generating new ideas and new ways of doing things.

When supervisors engage in intellectual stimulation in the form of encouragement of their subordinates to solve complex problems and engage in creative tasks prompting them to think creatively, subordinates are motivated to pursue their goals that would lead to career advancement (Kark et al., 2015). Influencing goals related to growth and development would amount to increased promotion focus. In so doing, supervisors who engage in intellectual stimulation behaviours are more likely to influence subordinates to be future-oriented as they pursue higher performance levels that would lead to career advancement.

In addition, when supervisors emulate intellectually stimulating behaviour, subordinates are motivated to display similar behaviour since as per social learning theory individuals learn by imitating observed behaviour (Eby et al., 2015). This hence encourages subordinates to critically think through challenging tasks such as change initiatives as they seek to discover the way forward thereby enhancing their promotion focus. Since intellectual stimulation involves questioning the status quo, subordinates may in turn, set ambitious goals for themselves as they desire to be seen as champions of the change leading to increased promotion focus. The researcher hence hypothesises that intellectual stimulation from their supervisors will increase their urge to meet their ideal self and hence increased levels of promotion focus.

*H2a: The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the subordinates' promotion focus orientation.*

While prevention focus oriented individuals have been shown to be generally lower in creativity and adaptivity, in the face of a clear motivation such as a change initiative, prevention focus oriented individuals will not avoid extra-role behaviours to adapt to the change but rather invest extra energy and effort to achieve adaptivity to the change (Petrou et al., 2020). Prevention focused individuals are driven by their security needs to ensure they achieve their duties and

responsibilities (Kark et al., 2015). During inevitable times of change such as the change of an information system, the subordinates would ensure that they are still able to perform their responsibilities or obligations. It is expected that since they cannot ignore the change as that will render them in an undesired state of perceived malperformance by their supervisors, they come up with ways of meeting the minimum obligations. Inspirational motivation from their supervisors will increase their urge to meet their responsibilities and obligations and hence increased levels of prevention focus.

Furthermore, intellectual stimulation from supervisors would compel subordinates to analyse past mistakes critically and learn from them. As they reflect on past failures and figure out how to avoid mistakes in future, subordinates' prevention focused is enhanced with the aim of minimising a repeat of the mistakes (Welsh et al., 2015). Consequently, intellectual stimulation that entails considerations around legal compliance, ethical practices and adherence to organisational policies would stimulate subordinates to consider the consequences of not complying with the same. This would hence cause subordinates to focus more on how to avoid negative outcomes by following rules and regulations leading to increased prevention focus.

Consequently, such intellectual stimulation can create a heightened awareness of risks and encourage a culture of precaution when undertaking initiatives whereby subordinates focus on risks and how to prevent them. In addition, such thinking would prompt subordinates to think forward and consider preventative measures in advance. The researcher hence hypothesizes that inspirational motivation from their supervisors will increase their urge to meet their responsibilities and obligations and hence increased levels of prevention focus. The researcher hence hypothesises that inspirational motivation from their supervisors will increase their urge to minimize risks and hence increased levels of prevention focus.

*H2b: The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the subordinates' prevention focus orientation.*

### **3.3.1.3 Promotion focus and Perceived supervisor support.**

Perceived supervisor support is enhanced when employees are provided with opportunities that meet their specific needs (Kurtessis et al., 2017). The norm of reciprocity indicates that when employees are provided with the opportunity for personal growth and development they reciprocate by showing support to their supervisors through increased efforts at work (Dysvik et al., 2014). In line with the individual's regulatory focus, promotion motivated individuals seek opportunities to pursue their growth and development needs during change initiatives. (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Wallace et al., 2016; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Regulatory focus



shows that higher promotion focus is associated with a higher need for pursuing growth and development needs.

Owing to the norm of reciprocity, we anticipate that the more promotion focused employees are given opportunities for growth and development, the higher the obligation they will have to pay back such positive treatment received. Since supervisors are viewed as agents of the organisation, they will be perceived to offer opportunities for growth and development during times of change. Subordinates will hence perceive their supervisors to support their career by providing developmental opportunities in the form of challenging tasks as well as being available and accessible to guide them during such times leading to higher perceived supervisor support.

Consequently, perception of such support will motivate the subordinates to display positive attitudes and behaviours. Higher promotion focus will cause subordinates to pursue ambitious goals and opportunities for advancement anticipating support from their supervisors and consequently reciprocating higher perceived supervisor support. Such support from supervisors may be received in the form of recognition, rewards, and advancement. The researcher hence hypothesises that:

*H3a: The higher the employees' promotion focus, the higher their perceived supervisor support during change initiatives*

#### **3.3.1.4 Prevention focus and Perceived supervisor support**

Prevention focus motivates individuals to meet their needs for safety, protection, and security by avoiding the presence of negative outcomes such as failure (Kark et al., 2015). Prevention focus makes individuals feel anxious or worried because they perceive that they cannot measure up to the new tasks imposed by change initiatives (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Since change initiatives are potential stressors in the workplace, emotional support that leads to the well-being of the subordinate may be considered essential during such times. Such emotional support may be displayed in the form of empathy, validating the subordinates' concerns as demonstration of understanding.

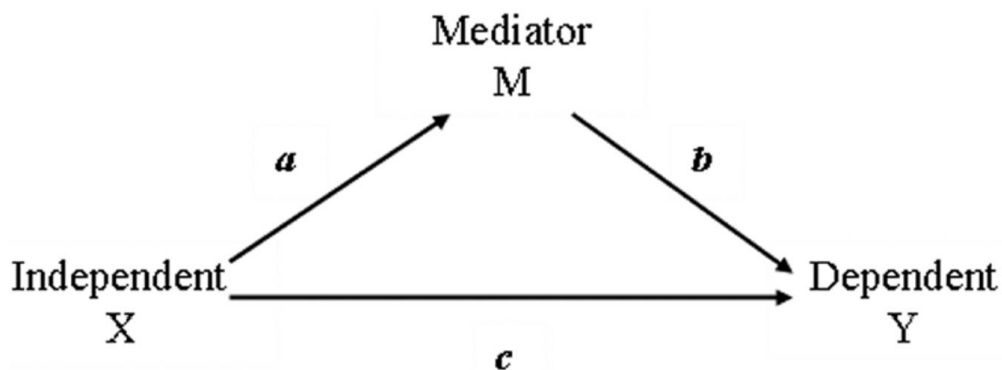
When subordinates perceive their supervisors as supportive in avoiding negative outcomes by listening to their concerns they may feel emotionally supported during such times of change. Such support may equally be felt as when supervisors provide the necessary training and material required for the subordinates to fulfil their duties, obligations, and responsibilities

(Chen et al., 2016; Hoppe et al., 2017). Such subordinates consider the supervisors as supportive as they provide resources that help them avoid errors. When subordinates receive such emotional support from supervisors, they are likely to have higher levels of perceived supervisor support. We hence hypothesise that:

**H3b:** *The higher the employees' prevention focus, the higher their perceived supervisor support during change initiatives*

### 3.3.1.5 The indirect effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support

When the paths represented by the indirect associations shown in Figure 5 below are significant then a direct effect could exist between the two variables (Amiot et al., 2006). Based on the SEM results obtained for the direct effect (H1) as well as indirect effects (H2a, H2b, H3a, H3b) when all paths are evaluated simultaneously, the possibility and type of mediation that exists between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support was evaluated based on a classification guide provided by Zhao et al., (2010) for a three variable causal model as shown in Figure 5 below.



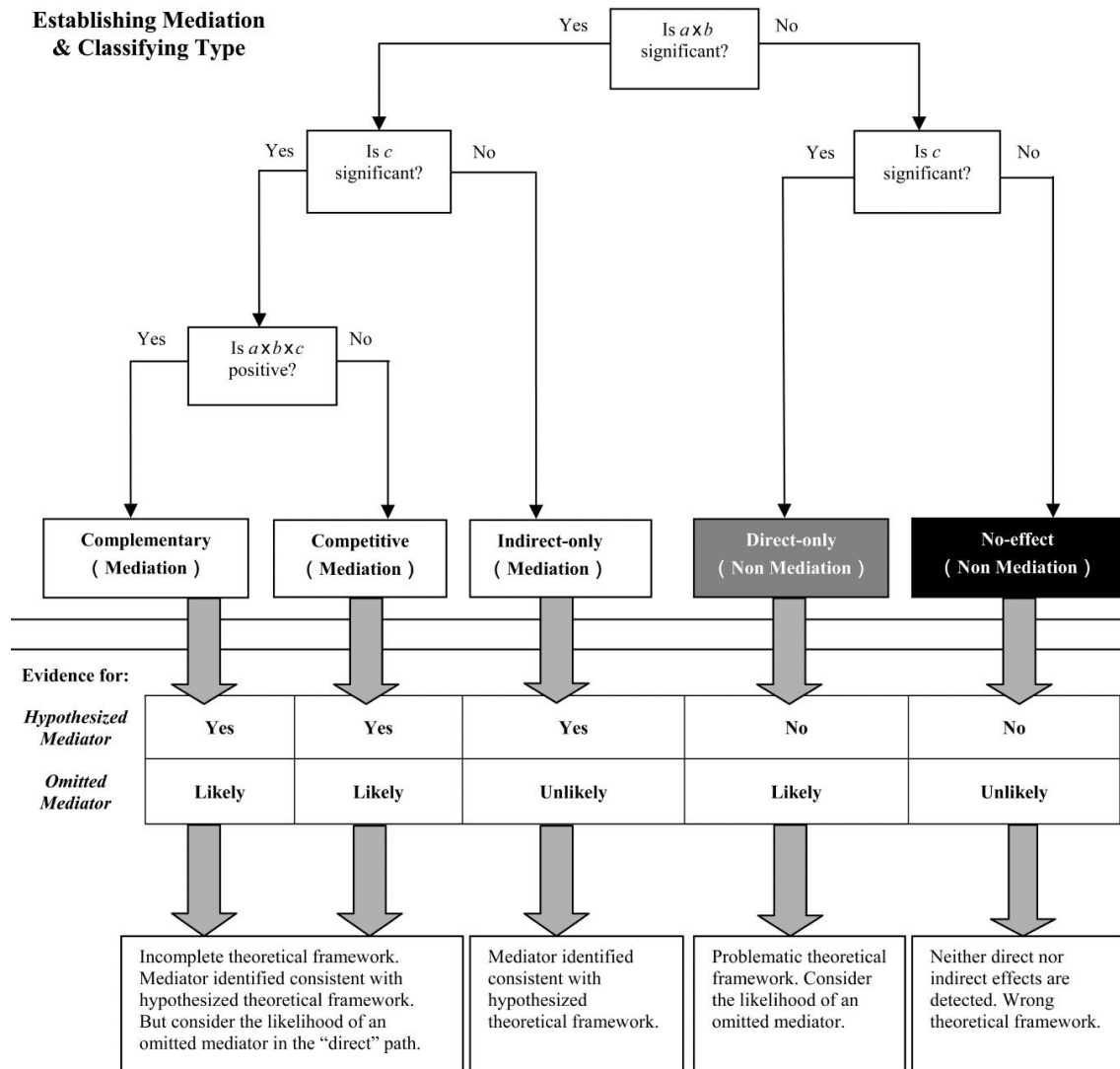


Figure 5: Mediation classification guide for a three variable causal model

Diagram adopted from Zhao et al. (2010)

We hence hypothesise that:

**H2a x H3a:** *The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is mediated by promotion focus such that the indirect effect of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support through promotion focus is expected to be significant and positive.*

**H2b x H3b:** *The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is mediated by prevention focus such that the indirect effect of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support through prevention focus is expected to be significant and negative.*

### **3.3.2 Research conceptual model**

A conceptual model represents the various variables and the anticipated relationships between them as derived from theory (Benitez et al., 2018). The research intended to introduce individuals' regulatory focus as an antecedent that **governs reciprocity relations** between subordinates and supervisors by introducing regulatory focus (promotion and prevention focus) as mediators in the relationship between the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour and the subordinate's perceived supervisor support in the context of a change initiative. Based on the outcome of the anticipated relationships between intellectual stimulation, promotion and prevention focus orientation and perceived supervisor support as depicted in the stated hypothesis, it suggests that promotion and prevention focus orientation would mediate the link between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. However, the nature of mediation, be it full or partial, will be determined by the actual outcomes in the analysis section.

The conceptual model is a graphical depiction of the derived hypothesis thereby forming the conceptual model that was tested once the corresponding data was collected. The latent variables have been drawn from the organisational support theory, regulatory focus literature as well as transformational leadership literature. The control variables identified, namely supervisor ability, supervisor rank, subordinates service duration, duration of time with the current supervisor and ethnicity, have been identified from previous studies as highlighted in section 4.8.4. By evaluating the model, this research sought to contribute to the organisational support theory in the context of organisational change by showing how the perceived supervisor support varies based on individual regulatory focus. See Figure 6 below for the conceptual model that guided the study.

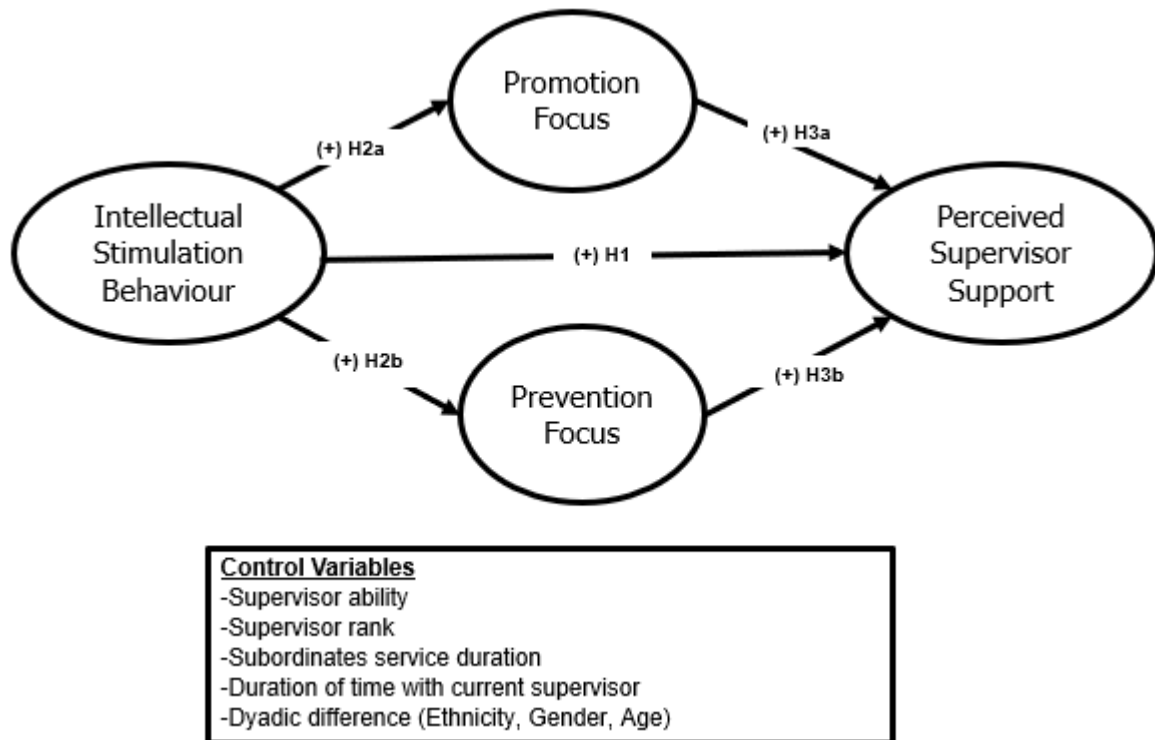


Figure 6: Study conceptual model

The research sub-questions and the associated hypotheses are indicated below:

- i) RQ1: What is the direct effect of a supervisors' intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?  
**H1:** *The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the perceived supervisor support.*
- ii) RQ2: What is the effect of a supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour on the the subordinates' promotion and prevention focus orientation during a change initiative?  
**H2a:** *The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the subordinates' promotion focus orientation.*  
**H2b:** *The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the subordinates' prevention focus orientation.*
- iii) RQ3: What is the effect of subordinates' promotion and prevention focus orientation on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?  
**H3a:** *The higher the employees' promotion focus, the higher their perceived supervisor support.*  
**H3b:** *The higher the employees' prevention focus, the higher their perceived supervisor support.*

- iv) RQ4: What is the indirect effect of a supervisors' intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support when mediated by the subordinate's regulatory orientation during a change initiative?

**H2a x H3a:** The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is mediated by promotion focus such that the indirect effect of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support through promotion focus is expected to be significant and positive.

**H2b x H3b:** The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is mediated by prevention focus such that the indirect effect of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support through prevention focus is expected to be significant and negative.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter began by providing an overview of the perceived supervisor support theory and positioning the present study in relation to extant work. It then discussed and clarified assumptions employed throughout the study based on the organisational support theory. The researcher then drew from the regulatory focus literature to shed light on how individual differences in regulatory focus would affect the perceived supervisor support. This delineated the study's theoretical framework confirming the existence of a knowledge gap: limited understanding of the effect of individuals' regulatory focus on the perceived supervisor support. Remedying these gaps has the potential to provide a direct response to calls by Kurtessis et al. (2017) who have called on the scholarly community to undertake such studies.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section focuses on the methods that were used to collect and analyse the data required to address the research question “What is the mediating role of regulatory orientation (promotion and prevention focus) in the relationship between supervisors’ intellectual stimulation behaviour and the perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?” The nature of the research problem guided the selected methodology. In this section, the following aspects are highlighted sequentially: the theoretical paradigm that underpins the study, the research approach, the research design, the sampling strategy, the data collection plan followed by the analysis plan and finally the quality and ethical considerations made.

### **4.2 Research Philosophy**

Researchers’ philosophical assumptions form the basis on which the research is done and hence should be stated upfront (Creswell, 2003). The four key research philosophies that can be adopted include positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Sousa, 2010). This research took on a positivist philosophy owing to the objective nature of the research problem and research questions. A positivist philosophy assumes that there is one single reality and that knowledge of this reality can be measured using reliable designs and tools (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Rahi, 2017; Wayhuni, 2012; Yilmaz, 2013). Previous studies that have been used to contribute to the organisation support literature have followed a positivist ontology and epistemology (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Justin & Robert, 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

### **4.3 Research approach**

Based on the positivist research paradigm this research assumed a quantitative deductive approach as the researcher sought to establish the impact and direction of the hypothesised relationships between employees prevention focus and the perceived supervisor support as well as the employees’ promotion focus and the perceived supervisor support (Rahi, 2017; Wayhuni, 2012; Yilmaz, 2013). Epistemological assumptions highlight the researchers’ view of how humans gain knowledge of the world of which positivists use three methods in testing theory namely surveys, experiments and content analysis (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Chang, 2017; Rahi, 2017; Wayhuni, 2012; Yilmaz, 2013). A quantitative approach aligns with the ontological claim of a single reality made in the organisation support literature which assumes the norm of reciprocity. The norm of reciprocity which states that the employee has an obligation to pay back positive treatment received from the organisation and its agents is

assumed to be a reality that applies for all humans (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This validates the quantitative deductive approach for the proposed study.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

The study sought to establish a relationship between variations in the independent variables namely promotion and prevention regulatory focus and the dependent variable namely perceived supervisor support as depicted in the proposed conceptual model in section 3.3.2. Correlational studies entail the testing of hypothesis by observing phenomena in its natural setting to establish the effect they have on a variable of interest without interfering or manipulating that effect (Phillips, 2017). Aligned with the positivist paradigm the research took on an explanatory research design approach as it is suited for research problems that involve identifying factors that influence an outcome, the value of an intervention or understanding the best predictors or outcomes (Sloane-Seale, 2009). An explanatory research design was hence appropriate for the conducted research as it seeks to test the organisational support theory by establishing the role of individuals' regulatory orientation in determining their perceived supervisor support as well as the effect of supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour on regulatory focus orientation.

Such an explanatory design is appropriate for theory testing and requires the generation of data from human subjects which is captured through response to surveys (Phillips, 2017). Besides, a number of the literature on perceived supervisor support have used explanatory designs that make use of Likert-type surveys (Gonzalez-Morales et al., 2018; Justin & Robert, 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades et al., 2001; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020) as well as studies focussing on employees regulatory focus (Petrou et al., 2015, 2018; Wallace et al., 2016). A cross-sectional online survey was hence adopted for enquiry with the aim of generalizing the findings to the population. The survey was conducted using closed ended questions to collect data on the various items under study. The online questionnaire was appropriate as it was validated to ensure the respondents fill in all questions thereby avoiding data gaps. In addition, the targeted organisational staff had been using online surveys for their annual staff survey hence are familiar with online surveys.

#### **4.5 Sampling Strategy**

##### ***4.5.1 Study universe***

One organisation is typically used to mitigate the impact of other contextual variables that are unique to organisations since supervisor support dynamics potentially vary across



organisations (Eisenhardt, 1989). To mitigate variances attributed to contextual differences, the proposed study was carried out in a single organisation that had to conduct various change initiatives thereby making the study an explanatory case study design. As a result, purposive sampling was used to identify a company undergoing a planned change initiative that could significantly upset its organisational members. The organisation identified was undergoing a transformational information system change that led to the re-engineering of various business processes compelling the organisation staff to learn new ways of doing things. The researcher sought to target all the Kenyan employees in the survey to maximise statistical explanatory power.

While the case of the organisation identified was a large firm in the water and energy sector that had operations in nine African countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda, DRC, Zimbabwe, Sudan and Ethiopia, the research was conducted in Kenya. Since the desired response rate was achieved, the other countries staff were not included in the survey. The company is domiciled in Kenya with an employee base of 525 staff in Kenya and 275 staff across its subsidiaries. In the event that other countries would have been considered, generalisation would only have been possible across countries of similar cultural orientation such as similar power distance. The research was valuable to the organisation as it helped assess the organisational supervisors with regards to the perceived support offered to subordinates during a change initiative. The researcher obtained a consent letter from the company to meet various ethical considerations.

#### ***4.5.2 Level and units of analysis***

Individual employees were the main unit of analysis for the conducted research. While organisational support theory works at both the individual and team level, this research was focused on the perceived supervisor support at individual level as has been done in previous studies in the organisation support literature (Gonzalez-Morales et al., 2018; Rhoades et al., 2001; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). The two concepts, namely employee regulatory focus and perceived supervisor support, were analysed at the individual level. As a result, the individual employees within the organisation rated the items on the scales. The individual level of analysis was further appropriate since the conducted research focused on analysing the effect of individual differences in regulation (Kark et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2018).

#### ***4.5.3 Sampling***

Previous studies on perceived supervisor support were used to assess an appropriate sample

size. Four previous studies were first evaluated, and Table 2 below shows the studies as well as their sample sizes and response rates.

Table 2: Previous studies, sample sizes, response rates and sample groups

Study	Sample Size (N)	Response Rate	No. of Responses	Population
Eisenberger et al., (2002)	314	54%	170	Alumni of Belgium university graduated between 1997 and 1998
Tafvelin et al., (2019)	524	65%	340	Nursing assistants in home help services
Vandenberghe et al., (2019)	820	51%	418	Countrywide survey of Organisation newcomers in France
Paustian-Underdahl et al., (2017)	271	79%	214	Undergraduate students at a university in the south-east United States

From Table 2 above the realised complete responses sizes range from 170 to 418 respondents. To determine the appropriate minimum sample size for the proposed study, an average of the samples from the previous selected studies on perceived supervisor support was calculated. The researcher targeted all the 525 Kenyan employees in the survey to maximise statistical explanatory power (Eisenberger et al., 2002). The researcher aimed to ensure the realised sample was as close as possible to the population.

The strategies stated in section 4.7.2 were used to ensure an adequate response rate. A total of 238 responses (see Table 3.1) out of the population of 525 employees which makes up forty-five percent (45%) of the targeted population were received. Of the 238 employees that responded to the questions only 174 fully completed the questionnaire resulting in a 33% response rate. The 174 responses are on the positive side of the minimum of 170 responses received which is the minimum set in previous perceived supervisor support studies and can therefore be assumed to be sufficient to produce a stable solution. In addition, the 174 responses were on the positive side of the minimum sample of 119 respondents needed as per the G\*Power Tool.

Table 3: Actual Study Response and Completion

Response behaviour	Number of responses
Total responses for analysis	238
Fully complete questionnaires	174
Partially completed	64

Majority of those who fully completed the questionnaire were males with females making only 34% of the respondents. A total of 138 respondents which amounts to 79% of the respondents who fully completed the questionnaire reported to supervisors who were of a lower rank as their supervisors were not a part of the executive management team. Complete responses from respondents who had served for over three months with the current supervisor constituted 93% whereas the other 7% had served under the current supervisor for under 3 months.

#### 4.6 Instruments for data generation

To generate data that was used to test the hypotheses, the study carried out a cross-sectional survey as has previously been done in research on organisation change (Collins & Browning, 2019). Ng and Lucianetti (2016) indicate that change by its nature should be studied longitudinally, however the conducted study did not focus on the effect of the change but rather the employees' perception of support during a change initiative, thereby justifying the appropriacy of a cross-sectional study. There was hence no need to track changes of the employee's perception over time which would otherwise have necessitated as longitudinal study. Closed ended survey questionnaires which included the various appropriate measures as highlighted in section 4.8 were adopted to gather data that was used for testing the various hypotheses identified. The cross-sectional study constituted one survey to establish the effects of the changes that were initiated in light of the information system change. The questionnaire link would open a web page that will have various sections as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Study questionnaire sections

Section	Content
1 <sup>st</sup> Section	Study introduction containing the purpose of the study, questionnaire layout, ethical considerations including informed consent, assurances of anonymity, an estimation of the questionnaire completion time and instructions on how to respond to the questionnaire
2 <sup>nd</sup> Section	Data that profiled the respondent – Service duration, supervisor rank, duration of time with the current supervisor, perceived supervisor ability and ethnicity effect
3 <sup>rd</sup> Section	Measuring the employee's promotion and prevention regulatory focus
4 <sup>th</sup> Section	4 items measuring the perceived supervisor support
5 <sup>th</sup> Section	3 items measuring the supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour

## **4.7 Procedures**

### **4.7.1 Pilot study**

The researcher tested the validity and reliability of the survey instrument to be used for data generation by carrying out a pilot study with a random sample of 20 participants (Svensson, 2018). This allowed testing of the data generation procedure, response rate and the effectiveness of using email to disseminate the questionnaire. In addition, since existing scales were adapted for this research by removing some items and shortening the length of various items to increase the survey response rate, the researcher had to ensure the original item meanings were maintained. This was done by conducting Cronbach's alpha test on the data obtained from the pilot study to ascertain the required value of 0.7 or higher was achieved (Douglas & Thomas, 2014).

Where the 0.7 target value for the Cronbach's alpha is not be achieved it is recommended that items that have lower coefficient values are removed (Churchill, 1979). However, to avoid having single item scales in the event that items are eliminated, new items would need to be introduced since shortened versions of the scales were used (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Svensson, 2018). Additional pilot studies would have needed to be carried out to check if the revised survey items met the target Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7.

Partial Least Squares Structured Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was done to provide an initial inspection of correlations in the hypothesised model. Given the small sample size for the pilot study, a PLS-SEM was appropriate over a CB-SEM (Svensson, 2018). PLS-SEM used an exploratory approach based on regression to predict the variance in the dependent variable namely perceived supervisor support (Hair et al., 2011). Table 4 below indicates the summary of the results from piloting with the study pilot results appended as Annex 2.

Table 5: Summary of the Results of Piloting

Objective	Findings	Action taken by Researcher
<b>Research design</b> - Identify logistical problems which might occur when using the research design	Inconsistent responses due to convergent validity issues from the questions on ethnic and tribal differences.	Both questions were modified to include both ethnic and tribal aspects.
	Owing to the use of a single respondent, expected limitations of common method bias was observed through similar responses for a number of questions where variability was expected possibly compromising on validity.	Every alternate question or item in a scale was reverse coded.
<b>Sampling strategy</b> - Assess the likely success of the proposed recruitment strategy for identifying the study potential respondents	Some respondents had changed supervisor during the change period which led to confusion from the respondents on the supervisor to make reference to.	A screening question and appropriate branching was introduced to address changes in the supervisor.
	Minimal variability in questions whose responses were based on time period	Shorter year intervals were included in the responses to increase choice options.
<b>Ethical considerations</b> - Test the procedure for ethical considerations.	The anonymity settings on the questionnaire were effective leading to random IDs being assigned to respondents' responses.	No further action was needed.
<b>Instruments for data collection</b> - Develop and modify the data collection instrument to maximise its internal validity.	All the scales evaluated had a Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 thereby indicating the internal validity for each of the constructs.	No further action was needed.

<p><b>Procedures</b> - Test the method proposed for data collection.</p>	<p>Survey monkey could not directly send email invitations to the organisational members under study due to restrictions imposed by the organisation under study.</p>	<p>A web link collector was created and used to collect responses.</p>
	<p>Correspondents and reminders to respondents could not be done directly from Survey monkey.</p>	<p>This was done by sending communication using the researcher's work email address.</p>
	<p>The introductory section of the survey was quite long prompting the need for brevity.</p>	<p>Only a summary of the consent aspects was included in the introductory section. Hyperlinks to the full informed consent documents were used which proved effective as respondents were able to navigate to the same.</p>
	<p>The anticipated completion time of 10 minutes was achieved as most respondents took a slightly shorter time averaging at 7min 41 seconds. A response and completion rate of 74% was achieved.</p>	<p>This was satisfactory as it predicted about 388 responses which was sufficient for the survey.</p>
	<p><b>Data Analysis</b> - Test the adequacy of the data analysis instrument.</p>	<p>SPSS was suitable in generating descriptive statistical analysis for various control variables.</p>
	<p>PLS-SEM was used to evaluate the hypothesised relationships between the key constructs.</p>	<p>The data was satisfactory for structural modelling in AMOS hence no further action was needed.</p>

### **4.7.2 Main study**

A list of all the Kenyan employees within the organisation under study was obtained and once compiled, an email containing an online link to the questionnaire was to be sent to all the employees. The organisation under study carries out at least two surveys in a year whereby it achieves a response rate of 75%. The researcher aimed for a minimum of 170 valid responses as established in section 4.5.3 when the survey was conducted. To ensure the target response rate was achieved, polite email reminders were sent weekly to staff who would not have responded to the questionnaire. Owing to the anonymity of the questionnaire and inability to monitor respondents from survey monkey, it was not possible to call potential respondents who had not responded and encourage them to respond over the phone. The researcher would have sought consent from the organisation under study to utilise their call centre agents to conduct polite reminders to the employees who have not responded, however this was not possible.

Therefore, to encourage participation and candidness the employees were informed and reminded that their individual responses would be kept confidential and the only data that would be shared with the organisation is group data (Eisenberger et al., 2002). To achieve the desired response rate the researcher ensured the survey could be completed in a short time by making use of validated shortened scales that have been used in previous research as indicated in section 4.8 (Gonzalez-Morales et al., 2018; Rhoades et al., 2001; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). The respondents were informed of the estimated completion time that was targeted at 10 minutes which was additionally a motivation to take part in the survey.

### **4.7.3 Data Gathering**

In seeking to collect data for the main study, owing to management changes in the organisation, the researcher had to get consent a second time. At the time of the pilot, the then managing director provided written consent to conduct the survey on behalf of the organisation under study which was presented to the GIBS Ethical clearance committee. Unfortunately, by the time the researcher was due for the actual study, the managing director had retired from the organisation. The organisation CEO directed that the new managing director to review the documents and provide consent if they found it fit. Fortunately, the survey was reviewed and approved without any amendments much as there was a proposal for two additional questions.

Based on the approval, the organisation through the HR department provided a database of staff and their email addresses. The staff list provided was for all the staff in Kenya and was confirmed to be 525 as initially anticipated. Owing to the technological limitations identified in sending the survey link from survey monkey, the researcher used their corporate work email to send out the initial invitation. All the targeted staff were on blind copy (bcc) to ensure isolation of communication between staff if any of them needed clarification on an issue and avoid unnecessarily bothering other staff in case of any clarifications. A link to the survey was provided within the invitation email. A snapshot of the email invitation is provided in the Appendix 3 on data collection (under section 1.0).

On the first two days the responses were high after which they quickly tapered off. The researcher opted to do polite email reminders to all the staff. Unfortunately owing to the restriction imposed by the organisation the researcher could not use survey monkey to send targeted reminders to those who had not responded. Several staff indicated they had filled the survey and requested to be left out of the survey. This was done and the respondents emails deleted from the reminder list as demonstrated in the Appendix 3 section 2.0 on data collection.

The researcher noted earlier on that several respondents were not completing the survey to the end since they did not know what signified the end of the survey as it had multiple page sections. A snapshot of how the final survey completion page was added as part of the reminder communications as shown in Appendix 3 section 3.0 on data collection which led to increased completion among staff.

However, during the survey, the researcher realized that the reminders were not as effective in persuading more staff to participate in the survey. Furthermore, the organisation had placed a restriction that the survey could only be carried out in the month of August 2021 since the organisation under study has a group wide organisational strategic planning month which is quite involving for all staff in September 2021. This called for a change in the content of the reminder information to creative reminder messages which proved quite successful. A sample of the innovative reminders are included in Appendix 3 section 4.0 on data collection. The response rates were always high at every reminder as indicated in the graph below.



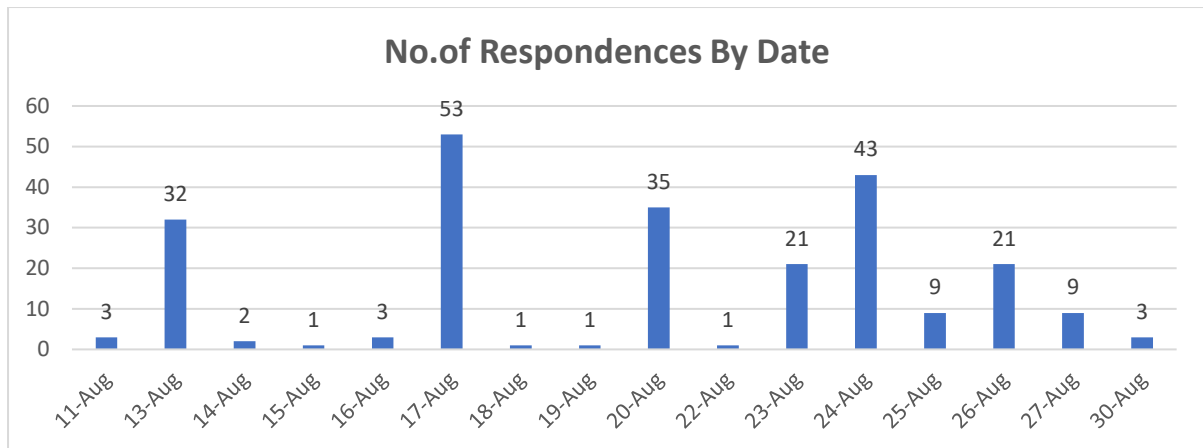


Figure 7: Graph indicating responses over time.

The survey resulted in 238 responses by the last day. However, it was notable that most of the respondents took longer than the approximated 10 minutes to finish the survey resulting in an average finish time of 16 minutes. The additional time could have been attributed to a substantial change in the questionnaire by reverse coding almost fifty percent of the scale item questions. In addition, several respondents confessed to have started and paused severally to attend to priority work issues. The final completion rate was 73% resulting in 174 complete responses which was adequate. The responses were realised within the month of August 2021. A thank you and appreciation message was sent to all the staff as demonstrated in the Appendix 3 section 5.0 on data collection.

## 4.8 Measures

### 4.8.1 Individuals' Regulatory Focus

Regulatory focus was measured using the existing prevention and promotion focus scale that has been validated and used by Wallace et al. (2016). While the full scale contains a total of eighteen items, the shortened six-item validated scale was used as has been done in previous research (Hekman et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2012) and items rephrased to keep the word count low which led to increased participation and reduced dropout rate. The six items consist of three items that pertain to promotion focus while the other three pertain to prevention focus.

The survey participants responded to all six items of which three items measured the respondent's promotion focus orientation while the other three measured the respondent's prevention focus orientation. Based on the above each respondent had a measure for both promotion and prevention focus orientation. Below is a sample item that targets promotion focus (e.g., "I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations") and prevention

focus (e.g., “I am focused on preventing negative events at work”). The six items included in the questionnaire are included in Table 7 at the end of the section 4.8. Every item underwent evaluation using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to agree.

#### **4.8.2 Perceived supervisor support**

To measure perceived supervisor support, items from the existing Survey of Perceived Organisational Support scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) have been used in previous studies by replacing the word organisation with supervisor (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017). While the original scale contains a total of thirty-six items the shortened five-item scale was used as has been done in previous studies, and items rephrased to keep the word count low which led to increased participation and reduced dropout rate (Gonzalez-Morales et al., 2018; Rhoades et al., 2001; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). Below are two sample items that were used (e.g., “My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values” and “My supervisor would forgive an honest mistake on my part”). The five items included in the questionnaire are included in Table 7 at the end of the section 4.8. Every item underwent evaluation using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to agree.

#### **4.8.3 Intellectual Stimulation behaviour**

To measure the supervisors intellectual stimulation behaviour, items from the existing multifactor leadership questionnaire have been used in previous studies (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Items for the single component namely intellectual stimulation were included. Below is a sample items that were used for intellectual stimulation (e.g., “My supervisor enables others to think about old problems in new ways”). The three items included in the questionnaire are included in Table 7 at the end of the section 4.8. Every item underwent evaluation using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to agree.

#### **4.8.4 Control variables**

The control variables proposed included supervisor ability, supervisor rank, the subordinates service duration and dyad tenure as indicated in the conceptual model in section 3.3.2. The three variables if neglected could potentially distort the research findings as they are extraneous to the hypothesised conceptual model (Bernerth et al., 2018). To avoid inaccuracy in the observed relationships, items relating to the control variables below were included in the survey instrument.

### **i. Supervisor ability**

The credibility of the person offering the support is vital as previous research has shown that a supervisor's competence breeds trust from the subordinates allowing for higher reciprocity (Neves, 2011). The trust literature has three dimensions of trust namely ability, benevolence and trust (Mayer & Davis, 1999). Of the three dimensions, only aspects of the supervisor ability are not included in the aspects of perceived supervisor support. Supervisors show their ability by defining roles and tasks, outlining and clarifying their expectations and as such are deemed as more supportive (Neves, 2011). In addition, whenever a supervisor can offer help to subordinates when they need it, the supervisor is perceived to offer higher levels of support (Dysvik et al., 2014; Neves, 2011).

Data for the perceived supervisors' ability was generated by incorporating items from the supervisor ability scale (Mayer & Davis, 1999). A sample item that was used is ("My supervisor is very capable of performing his job"). The four items included in the questionnaire are included in Appendix 1 in the section titled "Control variables". The respondents evaluated each item based on a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to agree.

### **ii. Supervisor rank**

The rank of the supervisor comes into play as top managers have valuable knowledge and expertise predisposing them to higher levels of support perception (Garrett & Neubaum, 2013; Wang et al., 2018). In addition, such higher-ranking supervisors are seen as more competent than their lower ranking counterparts and are deemed to possess qualities that contribute to organisational success. This will hence impact on our hypothesis by yielding higher levels of perceived supervisor support for supervisors with a higher rank in the organisation. Data for the supervisor rank was generated using an item that required participants to state whether their direct supervisor is a part of the top management team or not. They responded by selecting "Yes" if their direct supervisor was on the top management team and "No" if they were not.

### **iii. Subordinates service duration**

Based on the unmet expectations theory, for "new employees", the perceived supervisor support is bound to decline within the first months of employment owing to their initial naive understanding of the workplace (Vandenberghe et al., 2019). This will hence impact on our hypothesis by yielding higher levels of perceived supervisor support when the subordinates evaluating them have shorter service durations. Data for the participants' service duration will

be generated using an item that will require participants to state how long they have been in service in the organisation. They will respond by selecting the number of years and months that they have been in service.

#### **iv. Dyad differences**

Perceived supervisor support is an individual level construct that occurs in the domain of interpersonal interaction. Owing to the reciprocity nature of the supervisor subordinate relationship, PSS is highly dependent upon the behaviour and reactions of both the subordinate and the supervisor. PSS will therefore be highly influenced by aspects of the ongoing situation and the individual characteristics of both parties involved. Therefore, for the conducted research, the interactions under investigation were not held in a group context as this would void the interpersonal exchanges rendered in the organisational support theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The supervisor-subordinate relationship is conceptualised in dyads as has been done in a number of previous research whereby the phenomenon under investigation is between the employee and their immediate supervisor (Baran et al., 2012; Škerlavaj et al., 2014). However, despite the dyadic nature of the supervisor subordinate relationship, the proposed study will focus on one side of this interaction namely the employee perception of their supervisor. To incorporate aspects of the dyadic relationship, the subordinates also evaluated various characteristics of their supervisor including ethnicity, gender and age (Bernerth et al., 2008; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017).

Dyad tenure which is how long an employee has been working under the supervision of a particular direct supervisor was controlled for as the length of the supervisor-subordinate relationship would impact on the perceived supervisor support (Landry & Vandenberghe, 2012; Škerlavaj et al., 2014). Ethnicity is regarded as a source of bias especially when such information is available to other parties (Ali et al., 2017). Therefore, ethnicity has been identified as a surface level variable that is associated with negative effects on performance within a workgroup (Roth et al., 2019). Gender contributes to the ascribed status characteristics that one holds within the organisation as higher dominance and power is associated with men than with women (Walfisch et al., 2013). Such dyadic differences were hence included to control for their effects in the stated research.

Table 6: Table indicating the items of the various scales included.

Constructs	Definitions	Measurement items		Sources
Perceived Supervisor Support	The extent that an employee perceives their supervisor cares about their well being and values their contributions (Gordon et al., 2019).	PSS1	My supervisor strongly considers my goals.	Adapted from (Gonzalez-Morales et al., 2018; Rhoades et al., 2001; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020)
		PSS2	My supervisor strongly considers my values.	
		PSS3	My supervisor would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	
		PSS4	My supervisor disregards my best interests when he/she makes decisions that affect me.	
		PSS5	My supervisor is willing to extend himself/herself to help in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	
Regulatory Focus – Promotion Focus	<b>Promotion Focus</b> is the extent to which individuals seek to maximize pleasure and are motivated by their growth and development needs to try and achieve their wishes and aspirations (Wallace et al., 2016).	Prom1	A chance to grow is an important factor for me when looking for a job.	Adapted from (Shin et al., 2017)
		Prom2	I focus on accomplishing job tasks that will further my advancement.	
		Prom3	My work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what I aspire to be.	
Regulatory Focus – Prevention Focus	<b>Prevention Focus</b> is the extent to which individuals seek to avoid pain and are driven by their security needs to ensure they achieve their duties and responsibilities (Wallace et al., 2016).	PrevF1	Job security is an important factor for me in any job search.	
		PrevF2	I focus my attention on avoiding failure at work.	
		PrevF3	I am very careful to avoid exposing myself to potential losses at work.	
Intellectual stimulation	Increasing followers awareness and	IS1	My supervisor enables others to think about old problems in new ways.	Adapted from (Zhou et al., 2012)

Constructs	Definitions	Measurement items		Sources
	interest in the institutional problems to inspire their ability to think of ways of solving the problem (Zhou et al., 2012)	IS2	My supervisor provides others with new ways of looking at puzzling things.	
		IS3	My supervisor gets others to rethink ideas that they have never modelled before.	

## **4.9 Data Analysis**

### **4.9.1 Software for data analysis**

Owing to the quantitative nature of the study SPSS and AMOS were used for the data analysis.

### **4.9.2 Data preparation and cleaning**

The data was imported into SPSS and coded. Firstly, the data was checked for errors which arose from mistakes when entering the data resulting in faulty analysis. Secondly, missing data values for particular cases were identified and the cases excluded (Russo, 2016). Thirdly, the data was cleaned up to ensure all values fall within the range of possible values. A summary of the data cleaning process is included in section 5.0 below. For categorical variables such as supervisor rank, this was done by inspecting the frequencies of each of the variables. The service duration for the subordinates in the organisation was coded to identify those who had been in the organisation for less than three months as well as those who were above the three months.

Preliminary analysis was done on the data by calculating various descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, mode, and medians. A summary of the descriptive statistics and histograms is included in section 5. To establish the outliers, a box plot was produced to identify all the data points that are out of the desired range (Wennberg & Anderson, 2020). Any outliers identified create a case for future studies as they could potentially contribute to theory by way of theory testing. Besides, for the various parametric test to be performed, the data must be normally distributed. The normality was established by measuring the skewness and kurtosis of the data (Williams & Dreher, 1992). The two tests did not present the need to improve normality, hence the study variables were not standardised (Jaggia & Kelly-Hawke, 2009). A summary of the normality as well as outlier checks is included in section 5.0 below.

To evaluate the reliability of the scales, Cronbach's alpha, the item total statistics, inter-item correlation as well as the principal component analysis for various scales was evaluated and is included in section 5.0 below. In the case where the Cronbach's alpha was less than 0.7 as it was for prevention focus as is expected when the scale items are few, the mean inter-item correlations score was evaluated. The mean inter-item correlations score should be above 0.2 and below 4 when the scale items are few (Pallant, 2016). The mean inter-item correlation for prevention focus was found to be 0.419 which indicates the scale is reliable. The principal component analysis yielded four items for the main study variables as expected and is included in section 5.0 below.

### **4.9.3 Data analysis plan**

#### **4.9.3.1 Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics refer to graphical techniques as well as numerical procedures that are useful in organising and describing the characteristics of the sample. These are presented in the form of frequency distributions, means and standard deviations in a way that allows for comparison and description of the data (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). The demographic profile of the respondents was demonstrated using frequency distributions based on the study's categorical variables namely gender, subordinate-supervisor gender difference, service duration, age difference between supervisor and subordinate, subordinate age with reference to the supervisor and supervisor rank.

#### **4.9.3.2 Distribution of the data**

Statistical techniques applied in the study assume a normal distribution of the variables data implying a symmetrical bell-shaped curve for the data with the scores in the middle having the greatest frequency while those towards the extremes have lower frequencies (Pallant, 2020). The two most commonly tests for normality applied namely the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test were applied in the current study (Mohd Razali & Bee Wah, 2011). Both tests compared the provided data with a simulation of normally distributed data that has the same standard deviation and mean scores as that of the collected data. The p-values are assessed for which p-values are only statistically significant if the values are less than 0.05 (Mohd Razali & Bee Wah, 2011).

#### **4.9.3.3 Reliability of Constructs**

To evaluate the internal reliability of the scales, Cronbach's alpha, the item total statistics, inter-item correlation as well as the principal component analysis for various scales was evaluated and the results included in Section 5.0. The three scales used namely the regulatory focus, perceived supervisor support and intellectual stimulation scales highlighted in section 4.8 were required to attain a 0.7 threshold value for the Cronbach's alpha reliability test (Douglas & Thomas, 2014). In the case where the Cronbach's alpha was less than 0.7 as is expected when the scale items are few, the mean inter-item correlations score was evaluated. The mean inter-item correlations score should be above 0.2 and below 4 when the scale items are few (Pallant, 2016). The principal component analysis was conducted to discover the number of items yielded from all the variables and their loadings as demonstrated in section 5.0 below.



#### **4.9.3.4 Validity of Constructs**

The types of validity that will be checked include discriminant and convergent validity. Discriminant validity measures how much the measures of any two variables are empirically different and is evaluated by comparing the squared inter-construct correlations and the average variance extracted (AVE) (Bagozzi et al., 1991). Convergent validity is the extent to which a measure is highly associated with other constructs developed to measure the same construct that should be theoretically similar to itself (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

This research used existing scales for measurement and hence Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to verify the measurement model as opposed to an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) which is used when the researcher has to come up with a new scale (Hair et al., 2011; Svensson, 2018). In addition, the CFA is appropriate for large samples as is the case with the targeted sample size of 525 respondents. The data from SPSS was first imported into AMOS noting the number of indicators available for each construct. A measurement model based on the identified conceptual model was created in AMOS to examine the constructs psychometric properties namely their discriminant, convergent and nomological validity.

The measurement model was then created in AMOS by drawing the latent variables with the respective indicators and introducing the covariances. The variables in the data set were then assigned to the measurement model. The measurement model in AMOS was run to produce various model fit statistics that were used to ensure the collected data is aligned with the measurement model. Parameters that were evaluated for model fit are the default model chi-square test (CMIN/DF) which was expected to be less than 3 and Normed Fit Index (NFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) all of which were expected to be above 0.9 (Ng & Lucianetti, 2016). The results of evaluating the measurement model for the main study variables is included in section 5.0 below.

The factor loadings which indicate the regression between the latent variable and the indicators were evaluated to check if they were between the acceptable values of 0.5 and 0.7. For constructs with more than three items, any items with factor loadings below 0.5 were removed and the measurement model run again to improve the model fit. Model fit was also improved by co-varying the error terms to a certain extent. To check for composite reliability, discriminant and convergent validity, SPSS was used using inputs from the data collected for each measure. Once the data was input into SPSS and run the principal component analysis, it produced the loading factors for each measure and were subsequently used to establish the composite reliability for each construct which is desired to be more than 0.7. To establish the

convergent validity of each construct, the average variance extracted (AVE) was evaluated which is expected to be 0.5 or higher indicating the construct explains at least half the variance of its indicators otherwise more variance would be found in the construct's error term (Joseph et al., 2019). Based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion, for the constructs to have discriminant validity, the average variance extracted should exceed the Maximum Shared Variance.

Table 7: Table indicating the cut-off values for reliability tests

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Cut-off Values</b>
Composite Reliability	>0.7
Convergent Reliability	AVE $\geq$ 0.5
Discriminant Reliability	Fornell-Larcker: Square root of AVE to be higher than AVE

#### **4.9.3.5 Structural Equation Modelling**

Once satisfactory composite reliability was achieved, the theory represented by the conceptual model was evaluated by first removing the covariance paths on the model after which the regression paths needed to be inserted. Only the covariance path between the independent variables namely promotion and prevention focus are left, and an error term added to the dependent variable namely perceived supervisor support. To take care of the control variables (namely supervisor rank, supervisor ability, subordinate service duration, duration with the current supervisor and ethnicity) a path linking the control variables to the perceived supervisor support construct was added. The two control variables (namely supervisor rank and supervisor ability) were linked since the two covary. The model was then run and model fit ascertained by checking for a target CMIN/DF value less than 3 and NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, CFI values that are above 0.9. Once the model fit was verified, the results were then obtained from the output.

To assess the effect of the intellectual stimulation behaviour on the regulatory focus variables, two regression paths were created from the intellectual stimulation construct, one to the promotion focus variable and the other to the prevention focus variable. The model was then estimated as was done in the earlier case and from the output the P-value of the corresponding regression will indicate the significance of the relationships hypothesised H2a and H2b. The direct path between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support was then introduced to evaluate hypothesis H3.

#### **4.9.4 Results interpretation**

From the model output, the p-values for the five hypotheses indicated whether they are significant while the estimates gave the strength and the direction of the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables for each variable pair evaluated. For each pair of variables hypothesised, a positive estimate value will denote an increase in the corresponding independent variable leads to an increase in the dependent variable. On the other hand, a negative estimate value will denote an increase in the corresponding independent variable leads to a decrease in the dependent variable.

### **4.10 Research Quality**

The quality of quantitative research is based on the research question, the theoretical model, the research design, sampling procedure and the psychometric properties of the data generation instruments (Wester et al., 2013). Having evaluated the validity and reliability of the data to be used prior to analysis, the following aspects pertaining to research quality are discussed in this section: the objectivity of the process of generating data and the study results generalisability.

#### **4.10.1 Generalisability**

Quantitative research uses large sample sizes to allow for the generalisability of the findings to the study universe (Creswell, 2003). Therefore for generalisability to be achieved the minimum of 170 valid responses have to be achieved (Yilmaz, 2013). However, using employees from a single organisation brings limitations of generalising the findings of the study as well as weakening the research validity (Phillips, 2017). Such generalisability is limited by how dynamics of supervisor support may vary from organisation to organisation and across various cultures as highlighted in section 2.2. The study findings will hence be generalisable to countries in emerging markets due to their cultural comparable similarity in power distance and individualism (Swayampakala et al., 2017).

While the study was conducted in an organisation that is in the water and energy sector the findings may be generalisable to industries in other sectors provided they are of a similar type. The organisation under study is a family business hence privately owned and as a result, the power distance between subordinate and supervisor could be higher (Cheng et al., 2015). The organisation proposed for the study has been in existence for over 70 years hence offers security and stability compared to others in the labour market (Cheng et al., 2015) hence

subordinates may be willing to tolerate higher power distance relationships with their supervisors compared to their counterparts in an organisation that does not offer such stability and security. However, the results of this study may give a case for the need for more research across multiple organisations to confirm the findings.

#### ***4.10.2 Objectivity***

The positivist paradigm is based on the ontological assumption that social reality is external to the researcher and is objective (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Rahi, 2017). Since the researcher is a member of the organisation under study, the responses were made anonymous bearing no identifiable information that can be linked to the respondent. Respondents were equally assured of anonymity to ensure the researcher does not influence the participants thereby eliminating any related bias.

### **4.11 Ethical considerations, anticipated limitations, and solutions**

The ethical considerations made during the study are discussed in this section. In addition, the anticipated limitations are identified as well as the corresponding mitigation measures.

#### ***4.11.1 Ethical Considerations***

A research protocol that guided the researcher in conducting their study was provided beforehand and approved. For respondents to participate in the research, they were required to provide informed consent. Assurances of anonymity were given to the respondents prior to which they were clearly informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis. The participants were equally informed of their freedom to abandon the survey at any point they desired to do so. The respondents were properly appraised of the objective of the research, estimated length of time the survey would take and the procedure that was used to carry out the survey.

The opportunity of accessing the study results on completion was given and made known to the staff. The data collected throughout the various phases of the study were kept in a way that maintains participants confidentiality. It is not anticipated that the study will impact on the participants' emotions or physic. While the researcher was a part of collecting the data the survey responses were kept anonymous so that participants identification information is not picked. In addition, the researcher was guided by ethical standards to ensure that all the information they have access to is kept confidential and only used for academic intentions.

#### ***4.11.2 How limitations of the study were addressed***

The research was carried out in a single organisation operating in the water and energy sector in Kenya. Mantere et al., (2012) however stipulate that having respondents from a single organisation imposes limitations on generalizability calling for further research in contexts beyond that of the included institution for transferability to be assured. The results of the conducted research provided a case for the need for more research across multiple organisations to confirm the findings.

The research required employees to report about their supervisors which would have instilled fear on the staff. For this to be mitigated, the organisation's online survey platform was not used but rather a survey platform independent of the organisation. In addition, and as indicated in the ethical considerations section, the anonymity of the respondents was ensured, and respondents reminded of the same. This led to a sufficient response and completion rate.

Longitudinal research designs are suited for research focusing on change implementations as they allow for the before and affect effects of the change in the organisation as well as the evolution of the employee attitudes and opinions taking place to be analysed (Phillips, 2017). Due to time limitations however, a cross-sectional survey was carried out but to mitigate these limitations the survey was conducted soon after the change period.

Closed ended surveys, as data gathering instruments, present options that are categorised thereby putting constraints on the possible range of responses respondents could give. Besides, while the survey is presented online in an asynchronous way, some respondents may not have enough time to thoughtfully or full fill the survey. To mitigate this, the strategies stated in section 4.7.2 to increase response rate were used.

Finally, since the study used the same respondents hence the limitation of common method bias, consequently this study can't support assumptions based on causal relationships between intellectual stimulation, employee regulatory focus and perceived supervisor support. In as much as the conducted study did not intend to offer causal relationships, the study only provides a starting point for an examination of the degree to which the antecedents are associated with perceived supervisor support and their effect on perceived supervisor support. For causal relationships to be investigated, future research that employ an experimental design need to be done that integrate more antecedents of perceived supervisor support.

## Chapter 5: Results

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical results obtained from the data collected and analysed as per the research methodology discussed in Chapter 4. The chapter begins with a description of the sample demographics, providing a profile of the respondents. Descriptive statistics are then briefly mentioned, followed by a description of the distribution of the data. Results from CB-SEM on replication and hypotheses tests, including moderation effects, are then presented. The chapter concludes with a summary of whether the replications and hypotheses were supported or not.

### 5.2 Demographic profile

A total of 174 questionnaires were collected in the study. The survey attracted 238 respondents out of a population of 525. Of the 238 responses, only 174 questionnaires were fully completed. The data was downloaded from survey monkey and imported into SPSS. From the obtained responses those with missing values were removed hence only 174 were used for analysis. The reverse scored items were then reversed across the entire questionnaire.

Table 8: Response and completion rate

No. of Staff in the Company Under investigation	No. of Staff to Whom Email Invites were Sent	% of individual researchers reached	No. of responses received	Response Rate	No. of complete responses received	Total % of Respondents who Completed the Survey
(A)	(B)	(B/A)	(C)	(C/A)	(D)	(D/A)
525	525	100%	238	45%	174	33%

Table 9 presents the profile of respondents in terms of gender, gender difference between supervisor and subordinate, service duration, the age difference between supervisor and subordinate, the relative age of subordinate to supervisor and the supervisor rank.

Table 9: Respondents' demographic profile

<b>Demographic Information</b>			
Gender	<b>Subordinates</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Male	114	66%
	Female	60	34%
	Total	174	100%
	<b>Supervisors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Male	125	72%
	Female	49	28%
	Total	174	100%
Subordinate Supervisor Gender Difference	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Same Gender	109	63%
	Different Gender	65	37%
	Total	174	100%
Service Duration	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	01-05	146	84%
	06-10	16	9%
	11-15	7	4%
	16-20	0	0%
	21-25	3	2%
	25-30	2	1%
	Total	174	100%
Age Difference Between Supervisor & Subordinate	<b>Age Difference</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	01-05	47	27%
	06-10	44	25%
	11-15	65	37%
	16-20	4	2%
	21-25	8	5%
	25-30	6	3%
	Total	174	100%
Subordinate Age with Reference to Supervisor	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Younger Age	142	82%
	Same Age	6	3%
	Older Age	12	7%
	No Idea	14	8%
	Total	174	100%
Supervisor Rank	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	Top Management	36	21%
	Middle Level	138	79%
	Total	174	100%

Most of the respondent supervisors (72%) and subordinates (66%) were males which correlate with a similar study in the Kenyan context and hence a representative of the work population (Atambo & Momanyi, 2016). As expected, most subordinates (63%) had the same gender as their supervisors. Of the respondents, 84% had served for a duration between 1-5 years followed by 9% who had served for 6-10 years. With regards to the age difference between the subordinates and supervisors, 27% were in the 1-5 year age difference bracket, 25% in the 6-10 year age difference bracket whereas the majority (37%) were in the 11-15 year age difference bracket. Most of the subordinates (82%) were younger than their supervisors with only 3% being the same age, 7% being older while 3% of the respondents had no idea of their supervisors' ages. Of the supervisors referred to by the respondents, only 21% were in top management while 79% were in middle level management.

### 5.3 Descriptive statistics and outliers

Figure 8 below provides a visual representation of the data from the survey.

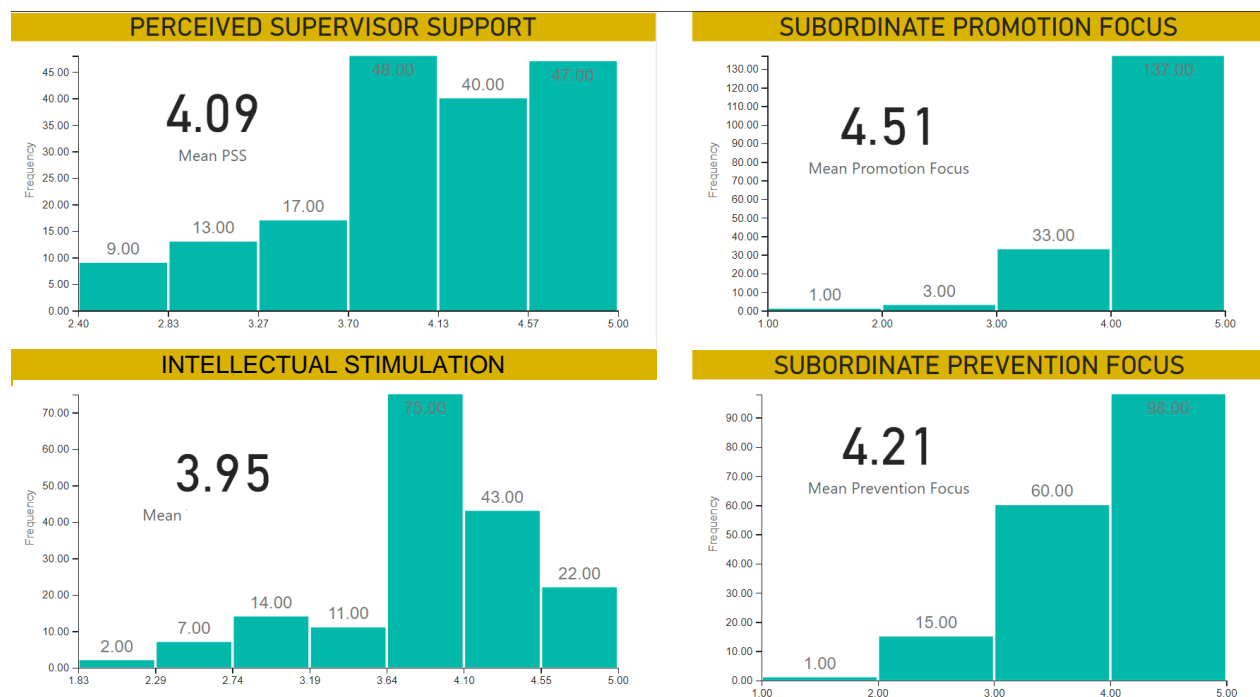






Figure 8: Histograms illustrating the distribution of the study variables data.

Descriptive statistics were conducted for each construct and its associated items. The results of the means and standard deviations are presented in Table 10 below:

Table 10: Descriptive statistics on all variables

	N	Min	Max	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Perceived Supervisor Support	174	2.40	5	4.09	0.048	0.637
Subordinate Promotion Focus	174	1.00	5	4.51	0.042	0.551
Subordinate Prevention Focus	174	1.00	5	4.22	0.055	0.719
Intellectual Stimulation	174	2.00	5	3.95	0.049	0.650
Supervisor Ability	174	1.00	5	4.39	0.050	0.660
Service Duration	174	1.00	5	2.13	0.077	1.018
Duration under Supervisor	174	0.00	1	0.93	0.019	0.254
Tribal & Ethnic Effect	174	1.00	5	1.20	0.049	0.651
Sup-sub Gender Difference	174	0.00	1	0.37	0.037	0.485
Sup-sub Age Difference	174	1.00	5	2.47	0.092	1.215

To determine the presence of outliers, the trimmed mean was compared to the mean. Based on the closeness of the mean values and the 5% trimmed mean, the data indicated that there were no outliers as indicated in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Trimmed mean, Skewness and Kurtosis for all variables

	Trimmed Mean	Comparison	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	5%	Variance of Trimmed Mean Over Mean	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Perceived Supervisor Support	4.127	-1%	-0.563	0.184	-0.06	0.366
Subordinate Promotion Focus	4.568	-1%	-2.259	0.184	9.73	0.366
Subordinate Prevention Focus	4.273	-1%	-1.059	0.184	1.66	0.366
Intellectual Stimulation	3.982	-1%	-0.562	0.184	0.75	0.366
Supervisor Ability	4.460	-2%	-1.64	0.184	4.34	0.366
Service Duration	2.050	4%	0.641	0.184	0.02	0.366
Duration under Supervisor	0.980	-5%	-3.432	0.184	9.89	0.366
Tribal & Ethnic Effect	1.070	11%	3.594	0.184	13.00	0.366
Sup-sub Gender Difference	0.360	3%	0.527	0.184	-1.74	0.366

## 5.4 Distribution of results

As discussed in subsection 4.11.4.1, the CB-SEM technique has found application in studies that have non-normal data distribution, have large sample sizes, and include formative indicators (Hair et al., 2014, 2017, 2019). Before conducting structural equation modelling, data distribution was assessed for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test and the results are presented in Table 12 below. These tests were not statistically significant for all items in the questionnaire with  $p$ -values less than 0.05 for all measures meaning they are significantly different from a normal distribution. Since SEM is suitable for both normally and non-normally distributed data, the test for normality however guides on the specific approach necessary to be employed in analysis of the data. Subsequently, CB-SEM was an appropriate data analysis technique as it doesn't assume normality to estimate and assess the model.

Table 12: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	Sig	Statistic	df	Sig
Perceived Supervisor Support	0.119	174	0.000	0.949	174	0.000
Subordinate Promotion Focus	0.209	174	0.000	0.780	174	0.000
Subordinate Prevention Focus	0.147	174	0.000	0.888	174	0.000
Intellectual Stimulation	0.171	174	0.000	0.933	174	0.000
Supervisor Ability	0.177	174	0.000	0.823	174	0.000
Supervisor Rank	0.488	174	0.000	0.497	174	0.000
Service Duration	0.199	174	0.000	0.852	174	0.000
Duration under Supervisor	0.538	174	0.000	0.274	174	0.000
Tribal & Ethnic Effect	0.520	174	0.000	0.337	174	0.000
Sup-sub Gender Difference	0.406	174	0.000	0.613	174	0.000
Sup-sub Age Difference	0.172	174	0.000	0.884	174	0.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

## 5.5 Evaluating the reliability and validity of the Constructs

Hair et al. (2017) recommended that before conducting the CB-SEM, the quality of the model in terms of reliability and validity should be established (sub-section 4.11.3). The study's research model comprised reflective constructs (sub-section 3.4.1 and 3.4.2) hence the desirability of using Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the various constructs.

To evaluate the reliability of the scales, Cronbach's alpha, the item total statistics, inter-item correlation as well as the principal component analysis for various scales were evaluated and are included in section 5.5.1 and section 5.5.2. In the case where Cronbach's alpha was less than 0.7 as it was for prevention focus as is expected when the scale items are few, the mean

inter-item correlations score was evaluated. The mean inter-item correlations score should be above 0.2 and below 4 when the scale items are few (Pallant, 2016). The mean inter-item correlation for prevention focus was found to be 0.419 which indicates the scale is reliable. The principal component analysis yielded four items for the main study variables as expected and is included in appendix 5 section 1.7.

### 5.5.1 Cronbach's Alpha for various constructs

The evaluation of the model's reflective constructs is presented in Table 13 below highlighting cases where the inter-item scores were evaluated.

Table 13: Cronbach's alpha for the Main Study Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha results		
PSS	Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items	Number of Items
	0.746	0.749	5
The Cronbach's alpha obtained was 0.746 which is suitably above the desired threshold of 0.7.			
Promotion Focus	Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items	Number of Items
	0.696	0.696	3
Cronbach's alpha is expected to be higher than 0.7. However, when the scale items are minimal, as in this case where only three items measure promotion focus, the Cronbach's alpha score obtained is often found to be below 0.7. In such cases, it is essential to report the inter-item correlation. The mean inter-item correlations score should be above 0.2 and below 4 when the scale items are few (Pallant, 2016). In our case, it is 0.433 hence indicating the scale is reliable.			

	The correlation of each item with all other items combined should be more than 0.4. In our case, the corrected item-total correlation for all items is more than 0.4.								
Prevention Focus	<table border="1" data-bbox="459 353 1209 636"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="459 353 692 577">Chronbach's Alpha</th> <th data-bbox="692 353 1018 577">Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items</th> <th data-bbox="1018 353 1209 577">Number of Items</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 577 692 636">0.685</td> <td data-bbox="692 577 1018 636">0.684</td> <td data-bbox="1018 577 1209 636">3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="448 712 1399 1048">Cronbach's alpha is expected to be higher than 0.7. However, when the scale items are minimal, as in this case where only three items measure prevention focus, the Cronbach's alpha score obtained is often found to be below 0.7. In such cases, it is essential to report the inter-item correlation. The mean inter-item correlations score should be above 0.2 and below 4 when the scale items are few (Pallant, 2016). In our case, it is 0.419 hence indicating the scale is reliable.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1115 1399 1361">The correlation of each item with all other items combined should be more than 0.4. In our case, the corrected item-total correlation for the first item is below 0.4 which is below the required value. However, if deleted the overall Cronbach's alpha would be within the anticipated threshold of 0.7</p>			Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items	Number of Items	0.685	0.684	3
Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items	Number of Items							
0.685	0.684	3							
Intellectual Stimulation	<table border="1" data-bbox="459 1370 1209 1653"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="459 1370 692 1594">Chronbach's Alpha</th> <th data-bbox="692 1370 1018 1594">Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items</th> <th data-bbox="1018 1370 1209 1594">Number of Items</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1594 692 1653">0.814</td> <td data-bbox="692 1594 1018 1653">0.817</td> <td data-bbox="1018 1594 1209 1653">6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="448 1729 1399 1816">The Cronbach's alpha obtained was 0.814 which is suitably above the desired threshold of 0.7.</p>			Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items	Number of Items	0.814	0.817	6
Chronbach's Alpha	Chronbach's Alpha Based on Standerdized Items	Number of Items							
0.814	0.817	6							

### 5.5.2 Evaluating the Measurement Model

The principal component analysis results show that the 12 variables measure 4 underlying factors. From the factor loadings (correlation between the items and the 4 components) all

variables have the highest correlations on the appropriate components. Based on a cut off value of 0.4, all the 12 variables yielded the highest factor loadings on the appropriate components. The rotated component matrix is presented in Table 14 below highlighting the loadings of the items on various constructs while the component correlation matrix in Table 15.

Table 14: Items loadings on various constructs

	Principal Component Matrix			
	1	2	3	4
PSS4	0.794			
PSS3	0.666			
PSS2	0.649			
IS1		0.825		
IS3		0.789		
IS2		0.735		
Sub_Prom1			0.895	
Sub_Prom2			0.771	
Sub_Prom3			0.586	
Sub_PrevF3				0.890
Sub_PrevF2				0.795
Sub_PrevF1				0.505

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in six iterations.

Table 15: Component correlation Matrix

Component Correlation Matrix				
Component	1	2	3	4
1 – PSS	1.000	0.475	0.179	0.081
2 – IS	0.475	1.000	0.328	0.235
3 – Sub_Prom	0.179	0.328	1.000	0.358
4 – Sub_Prev	0.081	0.235	0.358	1.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

From the above Tables 15 and 16, the composite reliability (CR), was arrived at by evaluating the average factor loading for each construct component. The CR was expected to be more than 0.7 and was found to be so as demonstrated in Table 16 below on the column labelled (a) for each of the constructs. Additionally, the average variance extracted did exceed the Maximum Shared Variance meaning the constructs have discriminant validity and convergent validity.

Table 16: Composite Reliability and Variances (AVE) Average Variance Extracted

	Component				Composite Reliability (a)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (b)=a*a	Maximum Component Correlation from Table 16 (c)	Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) (d)=c*c	Is AVE Greater than MSV (e)=b>d
	1	2	3	4					
PSS4	0.794				0.703	0.494	0.475	0.226	YES
PSS3	0.666								
PSS2	0.649								
TL_IS1		0.825			0.783	0.613	0.475	0.226	YES
TL_IS3		0.789							
TL_IS2		0.735							
Sub_Prom1			0.895		0.751	0.563	0.358	0.128	YES
Sub_Prom2			0.771						
Sub_Prom3			0.586						
Sub_PrevF3				0.890	0.730	0.533	0.358	0.128	YES
Sub_PrevF2				0.795					
Sub_PrevF1				0.505					

As indicated above, the types of validity that were checked included discriminant and convergent validity. From the initial analysis when all the items of perceived supervisor support were included, the construct did not have the requisite composite reliability. Upon removal of the two items with the lowest factor loadings, the requisite composite reliability of 0.7 was achieved. Consequently, the average variance extracted exceeded the Maximum Shared Variance meaning the construct had both discriminant validity and convergent validity. Based on the cut-off values expected a composite reliability of 0.7 was achieved for each of the constructs implying that all the scale items measure the same construct. Each of the constructs was found to have convergent validity demonstrating that each of the measures measuring the same construct was highly related.

This implies that the measures combined in each construct were appropriate and measured the same thing. Similarly, each of the constructs was found to have discriminant validity demonstrating that each of the measures measuring different constructs was not related. This implies the variation established from estimating the models is an indication of the effect of one variable on another which is the desired covariance as opposed to when two constructs measure the same aspect. Overall, this meant that the data obtained had the requisite validity for the hypothesis to be evaluated.

### 5.5.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In addition, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the measurement model and the factor structure as well as the fit indices measured as below:

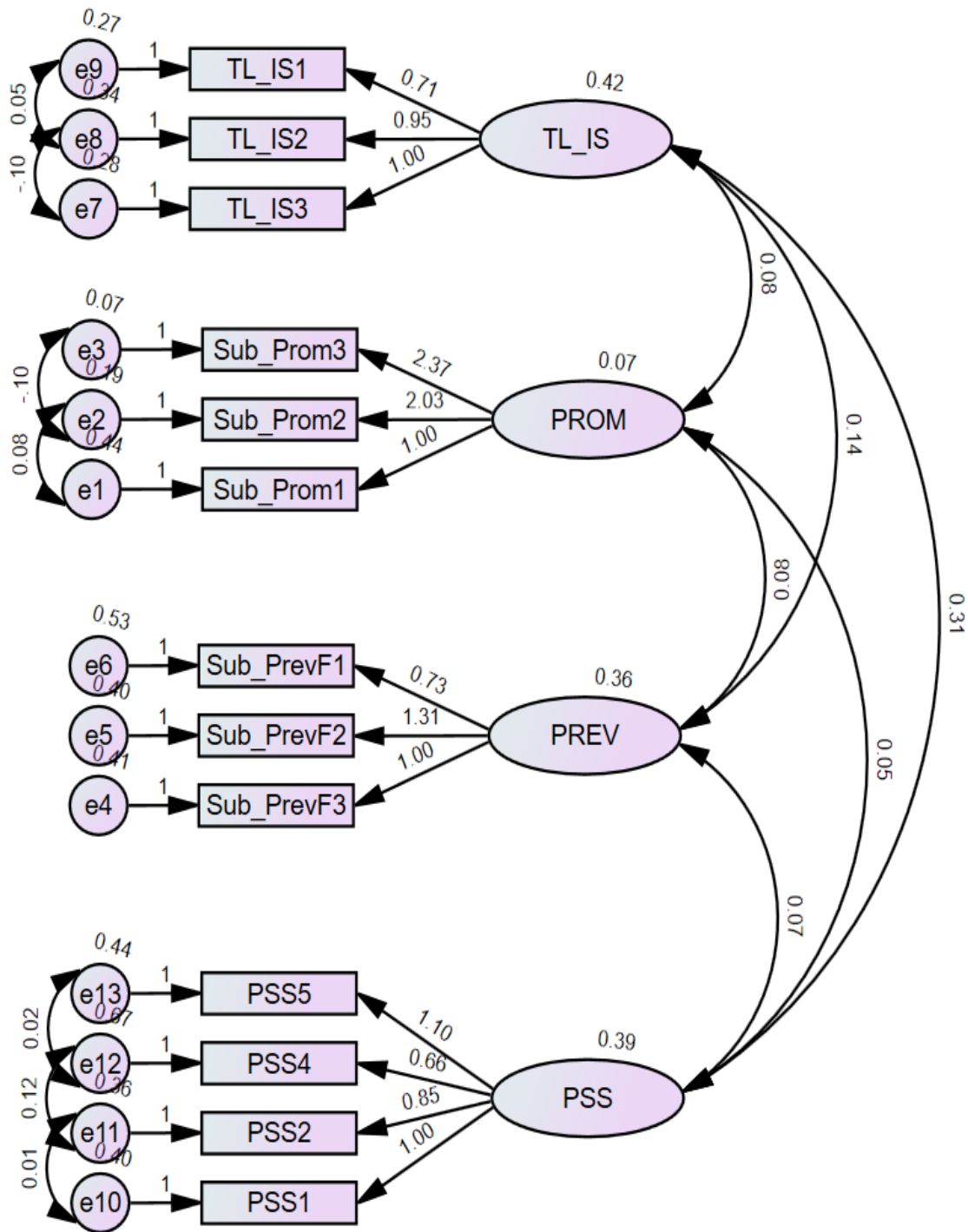


Figure 9: Measurement model from Amos.



As indicated in the Table 17 below the Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of the measurement model were found to be within the expected value of 0.9 and above.

Table 17: Fit Index for the Measurement Model

Model	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
	Delta1	rho1	Delta2	rho2	
Default model	0.89	0.835	0.963	0.942	0.961
Saturated model	1		1		1
Independence model	0	0	0	0	0

In addition, factor loadings between the items and the constructs they are intended to measure were found to be above 0.3 as is required. The results are shown in Table 18 below:

Table 18: Regression weights between items and constructs.

Item	Construct	Estimate
Sub_Prom1 <---	PROM	0.373
Sub_Prom2 <---	PROM	0.78
Sub_Prom3 <---	PROM	0.922
Sub_PrevF3 <---	PREV	0.682
Sub_PrevF2 <---	PREV	0.778
Sub_PrevF1 <---	PREV	0.515
TL_IS3 <---	A_TL_IS	0.773
TL_IS2 <---	A_TL_IS	0.727
TL_IS1 <---	A_TL_IS	0.662
PSS2 <---	A_PSS	0.703
PSS3 <---	A_PSS	0.663
PSS4 <---	A_PSS	0.724

This showed that the factor structure is well-fitting an indicator that the observed variables appropriately represent underlying constructs and that the model proposed satisfactorily represents the relationships among the variables.

## 5.6 Structural Equation Modelling – Direct Effects

Once satisfactory reliability and validity were achieved, the theory represented by the conceptual model was created in AMOS and evaluated by introducing regression paths between the variables progressively. A path was introduced for the direct path between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. The results are demonstrated below indicating the existence of direct effects between the two variables. The green box in Figure 10 represents the significant path with a P value less than 0.05.

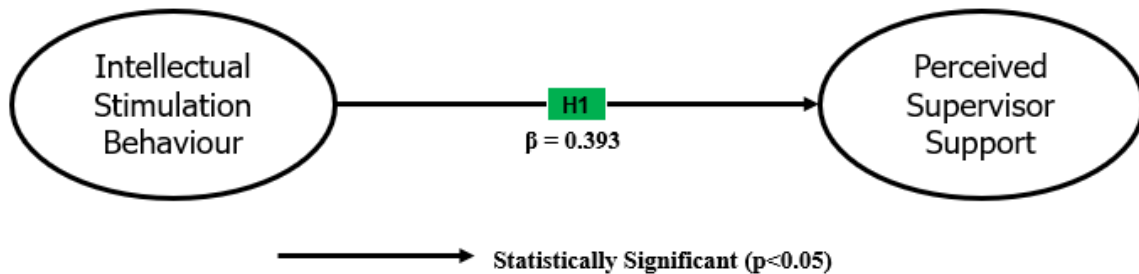


Figure 10: Outcome of the structural model for hypothesis H1

Table 19: Regression weights for the structural model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PSS	<---	Intellectual Stimulation	0.393	0.109	3.605	***

## 5.7 Structural Equation Modelling – Indirect Effects

The direct path between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support was then removed and the structural model was evaluated through the stepwise introduction of the promotion focus and prevention focus and evaluating the goodness of fit. The desired minimum discrepancy per degree of freedom (**CMIN/DF**) is less than 3. The indicated model indicates a CMIN/DF of 2.169 which is within the desired range indicating a good fit between the hypothesised model and the data as depicted in Table 17 below.

Table 20: Goodness of fit for the structural model

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	57	288.526	133	0	2.169
Saturated model	190	0	0		
Independence model	19	995.264	171	0	5.82

**Regression weights** from running the Structural Model are as below.

Table 21: Regression weights for the structural model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PREV	<---	Intellectual Stimulation	0.405	0.117	3.446	***
PROM	<---	Intellectual Stimulation	0.349	0.086	4.058	***
PSS	<---	Gender Difference	-0.169	0.077	-2.181	0.029
PSS	<---	Tribal & Ethnic differences	-0.285	0.063	-4.502	***
PSS	<---	PROM	0.388	0.139	2.792	0.005
PSS	<---	PREV	-0.015	0.075	-0.198	0.843
PSS	<---	Age Difference	0.013	0.032	0.406	0.685
PSS	<---	Time With Supervisor	-0.068	0.151	-0.451	0.652
PSS	<---	Supervisor Ability	0.65	0.073	8.945	***
PSS	<---	Supervisor Rank	0.212	0.097	2.193	0.028

Of the relationships between the main study variables as indicated by the four hypothesized relationships namely H2a, H2b, H3a and H3b, all but one hypothesis was not significant. This was hypothesis H3b which is the relationship between prevention focus orientation and perceived supervisor support. From Figure 11 below, the green boxes represent the significant paths while the red ones represent those with a P-value more than 0.05 rendering them insignificant.

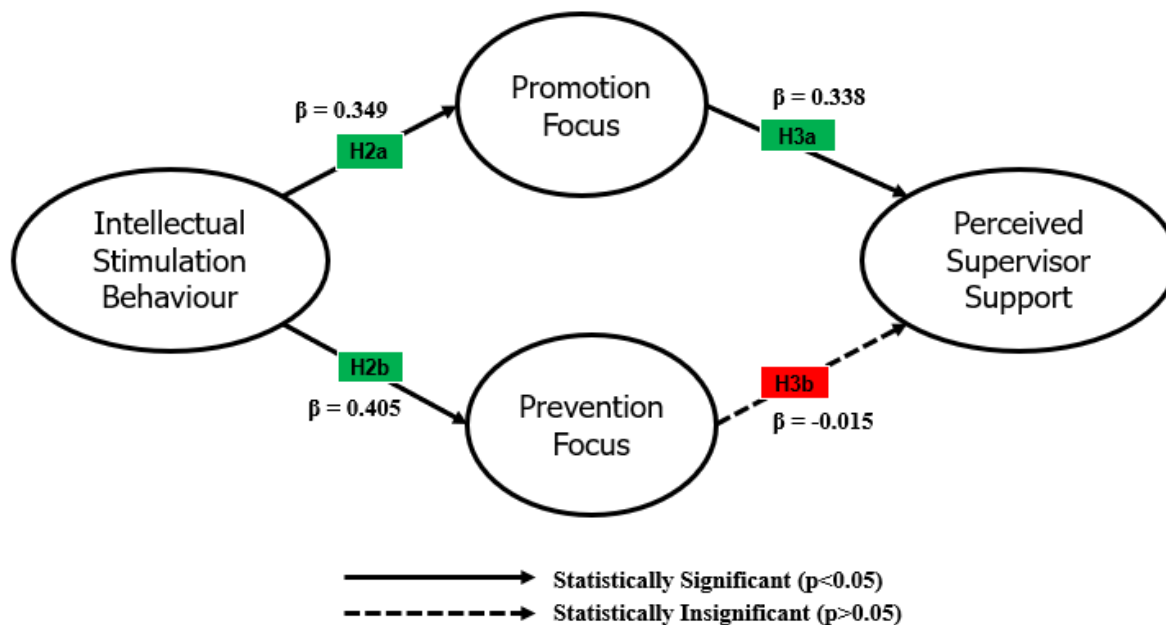


Figure 11: Structural model outcomes for hypotheses H2a, H2b, H3a and H3b

## 5.8 Structural Equation Modelling – Mediation Effects

The structural model in section 5.7 was then enhanced by adding a path between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support to test the direct and indirect effects simultaneously. The indirect path through promotion focus is represented by the interaction H2a\*H3a while that through prevention focus is represented by H2b\*H3b while the direct path is represented by H1.

Consequently, the direct and indirect effects between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support were evaluated as shown in Figure 12 to determine the simultaneous existence of both indirect and direct effects. Using SEM, the relationships were evaluated simultaneously resulting in the evidence of the existence of only a direct effect between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. The green boxes represent the significant paths while the red ones represent those with a P value of more than 0.05 rendering them insignificant.

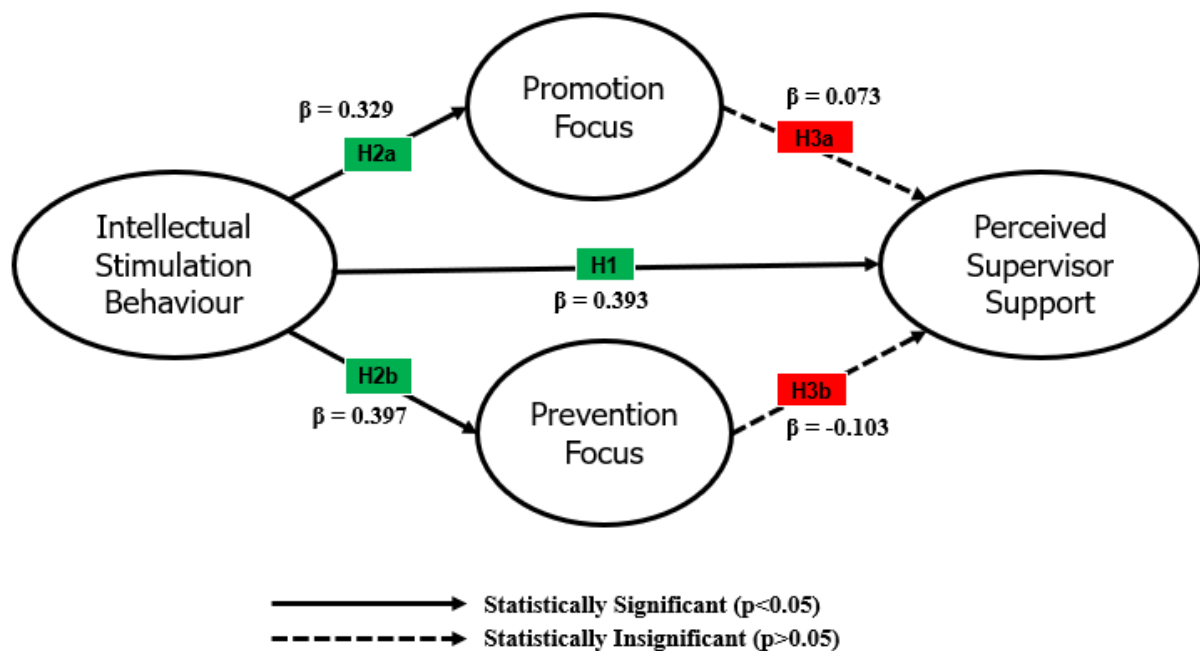


Figure 12: Outcomes of the structural model for hypothesis H2a\*H3a and H2b\*H3b

Table 22: Regression weights for the structural model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PREV	<---	Intellectual Stimulation	0.397	0.114	3.488	***
PROM	<---	Intellectual Stimulation	0.329	0.083	3.981	***
PSS	<---	Intellectual Stimulation	0.393	0.109	3.605	***
PSS	<---	PROM	0.073	0.143	0.507	0.612
PSS	<---	PREV	-0.103	0.081	-1.272	0.203

Based on the classification guide provided by Zhao et al., (2010) as shown in Figure 12 below for a three variable causal model (which includes intellectual stimulation as the independent variable X, promotion focus as the mediator M and perceived supervisor support as the dependent variable Y), a direct-only mediation does exist between the three. When all paths in the model in Figure 11 are evaluated simultaneously, (H2a x H3a) which is equivalent to (a x b) in Figure 12 below is found to be insignificant. Subsequently, since the path between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support which is equivalent to path c in Figure 12 is found to be significant then a direct-only (non-mediation) exists between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. This is illustrated by the red arrow in the mediation classification guide in Figure 12 below.

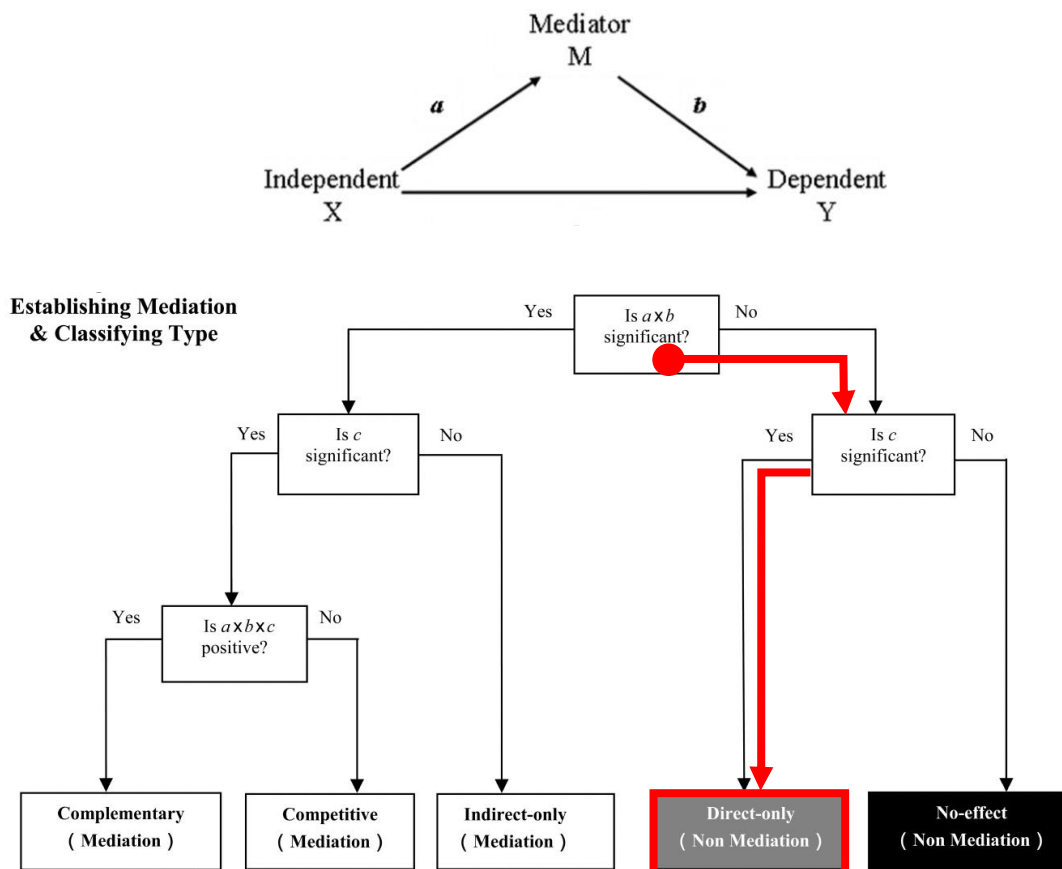


Figure 13: Mediation classification guide for a three variable causal model

## 5.9 Summary of main findings

This section presents a summary of the findings based on the two investigated scenarios. The first scenario is depicted by Figure 10 which shows the anticipated effects when there are no direct effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support (Exclusion of H1). In such a case, only promotion focus orientation has a direct effect on perceived supervisor support. The effect is such that the higher the promotion focus orientation the higher the perceived supervisor support. On the other hand, prevention focus does not have a direct effect on perceived supervisor support. In addition, intellectual stimulation offered by the supervisor will affect both the subordinate's promotion and prevention focus orientation. This implies that the supervisor can influence both orientations, leading to an increase in both promotion and prevention orientation when intellectual stimulation is increased. The second scenario is depicted by Figure 11 which shows the anticipated effects when there are both direct and indirect effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support (Inclusion of H1). In such a case, both promotions focus orientation and prevention focus orientation do not have an effect on perceived supervisor support.

The results also show that of the dyadic differences between the supervisor and the subordinate controlled for, only dyadic differences in ethnical, tribal as well as gender differences have a significant effect on the relationships being evaluated. In addition, of the individual attributes only supervisor rank and supervisor ability have an effect on the relationships evaluated. Table 20 below shows a summary of the outcomes of the various research questions.

Table 23: Summary of main findings

Research Question	Hypothesis	Main Finding	Outcome
RQ1: What is the direct effect of a supervisor's intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support?	H1: The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour, the higher the perceived supervisor support	Supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour demonstrates a statistically significant and positive relationship on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative.	Supported
RQ2: What is the effect of a supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour on the subordinates' promotion and prevention focus orientation?	H2a: The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour the higher the subordinates' promotion focus orientation.	Supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour has a statistically significant and positive relationship on subordinates' promotion focus	Supported

	H2b: The higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour the higher the subordinates' prevention focus orientation.	Supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour has a statistically significant and positive relationship on subordinates' prevention focus	Supported
RQ3: What is the effect of subordinates' promotion and prevention focus orientation on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?	H3a: The higher the employees' promotion focus, the higher their perceived supervisor support during change initiatives	Employee's promotion focus has a statistically significant and positive relationship on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Supported
	H3b: The higher the employees' prevention focus, the higher their perceived supervisor support during change initiatives	Employee's prevention focus has no effect on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Not supported
RQ4: What is the indirect effect of a supervisor's intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support when mediated by the subordinate's regulatory orientation during a change initiative?	H2a x H3a: The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is mediated by promotion focus such that the indirect effect is expected to be significant and positive	Supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour only demonstrates a direct only (non-mediation effect) on perceived supervisor support.	Not Supported
	H2b x H3b: The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is mediated by prevention focus such that the indirect effect is expected to be significant and negative.	Supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour only demonstrates a direct only (non-mediation effect) on perceived supervisor support.	Not Supported

Table 21 below shows a summary of the outcomes of the control variables.

Table 24: Summary of the control variables findings

<b>Nature of Control Variable</b>	<b>Control Variable</b>	<b>Main Finding</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Dyadic Differences	Ethical and tribal differences	Perceived ethnic and tribal influences between supervisor and subordinate have a statistically significant and negative relationship on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Supported
	Gender differences	Dyadic differences in gender between supervisor and subordinate have a statistically significant and positive relationship on their perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Supported
	Age difference	Dyadic differences in age between the supervisor and subordinate have no effect on the subordinate's perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Not Supported
Individual attributes	Supervisor rank	A supervisor's rank has an effect on the subordinate's perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Supported
	Supervisor ability	A supervisor's ability has an effect on the subordinate's perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Supported
	Service duration	The subordinate's service duration has no effect on the subordinate's perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Not Supported
	Time with the Supervisor	The subordinate's time with the supervisor has no effect on the subordinate's perceived supervisor support during a change initiative	Not Supported



## **5.10 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the empirical results of the study. The demographic profile of respondents was presented, followed by a reference to the descriptive statistics in Appendix C. This was followed by a discussion of the distribution of data. The results of CB-SEM analysis that tested replications and hypotheses, including the hypothesised mediation relationships, were then presented. The chapter concluded with Tables 19 and 20 that summarised the outcomes of each replication and hypothesis developed for the study as related to each of the study's research questions. The key results are that the higher the employees' promotion focus the higher their perceived supervisor support, and the higher the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour the higher the subordinate's promotion focus orientation, prevention focus orientation and the perceived supervisor support. Chapter 6 provides an in-depth discussion of the study's results.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion of study findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this research was to investigate the mediating role of subordinates' regulatory focus orientation on the relationship between supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour and perceived supervisor support during a change initiative. This chapter discusses the main findings of the hypotheses formulated for the study as presented in Tables 19 and 20. The chapter commences with a discussion of the assessment of reliability and validity of the measurement scales used in the study. The findings for the hypotheses of promotion, prevention focus and intellectual stimulation as antecedents of perceived supervisor support during a change initiative are then discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings related to the anticipated mediating relationships in the conceptual model. Throughout the chapter, the discussion focuses on interpreting the findings in relation to existing literature and previous studies.

### **6.2 Proposed relationships between constructs**

Five hypotheses and seven control variables were tested (section 5.8). Table 19 indicates that the four hypothesis and four control variables were supported while the other one hypothesis and three control variables were not supported. The following sub-sections provide insights into the results of the tested relationships, compare findings to other studies where appropriate, and explain the results in the context of the study.

#### ***6.2.1 The direct effect of intellectual stimulation on Perceived Supervisor Support***

The effect of intellectual stimulation on the perceived supervisor support was expected to be significant and positive (section 3.3.1). This expectation was confirmed by the results of the evaluation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and positive relationship does exist between the intellectual stimulation provided by the supervisor and the perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = 0.393$ ,  $t = 3.605$ ,  $p = ***$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). H1 was therefore supported. As per previous studies (Johnson et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2007), this confirmed the findings that higher intellectual stimulation inspires subordinates to have higher perceived supervisor support.

Intellectual stimulation behaviour, as observed in this study, involves challenging subordinates to think creatively and encouraging them to explore new ways of performing their tasks. This behaviour aligns with the notion that supervisors who engage in intellectual stimulation can

motivate their subordinates to exceed expectations, fostering a climate of innovation and growth during times of change (Hoch et al., 2018). The positive correlation between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support indicates that when supervisors promote creativity, allow questioning of assumptions, and provide opportunities for learning, subordinates tend to feel supported in their professional endeavours.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of emotional, instrumental, and career support in enhancing perceived supervisor support. Emotional support, involving active listening and understanding, along with instrumental support, which includes providing necessary resources and removing obstacles, contributes to subordinates' sense of being valued and supported (Chen et al., 2016; Hoppe et al., 2017). Similarly, career support, encompassing exposure to challenging assignments and recognition of efforts, fosters a belief that the supervisor genuinely cares about the subordinates' long-term development and success (Škerlavaj et al., 2014).

The relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is further reinforced through the concept of fair and constructive conflict resolution. When supervisors encourage different perspectives and challenge assumptions, conflicts can be resolved more effectively, thereby enhancing emotional support and trust among subordinates (Swanberg et al., 2011). Intellectual stimulation not only aids in conflict resolution but also promotes a culture of open communication and shared insights, leading to a broader thinking frame that is crucial for addressing challenges constructively.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that intellectual stimulation instils a sense of empowerment and involvement among subordinates. By engaging subordinates in innovative and critical thinking, supervisors provide them with a platform to contribute meaningfully to the organisation's future. This engagement is shown to drive subordinates' effectiveness and attentiveness, leading to increased interest in organisational goals and change initiatives (Tepper et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the confirmed hypothesis, as supported by the findings, establishes a strong connection between intellectual stimulation behaviour exhibited by supervisors and the perceived level of support from subordinates. Intellectual stimulation enhances subordinates' creative thinking, problem-solving abilities, and overall engagement, leading to a greater sense of support and empowerment. The positive influence of intellectual stimulation on emotional, instrumental, and career support, as well as its role in conflict resolution, further underlines its significance in fostering a supportive supervisor-subordinate relationship. This

study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support, particularly in the context of change initiatives and organisational development.

### **6.2.2 The effect of intellectual stimulation on Promotion Focus**

The effect of intellectual stimulation on the promotion focus orientation was expected to be significant and positive (section 3.3.1). This expectation was confirmed by the results of the evaluation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and positive relationship does exist between the intellectual stimulation provided by the supervisor and the subordinates' promotion focus ( $\beta = 0.349$ ,  $t = 4.058$ ,  $p = ***$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). H2a was therefore supported.

Promotion orientation is generally associated with an inclination for change, open minded thinking accompanied by flexibility in behaviour which increases the ability of such individuals to be creative and adaptive (Petrou et al., 2020). Through intellectual stimulation, supervisors raise controversial and novel issues in the context of a change thereby stimulating the followers to challenge the status quo by taking intellectual risks and consequently being innovative (Xiaoxiao & Seth, 2015). Within an organisation, there may be many potential areas for initializing change some of which may not be very viable and hence intellectual stimulation by the supervisor provides a social cue to the promotion-oriented individual on the next potential area of spearheading a change initiative (Zhou et al., 2012).

Supervisors who demonstrate intellectual stimulation, therefore, expend effort as they identify and monitor environmental challenges and consequently encourage their subordinates to develop thoughtful and imaginative solutions (Tepper et al., 2018). Consequently, intellectual stimulation seeks to challenge the status quo during times of change, by encouraging subordinates to generate ideas to solve the problems at hand (Dust et al., 2014). In challenging the status quo to create a sense of urgency, supervisors can appeal to the needs that promotion-oriented subordinates seek to satisfy (Barbars, 2016). To enhance promotion orientation, the supervisor motivates the change by addressing the needs that pertain to growth and development. An example would be encouraging individuals to learn how to use a new technology since it will enhance their productivity enabling them to achieve their goals faster.

Such intellectual stimulation triggers promotion-oriented individuals to meet their ideal self as the change creates an opportunity for them to be at the forefront of leading the organisation in discovering the new way of doing things as well as showcasing the same indicating a sense

of intrinsic motivation. Individuals are more expressive of their nature when there is an environmental stimulus which could be in the form of a social cue that is in tandem with their nature (Heslin et al., 2019). During times of change, supervisors perceive the needs of the organisation and set expectations on their subordinates concerning the effort they require from them during such times. This pathway of motivation is referred to as the extrinsic motivation pathway whereby the expression of promotion-oriented behaviour entails creativity which is viewed by others as favourable in light of the change initiative. Moreover, for a promotion-oriented individual, the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are aligned with each other such that promotion-oriented individuals show high levels of independence thereby limiting the support they need to access resources that would be essential for them to discover a new way of doing things. Intellectual stimulation from the supervisor is an extrinsic cue that indicates that they are willing to support the promotion-oriented subordinates' intrinsic drive to achieve the change by providing the resources that would be needed in the process.

This research, therefore, extends the transformational leadership theory by showing the mechanisms by which one of the constructs, namely intellectual stimulation, works during times of change, by encouraging subordinates to generate ideas to solve the problems at hand (Dust et al., 2014). To stimulate subordinates in this way, supervisors can therefore appeal to needs that pertain to growth and development intending to create a sense of urgency among promotion focused subordinates. This further shows the agency role that the supervisors bear within the organisation (Gordon et al., 2019) and in particular in the context of a change initiative as they seek to influence their members to embrace the change.

### **6.2.3 The effect of intellectual stimulation on Prevention Focus**

The effect of intellectual stimulation on the prevention focus orientation was expected to be significant and positive (section 3.3.1). This expectation was confirmed by the results of the evaluation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and positive relationship does exist between the intellectual stimulation provided by the supervisor and the subordinates' prevention focus ( $\beta = 0.405$ ,  $t = 3.446$ ,  $p = ***$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). H2b was therefore supported.

Prevention focus individuals are generally associated with a distaste for change, and conservative thinking accompanied by inflexibility in behaviour which limits their ability to be creative and adaptive (Petrou et al., 2020). This is hinged on the premise that individuals with a strong orientation toward prevention focus invest extreme extra effort and energy to compensate for their inflexibility as they achieve adaptivity to creativity and change through

effortful cognitive processes which include generation and analysis of potential paths of action. Due to this, before prevention oriented employees adapt to changes they often need to understand the criticality of adapting and that it is expected of them (Petrou et al., 2015). Through intellectual stimulation, supervisors raise controversial and novel issues in the context of a change thereby stimulating the followers to challenge the status quo by taking intellectual risks and consequently being innovative (Xiaoxiao & Seth, 2015).

Prevention orientation is driven by an underlying motivation to identify and adhere to courses of action that would most probably eliminate negative outcomes (Petrou et al., 2015). Change initiatives are instigated at times to avert certain negative outcomes that would lead to undesirable consequences such as job loss. The possibility of negative outcomes presents an undesirable state for prevention-oriented individuals hence their desire to overcome such problems will be heightened by supervisors who highlight the same. Through intellectual stimulation, supervisors encourage their subordinates to avert the potential problem by challenging the current norms and thinking about solutions to the problems from a different perspective (Dong et al., 2017). This raises the sense of urgency resulting in discontent around why we do the things we do to such an extent that the current way of doing things appears to be inferior to the proposed way of doing things. This causes prevention-oriented individuals to increase their desire to overcome the negative outcomes.

When risky methods are the only workable options for inhibiting negative results, even people with high prevention orientation are willing to take risks (Petrou et al., 2020). However, prevention focused individuals are not particularly self-efficacious as they have a low belief in themselves to overcome the challenges and hence find themselves dependent on others in the form of guidance and information on how they can overcome the challenges (Petrou et al., 2018). When supervisors role model through intellectual stimulation behaviour, they provide the external voice and dependency that prevention-oriented subordinates need during such periods. This potentially reduces the anxiety that prevention-oriented individuals are prone to as they no longer feel alone in trying to overcome the possible negative outcomes making their desire to overcome the negative outcomes even stronger hence increased prevention orientation.

Since prevention focus employees are driven by their need to meet their obligations and hence guarantee their safety, they will be driven to action by seeking the safest route possible. Based on the intellectual stimulation provided by the supervisors we expect that they will possibly think of the easiest way to meet their new demands. Such an increase in adaptivity is anticipated to be shown by an increase in their prevention focus which comes from intellectual

stimulation that seeks to motivate them to think through the problems they are facing differently, hence solving the issues. Such an increase in prevention focus could be demonstrated in individuals who seek to reduce the demands of the task at hand by using shortcuts to discover a new way of achieving the end goal but requiring less effort cognitively (Petrou & Demerouti, 2015).

Unlike promotion-oriented individuals, prevention-oriented ones would not target to reach their ideal self which includes the hopes and aspirations of being role models but rather reach their ought to self by meeting their obligations and duties. This is in line with the findings of Petrou & Demerouti (2015) that indicate that creativity in prevention focus would be triggered through self-protection to reduce the demands of the change on the employee. Such an increase in the desire to reduce the demands of the new change amount to an increased prevention focus. The findings hence provide further evidence to an ongoing debate concerning the propensity of prevention focused individuals to change (Petrou et al., 2020).

This research, therefore, extends the transformational leadership theory by showing the mechanisms by which intellectual stimulation works among prevention-oriented subordinates during times of change, by encouraging them to trigger creativity through self-protection to reduce the demands of the change on them. To stimulate subordinates in this way, supervisors can therefore appeal to needs that pertain to safety and security to create a sense of urgency among prevention-oriented subordinates.

#### ***6.2.4 The relationship between promotion focus and perceived supervisor support***

The relationship between subordinates' promotion focus and perceived supervisor support was expected to be significant and positive (section 3.3.1). This expectation was confirmed by the results of the evaluation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and positive relationship exists between subordinates' promotion focus and perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = 0.388$ ,  $t = 2.792$ ,  $p=0.005$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). H1a was therefore supported.

The positive and statistically significant relationship between promotion focus orientation and perceived supervisor support is aligned with literature that indicates perceived supervisor support is enhanced when employees are provided with opportunities that meet their specific needs (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In line with the individual's regulatory focus, promotion focused subordinates seek opportunities to pursue their growth and development needs during change

initiatives. (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Wallace et al., 2016; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Since supervisors are viewed as agents of the organisation (Swanberg et al., 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2019), they will be perceived to offer opportunities for growth and development during times of change and hence promotion-oriented individuals will feel more supported by their supervisors.

This finding is expected in line with promotion-oriented individuals who approach goals by defying the status quo and taking the necessary risks which are presented during a change period (Smith et al., 2016). Promotion-oriented individuals have been noted to have a risky bias during change initiatives and hence are expected to approach their goals by taking risks actively (Smith et al., 2016). Whenever subordinates take risks they display their willingness to withstand mistakes and uncertainty as they explore new ideas, advocate for unpopular and unconventional positions as they tackle problems that could be extremely challenging without solutions that are obvious with the aim of increasing the possibility of accomplishment (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014). Such orientation originates from the belief that individuals have the ability to control events and hence engage in controllable risks whereby they can fix negative outcomes after they occur. During organisational directed change initiatives, the supervisors usually provide the cushion or insurance for undertaking such risks at the business level.

Organisational support theory argues that subordinates who are provided with support in the form of valued resources such as training or even better pay develop perceived supervisor support (Tafvelin et al., 2019; Tu et al., 2019). Based on the reciprocity norm such subordinates feel obligated to help the organisation to achieve its objectives as a way of payback to the organisation (Gordon et al., 2019). Subordinates with higher perceived supervisor support may trust their supervisors more since they believe they care about their well-being and value their contribution. Since subordinates consider the possibility of failing in the process of seeking to satisfy their urge to engage in risk-taking, they would hence attribute the care to a sense of understanding of the uncertainties involved.

Moreover, immediate supervisors act as resources at the interpersonal level (Škerlavaj et al., 2014) since, during change situations, supervisors need to encourage the generation of creative ideas as well as the provision of resources required to implement the ideas. To implement such ideas, promotion focused individuals need to devote their time and energy to engage in socio-political processes as they “sell” ideas to others in the organisation to implement them. At this point, based on the general views that subordinates have developed regarding the support they will receive from their supervisors, they expect them to provide approval and support for the ideas generated. Supervisors hence provide the needed political



support within the organisation by providing the sponsorship needed to navigate their ideas past resistance and other tensions that arise in the course of implementation.

In line with the norm of reciprocity, the findings reveal the exchange currencies that both the supervisor and the subordinate have at their disposal. The supervisor who is the change agent has the appropriate promotional oriented assets in the form of training, social support and rewards among others and a provision of the above resources to the subordinate will be perceived as a show of care and concern for their well-being. The subordinate will then reciprocate by way of investing extra energy and effort to achieve adaptivity to the change in the form of in-role and extra-role behaviours. This shows that promotion orientation presents a psychological state that acts as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations in the context of the supervisor-subordinate dyadic relationship.

This research, therefore, extends the organisational support theory which is underpinned by norms of reciprocity by showing how the perceived supervisor support varies based on subordinate's promotion orientation in the context of organisational change. The findings confirm that perceived supervisor support is not a one size fits all as it is subject to individuals' regulatory focus. The implications are that during a change initiative promotion oriented individuals are likely to feel that the supervisors care about their well-being and value their contribution. They would hence reciprocate the same through in-role and extra-role behaviours to adapt to the change. This shows that individuals' promotion orientation is a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations during a change initiative.

#### ***6.2.5 The relationship between prevention focus and perceived supervisor support***

The relationship between subordinates' prevention focus and perceived supervisor support was expected to be significant and negative (section 3.3.1). This expectation was not confirmed by the results of the evaluation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant relationship does not exist between subordinates' prevention focus and perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = -0.015$ ,  $t = -0.198$ ,  $p=0.843$  hence  $p > 0.05$ ). H1b was therefore not supported.

From previous literature on regulatory focus, prevention focused individuals seek to achieve the minimum obligations and duties when conducting their roles (Kark et al., 2015; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2015; Petrou et al., 2018; Wallace et al., 2016). In line with this, prevention focused individuals generally feel anxious or worried because they perceive that

they cannot measure up to the new tasks imposed by change initiatives (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Since supervisors are viewed as agents of the organisation (Swanberg et al., 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2019), supervisors will be perceived not to be meeting subordinate's social emotional needs of security whenever changes are introduced in the organisation. This implies that though prevention-oriented individuals' perceptions may be driven by favourable or unfavourable assessments of the support they receive which makes them decide how to engage, a process referred to as employee attributions within the Organisational support theory, the context of the change itself negates any queue that supervisors are supporting them in the first place (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This implies that as long as it is during a change period prevention-oriented subordinates will not feel supported by their supervisors at all hence the lack of support for the hypothesis.

Prevention oriented individuals have been noted to have a conservative bias during change initiatives and hence are expected to approach their goals by either avoiding risks actively or maintaining the status quo where they can (Smith et al., 2016). Change situations characterize situations of risk whereby the probability of success in the particular initiative is low presenting a high variation in the potential outcomes notwithstanding the likelihood of extreme loss (Chng & Wang, 2016). Since supervisors are considered agents of the organisation and by extension agents of change, for prevention oriented individuals and based on the psychological states that matter to them, supervisors are viewed by subordinates as the ones destabilizing the status quo that prevention oriented employees crave (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In line with the findings, it is expected that the prevention-oriented employees will not feel supported by their supervisors.

Prevention focused individuals set goals that are geared towards avoiding failure hence they act in conservative and vigilant ways (Wallace et al., 2016). While this attribute is beneficial as it promotes conscientious attention to detail, change initiatives increase the level of uncertainty making it relatively effortful and resource consuming for prevention-oriented individuals to carefully scrutinize and process the needed information both at the task and environment level to avoid failure (Petrou et al., 2020). This increased demand for effort is counterintuitive for prevention focused individuals who seek self-protection during change initiatives by reducing the demands of the change (Petrou & Demerouti, 2015). Such increased demand will therefore lead to lower perceived supervisor support during a change initiative.

Prevention oriented individuals are equally prone to worry and anxiety as such prevention orientation directs their attention to negative stimuli thereby triggering more negative emotions

such as agitation (Koopmann et al., 2016). Change initiatives increase the extent of risk and uncertainty hence escalating the possible perceived worry levels. Since regulating the negative affective experiences of worry and anxiety is quite taxing (Petrou et al., 2020), prevention focus individuals will tend to feel that the supervisors who are agents of the change do not care about their well-being in the face of a change initiative.

Organisation support theory allows the reciprocate supervisor-subordinate relationship to be evaluated from the perspective of the party receiving the support which in this case is the subordinate (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In line with the norm or reciprocity, the findings reveal that in the face of prevention-oriented subordinates, the resources provided by the supervisor are biased by the context of the change initiative. The supervisor is viewed as an agent of the organisation that demands that the prevention-oriented individuals invest extra energy and effort to achieve adaptivity to the change beyond their established roles and responsibilities. This shows that prevention orientation presents a psychological state that acts as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations in the context of the perceived supervisor support. This shows that while prevention-oriented individuals may adapt to a change initiative, such behaviour should be attributed to their need for security as opposed to reciprocation of support by their supervisor.

This research, therefore, extends the regulatory focus orientation and change literature by providing further evidence to an ongoing debate concerning the propensity of prevention focused individuals to change (Petrou et al., 2020). The findings show that prevention oriented individuals would be apathetic to the support offered by their supervisors which is a key belief that underlies individuals' motivation to change (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). The findings of this research hence seek to extend the debate beyond the wholesome view of propensity towards change but rather evaluate the mechanisms of this key belief that motivate individuals to change. Since principal support is a key motivation to change, subordinates being prevention-oriented potentially reduces their propensity to change.

#### ***6.2.6 The mediating effect of regulatory focus on the relationship between intellectual stimulation and Perceived supervisor support***

To test for mediation three sets of relationships were evaluated simultaneously as depicted by the promotion mediation path (H2a x H3a), the prevention mediation path (H2b x H3b) and the direct path H1.

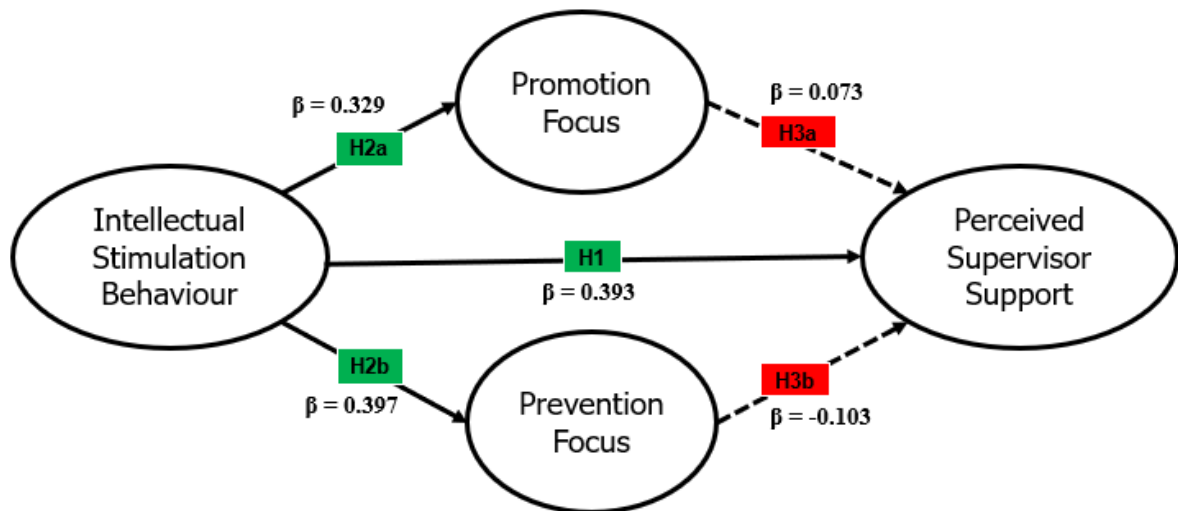


Figure 14: Results for Research Sub-question Four – Mediation effects model

In testing for mediation, the results show that of the three paths evaluated, there was a statistically significant and positive relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support (H1). However, the indirect effects (H2a x H3a) and (H2b x H3b) were found to be insignificant. Based on the mediation classification guide provided by Zhao et al., (2010) as shown in Figure 11 below, this indicated a direct only (non-mediation) relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support indicating the likelihood of omitted mediators in the conceptual framework.

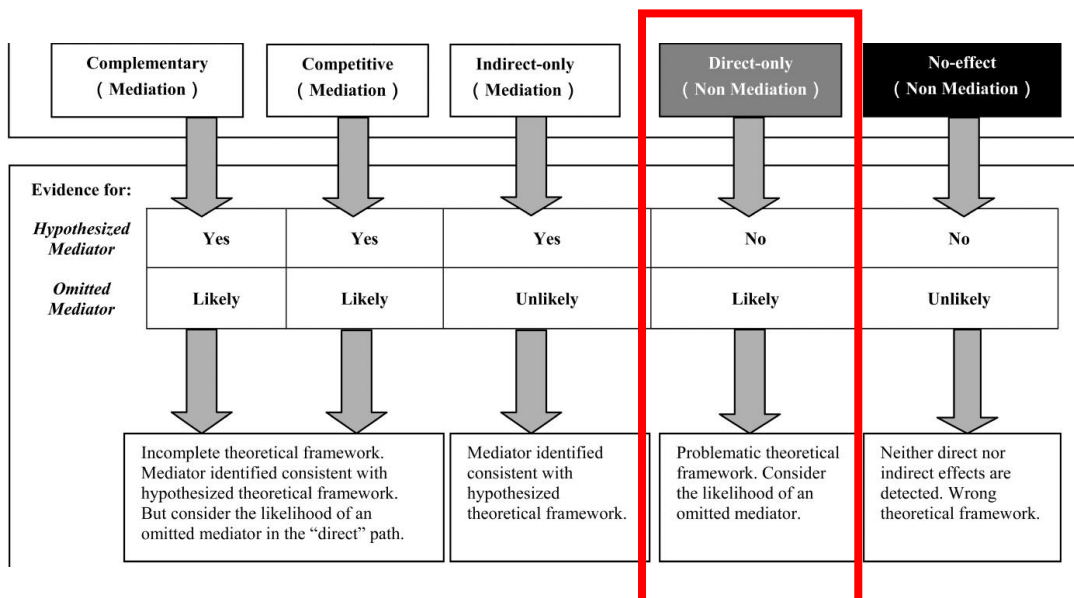


Figure 15: Mediation types and implications for theory

Diagram adapted from Zhao et al. (2010)

The above is in line with the identified limitations in section 4.12.2 that indicated difficulty in implying a causal relationship between variables. The implication for theory is that further research is needed to fully identify all possible mediators between the two variables. The current study hence only provides a starting point for an examination of the degree to which the antecedents are associated with perceived supervisor support and their effect on the same. For causal relationships to be investigated, future research needs to be done that integrates more antecedents of perceived supervisor support.

### ***6.2.6 The controlling effect of the dyadic differences in ethnicity and tribe***

The controlling effect of the supervisor-subordinate dyadic differences in ethnicity and tribe was expected to be significant and negative. This expectation was confirmed upon the estimation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and negative relationship does exist between the controlling effect of the supervisor-subordinate dyadic differences in ethnicity and tribe on the effect of subordinates' promotion focus and perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = -0.285$ ,  $t = -4.502$ ,  $p = ***$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). The controlling effect was therefore supported.

The findings are in line with previous research on supervisor and subordinate relations that have shown that demographic similarity is often associated with higher levels of perceived supervisor support and hence make a case for the inclusion of various demographic control variables such as ethnicity and gender (Bernerth et al., 2008; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2017). Similar to Kenya elections which are seen as moments of change whereby the electorate shows support for their candidates most of which happens along tribal lines (Miguel, 2004) such tribal oriented support is not only shown at the national level but also in the workplace. In addition, the higher the perceived difference and impact of the tribal and ethnic differences the lower the perceived supervisor support.

A key ground for stigmatization in the workplace is the visibility of the characteristics along which one will be discriminated against noting that ethnicity falls on the uncontrollable differences spectrum (Summers et al., 2018). Ethnicity has been identified as a surface level variable that is associated with negative effects on performance within a workgroup (Roth et al., 2019). Ethnicity is regarded as a source of bias especially when such information is available to other parties (Ali et al., 2017). In the Kenyan setting and the organisation under study, most individuals have tribal names that represent their ethnicity making tribal differences a visible characterization for stigmatization.

Ethnicity difference is considered to be a ground of stigmatization (Mikolon et al., 2016). Subordinates who are prone to stigmatization based on ethnicity may feel denied access to various resources which can be attributed to a lack of support. Such subordinates with different ethnicity are hence bound to perceive lower levels of support as stipulated by the findings. This aligns with the findings of the research that show that the higher the perceived difference and impact of the tribal and ethnic differences the lower the perceived supervisor support.

Tribal differences just like differences in political affiliations can be viewed to represent differences in attitudes, beliefs and values which lead to distrust and conflict between members of different in-groups (Roth et al., 2019). In addition, it is observed that where ethnical differences exist between the subordinates and the supervisors, the subordinates typically perceive the leadership of their supervisors to be less capable concerning performance owing to the biased evaluation of their leaders based on the subordinate's race (Hernandez et al., 2016).

The implication for theory is that future research on perceived supervisor support ought to consider including ethnic and tribal differences as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations in the context of a change initiative. This will result in a better understanding and explanation of the mechanisms of the dyadic relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate putting into consideration the ethnic and tribal effects. While this has been tested in the context of a developing country, future research should equally test its effect in developed countries.

### ***6.2.7 The controlling effect of the dyadic differences in gender***

The controlling effect of the supervisor-subordinate dyadic differences in gender was expected to be significant and negative. This expectation was confirmed upon the estimation of the structural model that showed the existence of a statistically significant and negative relationship. In the data coding during analysis, a lower value (0) was assigned to similar gender for both supervisor and subordinate while a higher value (1) was assigned where the respective genders were different. It was expected that where there was a gender difference, there should be lower perceived supervisor support. This expectation was confirmed by the results of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and negative relationship does exist on the controlling effect of the supervisor-subordinate dyadic differences in gender on the effect of subordinate's promotion focus and perceived supervisor

support ( $\beta = -0.169$ ,  $t = -2.181$ ,  $p=0.029$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). The controlling effect was therefore supported.

This is in line with the findings of research that sought to investigate the effects of the gender composition within the supervisor-subordinate dyad and how that affects leaders' perceived effectiveness (C. Douglas, 2012). The research demonstrated that there are stronger linkages between leadership and perceived effectiveness in same-gender dyads. Though beyond the scope of this research, the findings further showed that cross-gender dyads with males as leaders demonstrated a stronger linkage than those with female leaders. Future research should hence focus on the gender composition of the supervisor-subordinate dyads and analyse which of the female or male led dyads results in higher perceived supervisor support.

### **6.2.8 The controlling effect of the supervisor rank**

The controlling effect of the supervisor rank was expected to be significant and positive. This expectation was confirmed by the results of the evaluation of the structural model that showed that a statistically significant and positive relationship does exist on the controlling effect of the supervisor rank on the effect of subordinate's promotion focus and perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = 0.212$ ,  $t = 2.193$ ,  $p=0.028$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). The controlling effect was therefore confirmed.

A supervisor's rank relates to the hierarchical positioning within an organisation and is made salient through job titles and organisational charts such that the higher the supervisors' position the higher the prominence they are accorded (Djurdjevic et al., 2017). The study confirms that supervisors who are accorded a higher level of prominence such as those in the executive team as highlighted in the study are perceived to offer higher support levels in work related advice. Consequently, a supervisor's rank speaks to the perceived effectiveness as a role model since highly ranked supervisors attract more respect and prestige to such an extent that conformance to their behaviours is associated with higher rewards and benefits (Klotz et al., 2018). Based on this, subordinates can evaluate the support they would receive based on the rank of the supervisor such that the higher the rank the more power the supervisor has to initiate various changes to address the concerns of the subordinate and are hence perceived to be more supportive.

### **6.2.9 The controlling effect of the supervisor's ability**

While the controlling effect of the supervisor ability was expected to be significant and positive in all four hypotheses but only one hypothesis was found to be significant, namely H1. This expectation was confirmed by the results of the evaluation of hypothesis 1 (H1) structural model that showed that a statistically significant and positive relationship does exist on the controlling effect of the supervisor's ability on the effect of subordinate's promotion focus and perceived supervisor support ( $\beta = 0.65$ ,  $t = 8.945$ ,  $p = ***$  hence  $p < 0.05$ ). The controlling effect was therefore supported.

Ability is defined as "that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to influence within some specific domain" (Tomlinson et al., 2020, p. 538). When supervisors are perceived to have a high ability due to the skill they possess, they have a higher propensity to extend trust to the supervisor owing to the admirability of their capabilities (Lance Frazier et al., 2016). Consequently, in the supervisor-subordinate dyad, the supervisor's ability is regarded as the minimum threshold required for establishing cognitive based trust which constitutes the subordinate evaluating that the supervisor has the requisite ability needed for their interaction. This study confirms that subordinates need to assess their supervisors' ability as this is a requisite characteristic that is needed to establish if their supervisor is a favourable exchange partner (Holtz et al., 2020). This supports the findings that the higher the supervisor's ability the higher the perceived supervisor support.

## **6.3 Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the results of the study's conceptual model presented in Chapter 3 which constituted relationships among the study constructs. The findings supported the argument that individual differences in regulatory orientation do serve as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations between subordinates and supervisors in the context of change initiatives. Particularly, promotion orientation was found to have a significant and positive effect on perceived supervisor support. Owing to the norm of reciprocity, the results confirm that the more promotion focused employees are given opportunities for growth and development, the higher the obligation they will have to pay back such positive treatment received. Consequently, the supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour was found to have a significant and positive effect on both promotion and prevention focus. This confirms that during change initiatives employees of both orientations will seek ways of achieving their desired end states.

The organisation support theory is hence extended since promotion orientation as opposed to prevention orientation is introduced as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity norms



concerning the extent that subordinates feel supported by their supervisor during a change initiative. The research equally extends the transformational leadership theory by demonstrating that intellectual stimulation can lead to both increased promotion orientation and prevention orientation during a change initiative. In addition, this research provides further evidence to an ongoing debate on the propensity of prevention focused individuals to change (Petrou et al., 2020) indicating that influencing subordinates' prevention orientation does not affect their perceived supervisor support.

The chapter equally discussed the results of mediation analysis aimed at explaining the mechanism by which supervisors' intellectual stimulation influences perceived supervisor support. The findings supported the presence of direct effects only possibly suggesting the likelihood of omitted mediators in the conceptual framework. With regards to context, the study further contributes to the organisational support theory by spotlighting ethnical and tribal beliefs as a key aspect that would influence the subordinates' attributions of the support, they receive during a change initiative. The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

Perceived supervisor support is a key belief that underlies individuals' motivation to change and is defined as the extent to which employees perceive that their supervisor cares about their well-being and values their contributions. During change initiatives, supervisors are viewed as change agents of the organisation since they have a mandate to help subordinates overcome any challenges thereby motivating them to embrace the change. Organisations are continually faced with the need to carry out changes to adapt to pressures from the environment for them to survive (Wee & Taylor, 2018). Despite numerous initiatives undertaken to guarantee survival in a changing environment, there are examples from the literature indicating that many established firms are unsuccessful in their attempts to adjust to the changing environment (Hoppmann et al., 2019). One reason for failure is inadequate perceived supervisor support which is highlighted as a key belief that underlies individuals' motivation to adapt during a change initiative and consequently needs to be enhanced during such times (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019).

Despite supervisors' activities to provide support during change initiatives, such support provided by organisational leaders does not elicit the same response owing to individual differences and particularly individuals' regulatory focus orientation (Kark et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2018). However, there is little clarity on how perceived supervisor support works among individuals of different regulatory focus orientations which would in turn limit the effectiveness of change initiatives (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Owing to the influence that the supervisor has on the subordinate when the supervisor displays transformational leadership in the form of intellectual stimulation and its known impact on perceived supervisor support from previous studies (Zhou et al., 2012), the effect of such behaviour was included in the conducted research.

The research hence sought to address the research question "What is the mediating role of subordinates' regulatory focus orientation on the relationship between supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour and perceived supervisor support during a change initiative?" To bridge this gap, the researcher, therefore conducted an online cross-sectional survey study that investigated the role of regulatory focus differences in determining the perceived supervisor support during a planned change initiative. The study was conducted in the Kenyan setting which represents developing countries thereby providing a new context for examining the

mechanisms of perceived supervisor support, especially where ethnic and tribal effects were expected to affect the supervisor-subordinate relations.

## **7.2 Key findings of the research questions and study context.**

This section focuses on the findings and interpretations of the research.

### ***7.2.1 Findings of the research questions***

Inquiry into the interplay between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support, as well as its implications within organisational contexts, forms the foundation of the research investigation (RQ1). The study discloses that intellectual stimulation directly and positively influences perceived supervisor support, indicating that subordinates perceive higher support when supervisors stimulate creative thinking, challenge assumptions, and facilitate growth opportunities. These findings underscore the crucial role of intellectual stimulation in nurturing supportive supervisor-subordinate relationships and enhancing various dimensions of support, thereby contributing to a comprehensive sense of encouragement and value.

Furthermore, the study delves into the dynamic association between intellectual stimulation and regulatory focus orientations (RQ2). It reveals that intellectual stimulation serves as a catalyst to both promotion and prevention orientations, aligning with the diverse needs that these orientations seek to address during change initiatives. Specifically, intellectual stimulation fosters promotion orientation by emphasizing growth and developmental needs, whereas prevention orientation aligns with the security and protection imperative. This emphasizes the practicality of strategic intellectual support in enhancing perceived supervisor support, catering to the unique motivational requirements of subordinates.

Building upon these insights, the research explores the preference of regulatory orientations in relation to perceived supervisor support (RQ3). It demonstrates that a higher promotion orientation significantly correlates with heightened perceived supervisor support, highlighting the reciprocity norms and supportive behaviour within this context. In contrast, no conclusive evidence indicates such a correlation with prevention orientation, suggesting that support perception varies primarily with promotion orientation. As such, the study offers nuanced guidance for effective communication and leadership practices during change initiatives, emphasizing the importance of promoting a promotion-oriented outlook.

Finally, the mediating role of regulatory orientation on the connection between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support is explored (RQ4). The research showcases that intellectual stimulation surpasses individual regulatory orientations, becoming a potent factor in enhancing perceived support. In instances of low supervision, an individual's promotion orientation alone influences perceived support, while the inclusion of intellectual stimulation in leadership behaviour elevates the subordinate's support perception. This underscores the pivotal nature of intellectual stimulation in shaping perceived supervisor support, particularly in the presence of active leadership practices.

Collectively, these findings underscore the significance of intellectual stimulation in fostering supportive relationships between supervisors and subordinates during change initiatives. By catering to diverse regulatory orientations and promoting a promotion-oriented outlook, organisations can strategically enhance perceived supervisor support and, consequently, bolster the success of change initiatives.

### ***7.2.2 The relevance of the research setting***

A new control variable that was introduced for supervisor-subordinate dyads has to do with ethnicity and race. The research predicted that ethnicity and tribe would have a significant and negative effect on perceived supervisor support. The findings confirmed the predictions such that in the context of the African setting which can be applied to developing countries, tribe and ethnicity differences can't be overlooked when determining the level of perceived support from the supervisor. The higher the perception that the tribal and ethnic differences affect the relationship between the dyad, the lower the perceived support. Organisations should hence seek to reduce the impact of ethnic and tribal differences to better the perception of their subordinates towards their supervisors.

This study addresses the paucity of research in the Kenyan setting and at a broader level, countries in developing markets to facilitate the development of theory on how contextual factors may influence the relationships perceived supervisor support, subordinates' regulatory orientation and supervisors' intellectual stimulation behaviour during organisational change. Since the exchange rules used in various cultures may be different (Cheng et al., 2015), this study has revealed the essence of tribalism, ethnicity and race as a contextual factor that is significant in influencing the subordinate attributions of supervisor support.

On the other hand, contrary to the United States, which is a developed country and is where the perceived supervisor support scale was developed, exhibits low power distance and high

individualism (Rockstuhl et al., 2012), Kenya exhibits higher power distance and lower levels of individualism. These two culture components are comparable for several developing countries such as China, Mexico, Tanzania, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Pakistan as illustrated in Section 2.2.1 Figure 3. Though additional studies may be needed to generalise the findings to the entire country and subsequently other developing countries, this study makes a case for similar research in a similar context to validate the findings and thereby ensure generalisation.

## **7.3 Contributions of the study**

### ***7.3.1 Theoretical contributions***

This research is a response to calls by Kurtessis et al. (2017) for focused quantitative research on aspects that guide employee attributions of the support offered to them. The particular attribution under consideration is the role of individual differences with a particular focus on individuals' regulatory focus which is displayed in the form of promotion or prevention orientation. The study tested a model for the hypothesised relationships between individuals' promotion and prevention focus orientation and their perceived supervisor support.

This research extends the organisational support theory which is underpinned by norms of reciprocity by showing how the perceived supervisor support varies based on individual regulatory focus in the context of organisational change. The findings confirm that perceived supervisor support is not a one size fits all as it is subject to an individual's regulatory focus. The study theorised that individuals' regulatory focus orientation has a significant effect on the employees' perceived supervisor support (Chae et al., 2019; Gordon et al., 2019; Kark et al., 2015; Petrou et al., 2018) and confirmed this for promotion orientation as opposed to prevention orientation. In particular, the higher the individual's promotion orientation during a change initiative, the higher their perceived supervisor support.

Promotion-oriented individuals seek opportunities to pursue their growth and development needs during change initiatives. (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Wallace et al., 2016; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Owing to the norm of reciprocity, the more promotion focused employees are given opportunities for growth and development, the higher the obligation they will have to pay back such positive treatment received. Since supervisors are viewed as agents of the organisation, they are perceived to offer opportunities for growth and development during times of change. The research introduced individuals' regulatory focus as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations between subordinates and supervisors in the

context of change initiatives which Whetten et al. (2014) indicates that boundary conditions are valid contributions in research.

In addressing the role of subordinates' individual differences, it was critical to understand if the supervisor's leadership behaviour would influence the subordinate's promotion or prevention orientation. This addressed the question: what can the supervisor do to influence the subordinates' individual differences in the form or regulatory orientation? The study theorised that supervisors who exhibit intellectual stimulation behaviour have a significant effect on their subordinates' promotion and prevention orientation. The study model hypothesised the relationship between the supervisor's intellectual stimulation and the subordinate's promotion and prevention orientation. The relationship between intellectual stimulation and both promotion and prevention focus were found to be significant indicating the supervisor's intellectual stimulation is an antecedent to promotion and prevention focus orientation.

In addition, this research provides further evidence to an ongoing debate concerning the propensity of prevention focused individuals to change (Petrou et al., 2020). The research demonstrates the perception of prevention-oriented individuals towards one aspect of a change which is the perceived support expected. The findings show that prevention-oriented individuals would be apathetic to the support offered by their supervisors. While other researchers indicate that prevention-oriented individuals would be inclined toward a change it would be interesting to highlight what their perceptions would be towards the other key beliefs that underlie individuals' motivation to change namely discrepancy, appropriateness, efficacy and personal valence (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019). The findings of this research extend the debate beyond the holistic view of propensity towards change but rather evaluate each of the underlying key beliefs that motivate individuals to change. Since principal support is a key component of the change message, being apathetic to supervisor support, potentially reduces prevention-oriented individuals' propensity to change.

Finally, the construct of perceived supervisor support was developed in the United States and shows sensitivity to its geo-cultural context (Newman et al., 2012). This research contributed to the debate on the universality of reciprocity which underpins the organisational support theory has been questioned across different contexts of supervisor-subordinate relationships as well as various organisational and cultural settings (Shore et al., 2009). The Kenyan context introduced the aspect of a developing country, with low individualism but high power distance as well as having tribal and ethnic contextual factors that affect the supervisor-subordinate relations. This research demonstrated the validity of the perceived supervisor support scale in

this new context by demonstrating its composite reliability, and convergent and discriminant validity which is considered a valid methodological contribution (Bergh et al., 2022).

### ***7.3.2 Implications of the study for practice***

The finding that the relationship between promotion orientation and perceived supervisor support was found to be significant implies that perceived supervisory support is not a one size fits all. The study reveals that while promotion-oriented subordinates have a sense of intrinsic motivation to perceive that they are supported during a change initiative, their promotion focused counterparts need to be externally motivated through intellectual stimulation for them to perceive support by their supervisors during such times of change.

Leaders should hence seek to identify subordinates with high situational prevention orientation and seek ways of ensuring they are supported during a change initiative with an attempt of motivating their situational promotion orientation. Supervisors and leaders, in general, are encouraged to demonstrate intellectual stimulation behaviour during times of change. Such behaviour would therefore be reciprocated with higher levels of perceived support from their subordinates. Leaders who are perceived this way are more effective in driving and influencing change.

From the established direct relationship between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support, supervisors should be encouraged to display leadership behaviours that stimulate their subordinates intellectually. Firstly, leadership development programs should incorporate intellectual stimulation as a key training aspect the programs. This would encourage leaders to engage in thought-provoking discussions that challenge assumptions and foster creativity. Leaders would then incorporate such aspects in their coaching and feedback with their subordinates by tailoring challenging assignments through which subordinates can engage and demonstrate the new skills. To allow for such expression, supervisors ought to create an open communication that fosters an innovation culture characterised by idea generation and problem solving.

Based on the African context, the study revealed the role of tribal and ethnic dyadic differences between the supervisor and the subordinate. The study revealed that the higher the perceived effect of ethnic and tribal differences on the relationship between the supervisor and subordinate the lower the perceived support from a supervisor during times of change.

Therefore, such subordinates who are prone to stigmatization based on ethnicity may feel denied access to various resources which can be attributed to a lack of support.

When such ethnical and tribal differences are eminent, supervisors should seek to create and leverage organisational structures and norms such as creating hospitable diversity climates to minimize the effects of stigma-by-association (Hernandez et al., 2016). The biases demonstrated across tribes and ethnicity can be reduced by creating a superordinate identity that transcends all available tribal and ethnic identity groups. In Kenya for instance, there has been a desire to move from tribalism as was expressed in 'Tribe Kenya' civil society campaign which encouraged citizens to stop naming their ethnicity but rather respond as "Kenyan" when asked, "What tribe are you" (Balaton-Chrimes, 2021).

At the organisational level, this may include developing an organisational excellence identity to which employees ascribe. Acknowledging and rewarding such employees who achieve high standards of success would motivate individuals to subscribe to the new identity thereby minimizing the effects of such tribal and ethnic differences and in turn, result in higher perceived supervisor support and consequently higher acceptance of change initiatives. In addition, organisations should incorporate diversity awareness in the form of gender and ethnicity differences issues in various leadership and development programs. Leaders should be sensitized on how to be aware of such factors and provide guidelines on how to be inclusive as well as the appropriate ways to respond to such concerns.

#### **7.4 Limitations of the study**

The research was carried out in a single organisation operating in the water and energy sector in Kenya. Mantere et al., (2012) however stipulate that having respondents from a single organisation imposes limitations on generalizability calling for further research in contexts beyond that of the included institution for transferability to be assured. The results of the conducted research provided a case for the need for more research across multiple organisations to confirm the findings.

Longitudinal research designs are suited for research focusing on change implementations as they allow for the before and affect effects of the change in the organisation as well as the evolution of the employee attitudes and opinions taking place to be analysed (Phillips, 2017). Due to time limitations, however, a cross-sectional survey was carried but to mitigate these limitations the survey was carried out soon after the change period.



The study was conducted in a cultural context that is unique with regards to power distance and individualism. Kenya has a relatively high power distance compared to the United States and other countries with a similar cultural profile where the scale was developed, but on the contrary, much lower levels of individualism as presented in the global culture survey (Swayampakala et al., 2017). Since perceived supervisor support is anticipated to vary with respect to the geo-cultural context the findings may not be generalised to cultures of low power distance and high levels of individualism.

The concept of perceived supervisor support was originally formulated in the United States and has been observed to be influenced by the specific cultural and geographical context in which it is applied (Newman et al., 2012). In this study, we establish the applicability and reliability of the perceived supervisor support scale within this new context. This is achieved through an examination of its composite reliability, as well as its capacity to exhibit both convergent and discriminant validity. However, the study was conducted in a single organisation limiting the sample size as well as context variability. In addition, the study design employed a self-reported correlational design hence common method bias concern. This further limited the generalisability of this research as well as the ability to make a valid methodological contribution.

Finally, this study can't support assumptions based on causal relationships between intellectual stimulation, employee regulatory focus and perceived supervisor support. The conducted study only provided a starting point for an examination of the degree to which the antecedents are associated with perceived supervisor support and their effect on the same. For causal relationships to be investigated, future research needs to be done that integrates more antecedents of perceived supervisor support.

## **7.5 Recommendations for future research**

From the evaluation of the direct and indirect effects of intellectual stimulation on perceived supervisor support based on individuals' promotion orientation, an opportunity for future research was evaluated for the promotion-oriented individuals. Independently, a significant relationship does exist between intellectual stimulation and promotion orientation as well as between promotion orientation and perceived supervisor support before controlling for the direct effect. However, a direct only, non-mediation effect is found between intellectual stimulation and perceived supervisor support. Section 6.2.6 indicates the likelihood of an omitted mediator. Future research should hence evaluate what the missing mediators could

be to develop a complete theoretical framework. Further to this, future research should use experimental designs to investigate causality between the various variables.

Intellectual stimulation which is one of the four key constructs of transformational leadership is significant in influencing the supervisor's perceived supervisor support by working through the subordinate's regulatory orientation. The study hence highlights the role of supervisors in influencing their subordinates regulatory focus orientation indicating that by displaying intellectual stimulation behaviour they can enhance both promotion and prevention focus orientation. However, from the study, it shows that supervisors who intend to enhance their subordinate's perceived supervisor support should target enhancing their subordinate's promotion focus hinting for the need for regulatory fit between the change message and regulatory orientation of the subordinate. Future research should hence focus on how supervisors should frame the change message and subsequently lead to higher perceived supervisor support.

The conducted research only evaluated the gender variation within the supervisor-subordinate dyad in the form of similarity or difference. Previous research has shown variations in the dyad linkages based on the subordinate gender (Douglas, 2012). The research demonstrated that same-sex dyads with males as leaders demonstrated a stronger linkage than those with female leaders. Future research should hence focus on the gender composition of the supervisor-subordinate dyads and analyse which of the female or male led dyads would result in higher perceived supervisor support.

The findings of this research demonstrated the effect of tribal and ethnic differences on perceived supervisor support during a change initiative. In addition, previous literature has indicated the need to create and leverage on organisational structures and norms such as creating hospitable diversity climates to minimize on the effects of stigma-by-association (Hernandez et al., 2016) when such ethnical and tribal differences are eminent. Future research should focus on how such initiatives to reduce the effects of racial and ethnic differences by overcoming social identification processes which propel in-group favouritism affect perceived supervisor support (Hernandez et al., 2016).

In addition, the conducted research only considered the perception of one of the five underlying motivations to change namely principal support. Future researchers should investigate the perceptions would be towards the other key beliefs that underlie individuals' motivation to change namely discrepancy, appropriateness, efficacy, and personal valence

based on individuals' regulatory orientation. This would highlight the underlying mechanisms by which prevention and promotion-oriented individuals would support a change initiative.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

In the face of global and local disruptions, organisations must consistently ensure they adapt to their environments to ensure their survival. Organisations will hence be faced with an increasing need to initiate change initiatives to guarantee their survival. Organisations must work through supervisors at all levels since the latter are viewed as change agents of the organisation. To understand how perceived supervisor support works, the conducted research used the organisational support theory as its theoretical lens. Previous research on individual differences has revealed that individuals' response to change will vary based on their regulatory orientation in the form of promotion or prevention orientation indicating that supervisor support during an organisational change will not elicit the same responses from all employees. This research sought to investigate the mechanisms of perceived supervisor support given the subordinate's promotion and prevention orientation and the supervisor's intellectual stimulation behaviour.

The findings of the research confirmed individual differences in the form of regulatory focus as an antecedent of perceived supervisor support. Contributions of the study include guiding supervisors on the appropriate regulatory orientation to inspire during a change initiative to enhance perceived supervisor support, the preferred orientation being that of promotion focus. In addition, the study provides guidance on the supervisor's role in inspiring promotion orientation through intellectual stimulation behaviour thereby providing guidance on the appropriate content of the change message that ought to be provided in creating a sense of urgency. The study shows that to enhance perceived supervisor support, the change message should address growth and development needs to enhance subordinate's promotion focus orientation as opposed to their prevention focus orientation. Finally, to fully investigate the mechanisms of supervisor support, the study advocates that future research should investigate the possible missing mediators and subsequently develop a complete theoretical framework. The study hence introduces regulatory focus as a boundary condition that governs reciprocity relations in the form of perceived supervisor support during a change initiative.

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Section: Control variables

#### **Subordinate service duration**

How long have you been in service in the organisation?

Number of year(s) [Drop down field from 0 to 50]

Number of month(s) [Drop down field from 0 to 12]

#### **Supervisor Subordinate Relationship Duration**

Did your supervisor change for the larger part of the change period between November 2020 to Date?

i) Yes ii) No

#### **[Branching based on the above]**

**[If Yes]** Was the supervisor who you were directly under for the larger part of the Change Period a part of the top management team (Executive Team)?

i) Yes ii) No

**[If No]** Is your direct supervisor a part of the top management team (Executive Team)?

i) Yes ii) No

#### **Dyad Tenure: Duration of time with the current supervisor**

How long have you reported to the supervisor you referred to in the previous question?

Number of year(s) [Drop down field from 0 to 25]

Number of month(s) [Drop down field from 0 to 12]

#### **Supervisor rank**

Is your direct supervisor a part of the top management team?

i) Yes ii) No

#### **Supervisor ethnicity**

Are there any tribal or ethnic differences between you and the supervisor you referred to in the previous questions?

i) Yes ii) No

To what extent do you feel tribal or ethnic differences affect the relationship between you and the supervisor?

A great deal	A lot	A moderate amount	A little	Not at all
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#### **Subordinate Supervisor gender difference**

Select your gender below?

i) Male ii) Female

Select your supervisor's gender below?

i) Male ii) Female

**Subordinate Supervisor age difference**

In your view, what is the age difference between you and the supervisor referred to in previous questions??

I'm the same age as my supervisor	I'm older than my supervisor	I'm younger than my supervisor	I have no idea of my supervisor's age
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What is the approximate age difference between you and the supervisor referred to in the previous questions?

Number of year(s) [Drop down field from 0 to 30 and Above]

Number of month(s) [Drop down field from 0 to 12]

**Supervisor ability items**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ability of the supervisor referred to above?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The supervisor is very capable of performing his job.					
The supervisor is known to be UNSUCCESSFUL at the things he tries to do.					
The supervisor has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done.					

**3<sup>rd</sup> Section: A - Regulatory focus items of the subordinate**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your motivation or drive?

<b>Promotion focus items</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A chance to grow is an important factor for me when looking for a job					
I DO NOT focus on accomplishing job tasks that will further my advancement					
My work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what I aspire to be					

<b>Prevention focus items</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Job security IS NOT an important factor for me in any job search					
I focus my attention on avoiding failure at work					
I am very careful to avoid exposing myself to potential losses at work					

**3<sup>rd</sup> Section: B - Regulatory focus items of the supervisor**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the motivation and drive of the supervisor referred to above?

<b>Promotion focus items</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
A chance to grow is an important factor for the supervisor when taking on projects					
The supervisor DOES NOT focus on accomplishing job tasks that will further his advancement					
The supervisor's work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what he aspires to be					

<b>Prevention focus items</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Job security IS NOT an important factor for the					

supervisor when taking on projects					
The supervisor focuses his attention on avoiding failure at work					
The supervisor is very careful to avoid exposing himself/herself to potential losses at work					

**4<sup>th</sup> Section: Perceived supervisor support items**

**Perceived Supervisor Support:**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the supervisor referred to above:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The supervisor strongly considers my goals.					
The supervisor NEVER considers my					
The supervisor would forgive an honest mistake on my part.					
The supervisor DISREGARDS my best interests when he/she makes decisions that affect me.					
The supervisor is willing to extend himself/herself to help in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.					

**5<sup>th</sup> Section: Supervisor Transformational Leadership scale items**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the type of leadership displayed by the supervisor referred to above.

<b>Intellectual stimulation items</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The supervisor enables others to think about old problems in new ways					
The supervisor DOES NOT provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things					
The supervisor gets others to rethink ideas that they have never modelled before.					

## **Appendix 2: Pilot Study Report**

### ***1. Rationale for performing the pilot study***

A three-week pilot study was conducted as one of the important stages of the planned research project. The main objectives of the pilot study were to assess the feasibility of the study and design a research protocol that is realistic and workable in order to achieve the purpose of the study. The pilot study tested the efficiency of the research design and methodology by identifying potential problem areas or deficiencies that might have a negative impact on the validity of the study. This included determining the appropriateness of the selected research procedures and identifying practical modifications in the procedures so that the procedures would be implemented as desired.

Besides testing the research procedures, the pilot study also identified the effectiveness of the measurement instrument that will be used to collect the data. Problems associated with the design and use of the measurement instrument were identified and corrected to ready it for use in the main study. The main objective of the pilot study was to.

There were ten specific objectives for conducting the pilot study. These include:

- i. Identify logistical problems which might occur when using the research design.
- ii. Assess the likely success of the proposed recruitment strategy that will be used for identifying the study potential respondents.
- iii. Establish the effectiveness of the proposed sampling technique.
- iv. Test the procedure for ethical considerations.
- v. Use and further develop the data collection instrument to maximise its internal validity.
- vi. Test the construct validity and internal reliability of the two existing measurement scales that will be used.
- vii. Test the method that will be used for data collection.
- viii. Determine the response rate, completion rate and estimate realistic time for completing the questionnaire.
- ix. Collect and analyse preliminary data to assess the effectiveness of the proposed data analysis tests for examining the relationship between the study constructs.
- x. Test the adequacy of the data analysis instrument.

### ***2. Methods***

A three-week online survey pilot study was conducted among 25 respondents of which 17 responded. The respondents were selected through stratified sampling to ensure they were

representative of the control variable criteria such as supervisor seniority and the working duration with the respective supervisor as well as across various outlets of the organisation under study. The criteria and procedures that were used in that pilot study were carried out as outlined in the research proposal. This was meant to assess the validity of the criteria and procedures that will be applied in the main study, so that their adequacy and effectiveness could be determined. They included all the aspects of research such as the method of data collection, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations. In the subsequent sections the various objectives of the pilot study are addressed.

### **3. Results**

This section covers the observations made on the research criteria and procedures from the pilot study. It also discusses solutions that will be adopted to address problematic areas or deficiencies were identified in the research criteria or procedures. The solutions discussed here were trialed during the pilot study to validate their effectiveness. Moreover, this section reports information on the primary and secondary outcomes, such as the descriptive statistics for the pilot study sample, the reliability alpha scores for the two existing scales that will be used in the study, and preliminary results on the relationships in the study’s conceptual model. The discussion is categories according to the different aspects of research.

#### **3.1 Research design**

##### **Objective 1: Identify logistical problems which might occur when using the research design.**

The research design for the study is an online cross-sectional survey with closed ended questions. An electronic questionnaire was developed on SurveyMonkey which provided various capabilities as well as limitations.

##### **3.1.1 Inconsistent responses**

An inconsistency was identified, in that a respondent indicated there was no ethical difference between them and their supervisor yet indicated that their ethical difference impacted on their supervisor relations to a moderate amount.

Table 25: Supervisor ethical difference and Impact of ethical difference

Variable Coding	Questionnaire question
CV_SUPERV_ET HICAL_DIFF	Is there any ethnic or tribal difference between you and the supervisor you referred to in the previous questions?



CV_SUPERV_ETHICAL IMPACT	To what extent do you feel ethnic differences affect the relationship between you and the supervisor?
--------------------------	---

SN	CV_SUPERV_ETHICAL_DIFF	CV_SUPERV_ETHICAL_IMPACT
1	No	None at all
2	No	None at all
3	No	A moderate amount
4	No	None at all
5	Yes	None at all
6	No	None at all
7	No	None at all
8	No	None at all
9	Yes	None at all
10	No	None at all
11	No	None at all
12	Yes	None at all
13	Yes	None at all
14	Yes	None at all
15	Yes	A little
16	Yes	None at all
17	No	None at all

On evaluation, there was a convergent validity issue from the two questions since the first makes a reference to both ethnic and tribal differences while the subsequent question makes reference to only the ethnic differences. The subsequent question will hence be modified to include both ethnic and tribal differences aspects. Convergent validity issues will be flagged where respondents indicate no ethnic or tribal differences, yet in the subsequent question indicate their relationship is impacted by the same to some extent.

### 3.1.2 Reverse coding checks

On evaluation of the responses, it was noted that there were some respondents whose responses were the same for two questions expected to have some variability. The questions on Supervisor promotion regulatory focus (SP\_PROM\_F1) and supervisor prevention regulatory focus (SP\_PREV\_F1) had no reverse coded items. For the respondent's serial number (SN) 6, 14, 15 and 16 who all selected Strongly agree as indicated below it was difficult to tell if the respondent thought through the questionnaire.

Table 26: Supervisor Promotion and Prevention focus responses.

SN	SP PROM F1	SP PROM F2	SP PROM F3	SP PREV F1	SP PREV F2	SP PREV F3
10	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
9	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
17	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree
1	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree
5	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
13	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
6	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
14	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
15	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
16	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
4	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree
2	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Agree
12	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
3	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
8	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

However, respondent SN 16 responded “Strongly Agree” on all items except for one reverse coded question where the respondent state “Strongly Disagree”. This was a good check meaning; more reverse coded items should be included to check the consistency of the responses.

Table 27: Reverse coded question response (PSS3)

SN	SA1	SA2	SA3	SB_PROM	SB_PROM	SB_PROM	SB_PREV	SB_PREV	SB_PREV	TL_IS_1	TL_IS_2	TL_IS_3	TL_IM_1	TL_IM_2	TL_IM_3	PSS1	PSS2	PSS3	PSS4		
1	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Disagree	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	
2	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agr	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	
3	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	
4	Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Ag	Agree	Strongly Ag	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	
5	Strongly Disagr	Strongly Dis	Strongly Dis	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Ag	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	
6	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	
7	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	
8	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	
9	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	
10	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Agree	
11	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	
12	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	
13	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agr	Agree	Agree	Strongly Ag	Agree	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Ag	Neutral	Agree	
14	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	
15	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Strongly Ag	Strongly Agree	Neutral	
16	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
17	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Strongly Agr	Neutral	Strongly Agr	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Disagree	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Ag	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	

### 3.2 Sampling Strategy

#### Objective 2: Assess the likely success of the proposed recruitment strategy that will be used for identifying the study potential respondents.

Stratified sampling was used to identify respondents across various regions in the country and ensuring a mix of those who report to top level management as well as those whose supervisors and middle and lower-level managers.

#### 3.2.1 Changes in supervisor during the change period

A response from one of the supervisors was insightful as it revealed that subordinates may have changed supervisors during the change initiative. For this reason, the survey ought to guide the respondents on the appropriate supervisor to have in mind in their responses. This ought to be the supervisor who they largely served under between the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 up to date. The said supervisor would be more appropriate to make reference to.

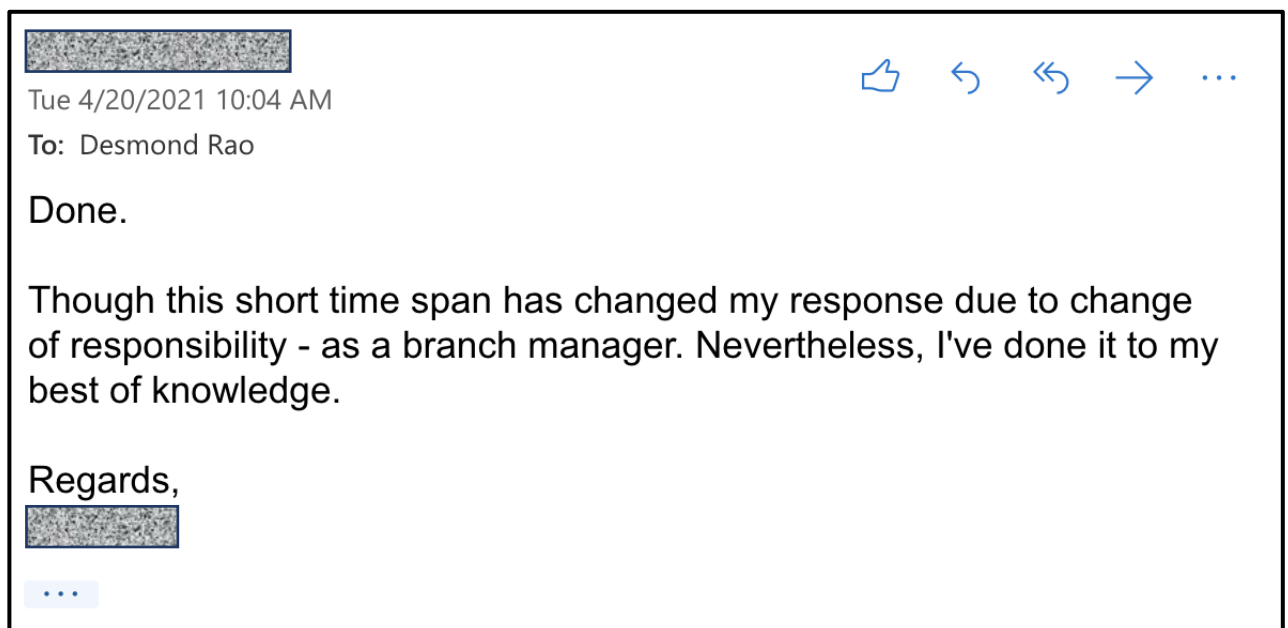



Figure 16: Email feedback response from a participant


The researcher proposes to change the supervisor related questions as below. Firstly, introduce a screening question and depending on the selected answer appropriate branching will be activated.

\* 3. Has your supervisor changed for the period between 1st December 2020 to Date?  0

Yes

No


If Yes

\* 4. Was the supervisor who you were directly under for the larger part of the Change Period (1st Dec 2020 to Date) a part of the top management team (Executive Team)?  0

Yes

No

If No


\* 5. Is your direct supervisor a part of the top management team (Executive Team)?  0

Yes

No

Figure 17: Proposed revised question on the subordinate's supervisor rank.

Subsequent questions will then refer to that particular supervisor.

\* 6. How long have you reported to the supervisor you worked under for the larger part of the change period?  0

<input type="radio"/> Less than 3 Months	<input type="radio"/> Between 6 - 10 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 3 - 6 Months	<input type="radio"/> Between 11 - 15 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 7 - 12 Months	<input type="radio"/> Between 16 - 20 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 1 - 2 Years	<input type="radio"/> Between 21 - 25 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 2 - 5 Years	<input type="radio"/> Over 25 Years

Figure 18: Revised questions making reference to the anticipated supervisor.

### 3.2.2 Variability of responses

The question on the impact of ethnic and tribal differences did not yield much variability as demonstrated below. This could be attributed to the fact that the wording of the question missed out the tribal aspect and only making reference to the ethnic differences.

Table 28: Variability of the ethnic effect responses

<b>Ethnic Impact</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
A little	1
A moderate amount	1
None at all	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

The question will be revised to indicate both ethnic and tribal differences as follows:

Table 29: Ethnic question rewarded.

Initial question	Is there any ethnic difference between you and the supervisor you referred to in the previous questions?
Revised question	Are there any ethnic or tribal differences between you and the supervisor you referred to in the previous questions?

For the questions that assessed issues of time period, there was little variability seen in the responses. This could be improved by reducing the lumped groups and having a drop down with multiple options.

Table 30: Variability of the responses on time period

<b>Time over which a respondent reported to supervisor</b>	<b>Difference in age between a supervisor and a subordinate</b>																														
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Reporting Duration</b></th> <th><b>No. of Responses</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Between 1 - 2 Years</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 2 - 5 Years</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 6 - 10 Years</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 7 - 12 Months</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than 3 Months</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>17</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Reporting Duration</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	Between 1 - 2 Years	1	Between 2 - 5 Years	10	Between 6 - 10 Years	2	Between 7 - 12 Months	3	Less than 3 Months	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Age Difference</b></th> <th><b>No. of Responses</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Between 11 - 15 Years</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 16 - 20 Years</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 2 - 3 Years</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 4 - 5 Years</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 6 - 10 Years</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Within 1 Year</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>17</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Age Difference</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	Between 11 - 15 Years	1	Between 16 - 20 Years	3	Between 2 - 3 Years	1	Between 4 - 5 Years	1	Between 6 - 10 Years	9	Within 1 Year	2	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>
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Within 1 Year	2																														
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>																														

The initial question format posed limitations in terms of allowing for as many possible responses without taking too much space on the questionnaire body.

\* 7. How long have you reported to the supervisor you referred to in the previous question? 🗨️ 0

<input type="radio"/> Less than 3 Months	<input type="radio"/> Between 6 - 10 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 3 - 6 Months	<input type="radio"/> Between 11 - 15 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 7 - 12 Months	<input type="radio"/> Between 16 - 20 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 1 - 2 Years	<input type="radio"/> Between 21 - 25 Years
<input type="radio"/> Between 2 - 5 Years	<input type="radio"/> Over 25 Years

Figure 19: Initial format for questions with time duration as responses

The questions responses format will be revised to utilise a drop-down which allows for more responses. This will allow for clustering to be done in the analysis stage based on the observed variability.

12. What is the approximate age difference between you and the supervisor referred to in the previous questions?

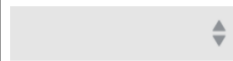


Figure 20: Revised format for questions with time duration responses

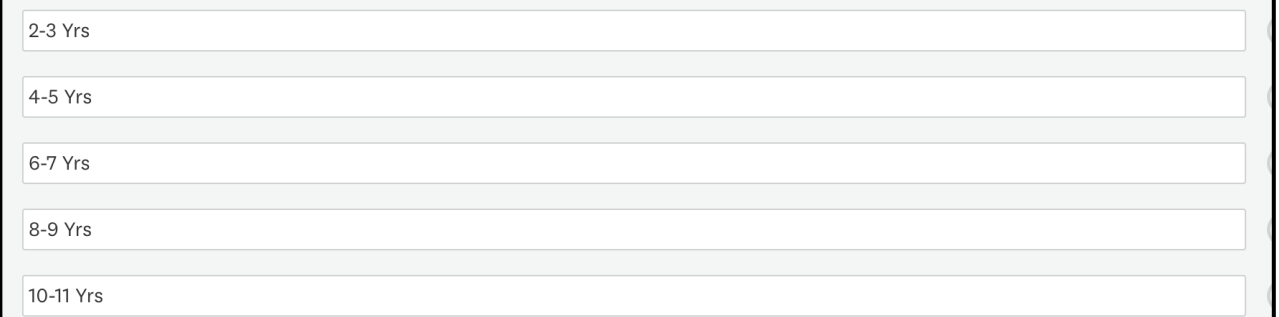


Figure 21: Broken down responses for questions with time duration responses.

### **Objective 3: Establish the effectiveness of the proposed sampling technique.**

The actual study will target the entire population. However, for the pilot study we needed a sample that was representative of various departments and respondents across the country. The respondents were hence selected using a disproportionate stratified sampling.

The researcher did target to obtain 20 valid responses for the pilot study to facilitate the running of various statistical test however, only 17 responses were obtained. Such a low sample size was not meant for establishing the statistical power but to assess the study feasibility.

### ***3.3 Ethical considerations***

Objective 4: Test the procedure for ethical considerations.

All respondents of the pilot study gave informed consent to participate. To protect their privacy of they were not asked to write their names on the questionnaire. The parameters for the data collection instrument were set such that the respondents' emails would not appear on the codebook.



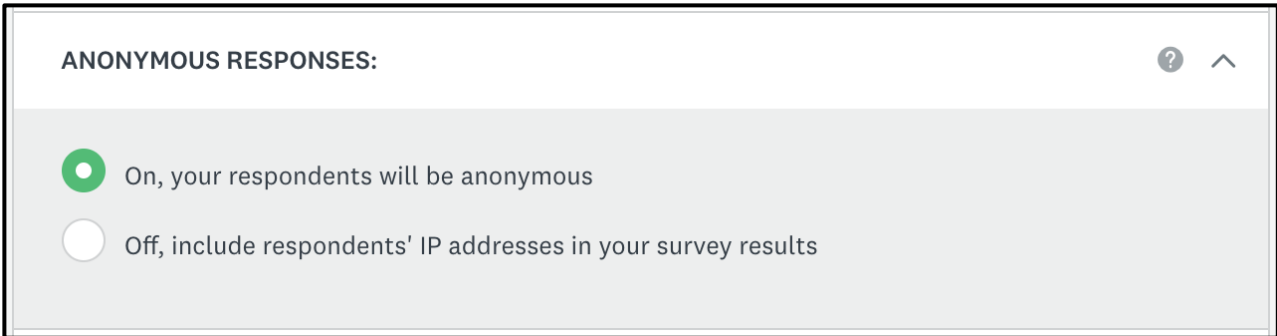


Figure 22: Anonymous setting on the questionnaire

The respondent IDs were generated by the system as indicated below.

Table 31: Random respondent IDs assigned by survey monkey.

Respondent ID	How long have you been in	Is your direct supervisor
	Response	Response
12589607523	Between 2 - 5 Years	No
12589046397	Between 2 - 5 Years	No
12589043951	Between 6 - 10 Years	No
12589026359	Between 6 - 10 Years	Yes
12586835547	Between 2 - 5 Years	Yes
12586725331	Between 2 - 5 Years	No
12586708593	Between 6 - 10 Years	No
12586644293	Between 6 - 10 Years	Yes
12586639121	Between 2 - 5 Years	Yes
12586632767	Between 6 - 10 Years	No
12586568182	Between 11 - 15 Years	Yes
12585854266	Between 6 - 10 Years	No
12585794876	Between 6 - 10 Years	No
12585790992	Between 6 - 10 Years	No
12585788860	Between 2 - 5 Years	No
12585763479	Between 2 - 5 Years	No
12585744926	Between 2 - 5 Years	No

**3.4 Instruments for data collection and measures**

Objective 5: Develop and modify the data collection instrument to maximise its internal validity.

There were five measures that were evaluated in the particular survey namely perceived supervisor support (PSS), supervisor ability, promotion regulatory focus, prevention regulatory focus and transformational leadership. To evaluate their internal validity Cronbach's alpha was evaluated for each construct as follows.

### 3.4.1 Internal validity of perceived supervisor support (PSS)

PSS attained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.735 which is within the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

Table 32: Cronbach's alpha for perceived supervisor support

Reliability Statistics					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items			
.735	.751	4			

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PSS1	11.94	3.809	.668	.490	.591
PSS2	11.71	5.096	.381	.214	.747
PSS3	12.24	3.066	.566	.348	.687
PSS4	11.59	4.632	.597	.438	.657

### 3.4.2 Internal validity of Supervisor ability (SA)

SA attained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.735 which is within the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

Table 33: Cronbach's alpha for supervisor ability

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.964	.964	3

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SA1	8.47	4.890	.882	.798	.977
SA2	8.59	4.382	.930	.914	.943
SA3	8.47	4.390	.963	.937	.918

### 3.4.2 Internal validity of Subordinate Promotion Focus (SB\_PROM\_F)

SB\_PROM\_F attained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.759 which is within the acceptable threshold of 0.7.



Table 34: Cronbach's alpha for subordinate promotion Focus

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items			
.759	.797	3			

<b>Item–Total Statistics</b>					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item–Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SB_PROM_F1	8.35	2.118	.643	.479	.674
SB_PROM_F2	9.06	1.309	.562	.317	.798
SB_PROM_F3	8.82	1.779	.675	.515	.595

### 3.4.3 Internal validity of Subordinate Prevention Focus (SB\_PREV\_F)

SB\_PREV\_F attained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.788 which is within the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

Table 35: Cronbach's alpha for subordinate prevention focus

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items			
.788	.780	3			

<b>Item–Total Statistics</b>					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item–Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SB_PREV_F1	8.41	2.882	.397	.185	.923
SB_PREV_F2	9.06	1.309	.786	.738	.528
SB_PREV_F3	8.76	1.316	.848	.758	.436

### 3.4.4 Internal validity of Supervisor Intellectual Stimulation (IS)

SB\_PREV\_F attained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.833 which is within the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

Table 36: Cronbach's alpha for supervisor transformational leadership

Reliability Statistics					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items		N of Items		
.833	.849		6		

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TL_IS_1	20.41	9.382	.698	.817	.789
TL_IS_2	20.35	9.243	.692	.789	.789
TL_IS_3	20.41	8.257	.788	.771	.764
TL_IM_1	20.59	10.382	.277	.743	.884
TL_IM_2	20.29	9.971	.688	.774	.796
TL_IM_3	20.29	9.346	.635	.756	.800

From the evaluation, all the scales have a Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 thereby indicating the internal validity for each of the constructs.

## 3.5 Procedures

Objective 7: Test the method proposed for data collection.

The questionnaire was administered to pilot study respondents in the same way as proposed for the research. The pilot study questionnaire was electronic and self-administered.

### 3.5.1 Method of collecting the surveys

While survey monkey allows for collection of responses in a way that respondents can be tracked in terms of participation but keeping their responses anonymous the pilot study revealed that the email method was not effective in the particular organisation. This comes from a restriction imposed on office 365 email service which the organisation under study uses. As demonstrated below, no email responses were received using the email invitation. The researcher later on realized that the emails were not being delivered to the respondents thereby reverting to the use of the web link which was effective in collecting the 17 responses.

Survey Collectors		BUY TARGETED RESPONSES	ADD NEW COLLECTOR
NICKNAME	STATUS	RESPONSES	DATE MODIFIED
<a href="#">Web Link 3</a> <small>Created 4/19/2021</small>	OPEN	17	Tuesday, April 20, 2021 11:23 AM
<a href="#">Email Invitation 3</a> <small>Created 4/18/2021</small>	OPEN	0	Sunday, April 18, 2021 3:17 PM

Figure 23: Responses obtained from the survey collectors.

### 3.5.2 Correspondence with respondents

Despite the email restrictions, the researcher’s email was used to send out the survey so as to accommodate any desired correspondence as indicated below correspondence to be by email as will be demonstrated below.

**From:** Desmond Rao  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 7:47 AM  
**Subject:** Request to participate in a School Based Research

Hello,

I am conducting a research which is a core part of my PhD studies. You have been selected to be part of the pilot study. I would really appreciate your input.

I hereby request **10 minutes of your time** to fill in the linked questionnaire that consists of 13 questions. Kindly click the link below to start the survey.

[Click Here to Access the Survey](#)

Regards,  
 Desmond Rao

Figure 24: Email invite for the respondents to participate in the survey.

### 3.5.3 Use of links for informed consent portion

From the initial questionnaire the entire informed consent portion was included which made the introduction extremely long. Survey Monkey Analytics recommended reducing the length of the portion. To curb this a high-level summary was included in the introductory section and links included to the documents. The section was as below:

This is a research project being conducted by **Desmond Tutu Rao**, a staff at Davis & Shirtliff. The research focuses on the **ERP 2020 project** which was initiated in December 2020 and constituted the introduction of a number of new D&S IT systems including the ERP system, CRM, HRMIS among others. This survey seeks to **evaluate the support you received from your supervisor during the transition from the old to the new way of doing things.**

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a member of staff at Davis & Shirtliff Ltd. [Click on this link to view consent obtained from the company management](#) to conduct this research in the organisation. The survey is **voluntary and anonymous**, details of which can be assessed on [this link which provides the respondents informed consent guidelines](#).

The survey contains **14 questions** that will take **approximately 10 minutes** to fill. Clicking on the "Agree" button below indicates that:

- You have read the respondent informed consent
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You are at least 18 years of age

OK

Figure 25: Survey introductory section with links to the informed consent documents

It was evident that the respondents used the link to access the document as there were a number of requests to access the file. Later on, the permissions on the file were changed to allow for open access.

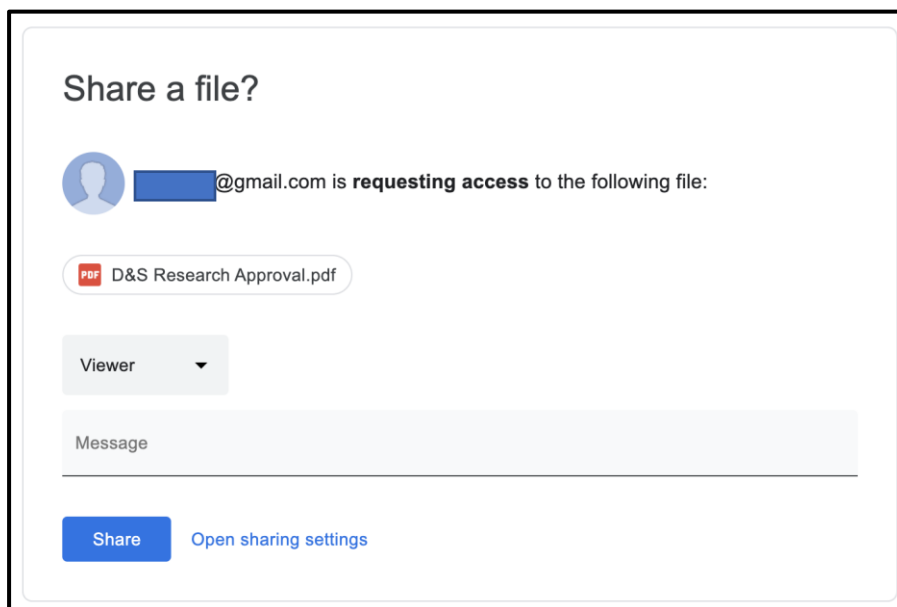


Figure 26: Request for access to the consent documents.

This showed that having a separate detailed informed consent from the questionnaire meant to collect research data is an equally effective method and guarantees a higher response rate as indicated by survey monkey. Once the correction of granting unrestricted access to the

consent documents was done this was incorporated in the communication feedback as shown below:

**Subject:** Re: Request to participate in a School Based Research

Good morning,

Thank you very much for taking the time to review the survey for those who were able. I got some valuable feedback yesterday that some people could not access the linked documents. This has since been fixed.

For those who have completed the survey, I'm sincerely grateful. For those yet to, this is a **polite reminder and a kind request to participate**. Some good news, I noted that most people **can fill it in 7 minutes**.

Kindly click the link below to start the survey.

[Click Here to Access the Survey](#)

Since the **survey is anonymous and voluntary**, you can respond to me on email so that I do not include you in subsequent reminders.

Regards,  
Desmond Rao

Figure 27: Email invite indicating open access to the consent documents.

#### 3.5.4 Reminders to respondents to complete the survey.

Emails were used to remind the participants to fill in the survey. Due to the anonymity of the survey and email restrictions imposed by the organisational email, it was not possible to send targeted reminders. To ensure those who had filled or opted out were not constantly sent the reminders, a statement was added on the email to allow them to opt out. Subsequently emails will be sent out to all apart from those who opt out.

Reminders:

Hello,

I trust you are well and had a restful Easter season.

Thank you so far for being a part of the initial respondents, we have **only 9 more responses to go**. This is a polite reminder.

[Click Here to Access the Survey](#)

In case you do not want me to send you any subsequent reminders kindly let me know by responding to this email.

Regards,  
Desmond Rao

Figure 28: Email reminder with an option to opt out.

#### 3.5.4 Thank you message on survey completion.

After completing the questionnaire, the system generated an automatic thank you message which was displayed to respondents as the final page of the survey.

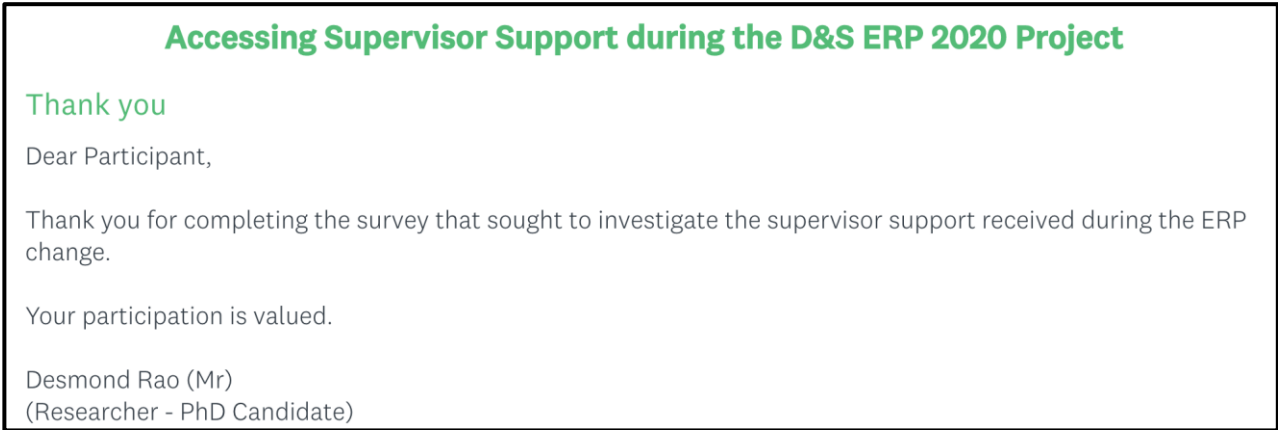


Figure 29: Thank you message generated on survey completion.

**3.5.5 Completion rate and time**

Of the 26 invited to participate in the survey 19 responded with 17 completing the survey. The completion rate of 74% indicates that a total of about 23 respondents clicked on the survey link. Going by the completion rate and considering the targeted population of 525 staff we anticipate that about 388 respondents will at least click on the survey link. The respondents took an average of 7min and 41 seconds which means the anticipated 10 minutes completion time is realistic.

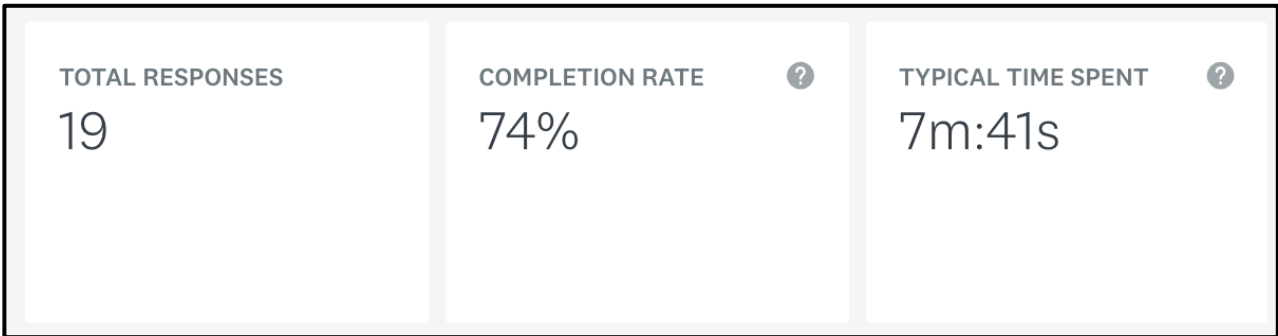


Figure 30: Completion statistics from Survey Monkey.

**3.6 Data analysis**

The descriptive statistical analysis for two control variables was done namely the service years (CV\_SERV\_YRS) and the age difference (CV\_SUPERV\_AGE\_DIFF) between the supervisor and the subordinate. As expected for small sample sizes, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality was performed though the results did not pass the normal distribution test which was indicated by a significance less than 0.05 (Mohd Razali & Bee Wah, 2011).

Table 37: Normality tests for service years and age difference

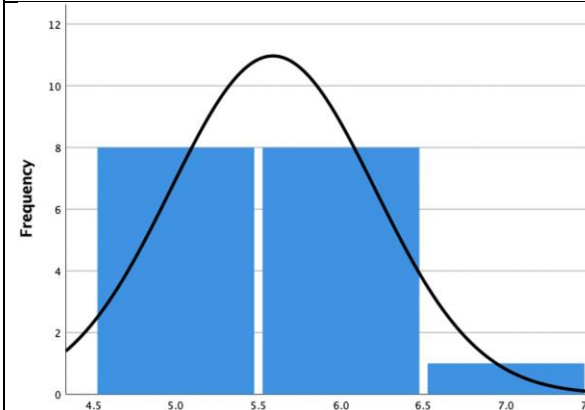
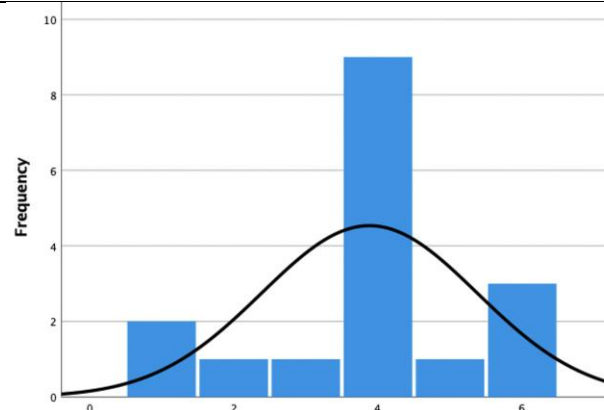
Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
CV_SERV_YRS	.300	17	<.001	.752	17	<.001
CV_SUPERV_AGE_DIFF	.296	17	<.001	.856	17	.013

In line with the tests for normality above findings the service years was found to be positively skewed while that for supervisor-subordinate age difference was found to be negatively skewed.

Table 38: Skewness and kurtosis for service years and age difference

Service Years				Supervisor Age Difference			
Statistic		Std. Error		Statistic		Std. Error	
Mean	5.59	.150		Mean	3.88	.363	
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.27		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.11	
	Upper Bound	5.91			Upper Bound	4.65	
5% Trimmed Mean	5.54			5% Trimmed Mean	3.92		
Median	6.00			Median	4.00		
Variance	.382			Variance	2.235		
Std. Deviation	.618			Std. Deviation	1.495		
Minimum	5			Minimum	1		
Maximum	7			Maximum	6		
Range	2			Range	5		
Interquartile Range	1			Interquartile Range	1		
Skewness	.522	.550		Skewness	-.537	.550	
Kurtosis	-.443	1.063		Kurtosis	.227	1.063	

An examination of the hypothesised relationships between regulatory focus, transformational leadership and perceived supervisor support was performed using PLS-SEM as it allows for analysing data from small sample sizes (Svensson, 2018). Though the established R-Squared values were low indicating potential relationships, there were no difficulties encountered in conducting the analysis.

Objective 10: Test the adequacy of the data analysis instrument.

SPSS was used to run the tests stipulated in the earlier sections hence showed the desired capability to perform the anticipated analysis. Since the preliminary analysis could be performed on SPSS, the output is expected to be utilizable in AMOS which will be used to validate the structural model.

#### ***4. Discussion***

The pilot has revealed certain issues that need to be addressed prior to conducting the actual study. Inconsistent responses will be eliminated through branching logic. There is need to guide the respondents on the supervisor to make reference to in the event that their supervisor has changed during the change period. Additional reverse coded questions will be included in the survey to guarantee the validity of the collected data. A web collector will be used to mitigate the effect of undeliverable emails for the particular survey instrument. To increase variability of the responses with ordinal values, a drop down will be used instead with smaller intervals. A web collector that will be circulated by email will be used for broadcasting the survey. Most importantly, the mistake of omitting the question on the dependent variable calling for a repetition of the entire pilot survey will be voided.

The pilot study equally validated the approach of including a link to the detailed informed consent section. From the pilot study it was revealed that the respondents be guided on the appropriate supervisor to make reference to in the particular cases where they had since changed supervisors during the change period.

The research design and methodology were in alignment to that set out in the research proposal. The researcher will hence proceed with the main study as per the research design indicated in the proposal. Overall, from the review and analysis of the survey data, the pilot study has shown the feasibility of the research protocol.

#### ***5. Conclusion***

The pilot study was a valuable component of the study as it eliminated potential mistakes that would have rendered the entire data set unusable. The researcher hence considers the pilot study a valuable investment in guaranteeing the success of the main study. The pilot study hence validates the research design and methodology for the study.



Changes made.

From:

**Q13** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your supervisors ability Matrix / Rating Scale

Make this a single-row rating scale (remove row choices). ?

My supervisor is very capable of performing his job (+) (-)

My supervisor is known to be successful at the things he tries to do (+) (-)

My supervisor has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done (+) (-)

To:

**Q13** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ability of the supervisor referred to above? Matrix / Rating Scale

Make this a single-row rating scale (remove row choices). ?

My supervisor is very capable of performing his job (+) (-)

My supervisor is known to be UNSUCCESSFUL at the things he tries to do (+) (-)

My supervisor has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done (+) (-)

From:

**Q15** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your supervisor's motivation or drive Matrix / Rating Scale

Make this a single-row rating scale (remove row choices). ?


A chance to grow is an important factor for my supervisor when taking on projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor focuses on accomplishing job tasks that will further his advancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor's work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what he aspires to be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security is an important factor for my supervisor when taking on projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor focuses his attention on avoiding failure at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor is very careful to avoid exposing himself to potential losses at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To:

**Q15** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the supervisor's motivation or drive Matrix / Rating Scale

Make this a single-row rating scale (remove row choices). ?

[10 Suggested Questions](#) ▼


A chance to grow is an important factor for my supervisor when taking on projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The supervisor DOES NOT focus on accomplishing job tasks that will further his advancement <span style="float: right;"></span>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The supervisor's work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what he aspires to be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security IS NOT an important factor for my supervisor when taking on projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The supervisor focuses his attention on avoiding failure at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor is very careful to avoid exposing himself to potential losses at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Appendix 3: Data Collection Report

## 1.0 Initial Request to Participate in the Survey

**Polite Request to participate in a School Based Research**

You forwarded this message on Fri 8/13/2021 7:25 AM

 Desmond Rao  
Thu 8/12/2021 3:27 PM

Bcc: [Redacted]

Hello,

I am conducting research which is a core part of my PhD studies. The study is about **an interesting dynamic of the ERP 2020 Change initiative and the support you received from your supervisor during the past six months**. I would really appreciate your input and will be glad to share the overall findings.

I hereby request **10 minutes of your time** to fill in the linked questionnaire. Kindly click the link below to access the consent letter issued by D&S Management and if okay you can proceed with the survey.


[Click Here to Access the Survey.](#)

Kindly note the **survey is anonymous and voluntary**, therefore you can reply to this email to be excluded from subsequent reminders.

Regards,  
Desmond Rao

## 2.0 Request to be removed from the reminder list.

**Re: Polite Reminder to participate in a School Based Research**

 Desmond Rao  
Fri 8/20/2021 6:27 AM

To: [Redacted]

Hello [Redacted]

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill in the survey. You have been very instrumental in my learning journey.

Regards,  
Desmond Rao

---

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 17, 2021 7:59 AM  
**To:** Desmond Rao <Desmond.Rao@dayliff.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Polite Reminder to participate in a School Based Research

Done last week. Okay to take me out of the reminder communication.

[Redacted]

### **3.0 Reminder informing respondents of the final page in the survey.**

Re: Polite Reminder to participate in a School Based Research

I hereby request **10 minutes of your time** to fill in the linked questionnaire. Kindly click the link below to access the consent letter issued by D&S Management and if okay you can proceed with the survey.

[Click Here to Access the Survey](#)

Kindly note the **survey is anonymous and voluntary**, therefore you can **reply to this email to be excluded from subsequent reminders**. Ensure you get to the final page (that looks like the one below) to be sure you have completed the survey.

**Accessing  
Supervisor Support  
during the D&S ERP 2020  
Project**

**Thank you**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for completing the survey that sought to investigate the supervisor support received during the ERP change.

Your participation is valued.

Desmond Rao (Mr)  
(Researcher - PhD Candidate)

Regards,  
Desmond Rao

## 4.0 Innovative Reminders to staff

### Innovative Reminder 1 to staff

Fw: Someone asked me if I saw their survey Response?



Desmond Rao

Mon 8/23/2021 7:47 AM



To: Desmond Rao

Bcc: Margaret Wangui; Mohamed Farook; Michael Kanyugi; Joseph Mwaura; Richard Mwangi; Joseph Mbugua +89 others

Hello and good morning,

So this is how the conversation went:

**Nicholas:** Did you see my survey?

**Desmond:** Did you click on the link [Click Here to Access the Survey](#)

**Nicholas:** Yes, I did. How else could I have filled the survey?

**Desmond:** Pole bas..you know, the survey is quite anonymous, I can't tell.

**Nicholas:** So how do I know mine was submitted?

**Desmond:** Did you see a page like the one below?



I caught up with Nicholas on my way home,

**Desmond:** Did you finally get to the end after [Clicking Here to Access the Survey?](#)

**Nicholas:**



## Innovative Reminder 2

Re: Some supervisors are asking me questions?

Hello,

As soon as the supervisor [Clicked Here to Fill and Submit the Survey!](#)

*Supervisor: Can I know what my team filled?*

*Me: (Knowing it's anonymous)*



## Innovative Reminder 3

**Christine:** Aki si you are lucky...

**Desmond:** How now?

**Christine:** I [Clicked on this link to Fill and Submit the Survey](#) and I noticed your supervisors names.

**Desmond:** What about them?

**Christine:** Hizo si majina za huku (These are not local names)... Prof. Johan Olivier and Prof. Caren Scheepers.

**Desmond:** Ni za wapi basi? (Where are they from?)

**Christine:** Nimesha google, picha zao ndio hizi...(I've already googled them, here are their photos)



To ensure Prof. Johan and Prof. Caren also review your contribution [Click on this link to Fill and Submit the Survey](#)

## Innovative Reminder 4

### Re: What would Lena Sumuni Have Done?

Hello all,

Thank you all for those who have been able to fill the survey even as I come to the last days of my data collection. I fondly remember having this conversation with one Lena Sumuni, quite a lesson on what a simple act of kindness can do.

**Desmond:** You know Lena, I'm not going to proceed with the PhD

**Lena:** What?

**Desmond:** Yes, I can't, I don't feel I have what it takes, I just can't.

**Lena:** What do you mean? After all that, then you want to give up now?

**Desmond:** You know... (she didn't let me finish)

**Lena:** Desmond, you have what it takes, you can do it. If you don't who will? Desmond, you have to go for it.

**Desmond Today:** This is my 3rd Year on the PhD program trying to entice D&S staff (by the way it's not easy 😊) to **carry on Lena's act of kindness** by [Clicking on this link to Fill and Submit the Survey](#)



Response:

To: Desmond Rao

Hello Desmond,

Thank you for the reminder – You've rekindled so much about Lena!

A good survey there!

N/B Permission from Lena granted to use the above.



## 5.0 Survey Closing Thank You Message

### Thank You in the Words of Mother Teresa



Desmond Rao

Fri 8/27/2021 7:46 AM

To: Group, Head Office; Group, Kenya, Branches

Cc: Managers, Executives

Hello all,

I stand grateful at the many who have taken time to [Click on this link to Fill and Submit the Survey](#). Mother Teresa said,



Today I express my utmost gratitude

- Firstly, **to the management** for reviewing and allowing me to carry out the research within the organization.
- Secondly, **to all the staff** who took their precious time to fill their survey.
- Thirdly, to all those who will [Click on this link to Fill and Submit the Survey](#) on this last day!

Taking your time to fill the survey is extreme act of kindness, **you fed just one**, for which I'm utterly grateful. As you have filled my cup may yours to overflow.

My preliminary sneak peek into the anonymously collected data shows some interesting findings that I will be glad to share with the organization upon completion of the analysis.

Regards,  
Desmond Rao