TAKING CHARGE AT WORK: EXTRAROLE EFFORTS TO INITIATE WORKPLACE CHANGE

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In this study, we investigated a neglected form of extrarole behavior called taking charge and sought to understand factors that motivate employees to engage in this activity. Taking charge is discretionary behavior intended to effect organizationally functional change. We obtained both self-report and coworker data for 275 white-collar employees from different organizations. Taking charge, as reported by coworkers, related to felt responsibility, self-efficacy, and perceptions of top management openness. These results expand current understanding of extrarole behavior and suggest ways in which organizations can motivate employees to go beyond the boundaries of their jobs to bring about positive change.

In everyday experience, it comes down to a conflict between those folks who dutifully work to manage established routines in order to ensure the successful functioning of their organization, and those who courageously challenge routines in order to do the same thing. (Hornstein, 1986: 8)

During the past decade, there has been growing emphasis in the organizational behavior literature on extrarole behavior, or employee behavior that goes beyond role expectations in a way that is organizationally functional. Scholars have argued that this phenomenon is critical for organizational effectiveness because managers cannot foresee all contingencies or fully anticipate the activities that they may desire or need employees to perform (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Organ, 1988). Scholars have also argued that extrarole behaviors are not motivated by the same factors as traditional, role-prescribed activities (Organ, 1988, 1990). Given the recognized importance of extrarole behavior, numerous studies have focused on identifying factors that predict this phenomenon (see Organ and Ryan [1995] for a review).

We argue, however, that this research has been limited by an overly narrow conceptualization of extrarole behavior. The most heavily researched form of such behavior is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Organ defined OCB as "those organizationally beneficial behaviors and gestures that can neither be enforced on the basis of formal role obligations nor elicited by contractual guarantee or recompense" (1990: 46). Although this definition is broad, research on OCB has concentrated almost entirely on what Organ (1988: 6) referred to as "modest, some would even say trivial" behaviors that sustain the status quo. Examples include helping colleagues with their workloads, not taking excessive breaks, attending functions that are not required, and alerting others about work-related problems (Organ, 1988).

Although these extrarole activities are important, we argue that they are not sufficient for ensuring the continued viability of an organization and that organizations also need employees who are willing to challenge the present state of operations to bring about constructive change. Hence, in this study, we focused on a form of extrarole behavior that has been largely neglected. We refer to this type of behavior as taking charge. Taking charge entails voluntary and constructive efforts, by individual employees, to effect organizationally functional change with respect to how work is executed within the contexts of their jobs, work units, or organizations. It is similar to other forms of extrarole behavior in that it is discretionary (that is, not formally required). Unlike other forms of extrarole behavior that have been assessed, however, taking charge is inherently change-oriented and aimed at improvement. It fits within the general class of extrarole behaviors that Van Dyne, Cummings, and Parks (1995) referred to as "challenging-promotive." As those authors pointed out, this class of extrarole behaviors has received little research attention.

Evidence from a variety of sources highlights the potential value of taking charge. In their work on socialization, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) argued that because organizations in the long run...
require innovation and change, it is often valuable for employees to reject and redefine aspects of their work roles. Similarly, Staw and Boettger (1990) highlighted the importance of employees' taking action to correct faulty tasks or misdirected work roles. They argued that an employee who goes beyond the call of duty to accomplish an incorrectly specified role, or one who is extra conscientious in following procedures that are counterproductive, may ultimately be dysfunctional for an organization. If current role definitions, procedures, or policies are inappropriate or inefficient, it may be more adaptive for employees to channel some of their extrarole efforts toward changing rather than maintaining the status quo. Scholars in the area of innovation (Bunce & West, 1995; Scott & Bruce, 1994), as well as strategy researchers (Burgelman, 1994; Goshal & Bartlett, 1994), have also noted the potential value of employee-initiated change for long-term organizational adaptability and have become increasingly concerned with how organizations can promote employee initiative (cf. Frohman, 1997).

Given the seeming importance of taking charge, the research question that we sought to address was the following: What factors motivate employees to step outside the boundaries of their jobs to bring about constructive change in their workplaces? We begin this article by discussing how taking charge relates to other forms of extrarole behavior. We then present a model of the motivation to take charge and a set of hypotheses, based on that model, regarding specific contextual and individual-level antecedents.

**TAKING CHARGE IN RELATION TO OTHER EXTRAROLE BEHAVIORS**

As noted, taking charge stands in marked contrast to organizational citizenship behavior, the best known and most heavily researched form of extrarole behavior. Taking charge can also be compared with such change-oriented behaviors as principled organizational dissent and whistleblowing. Graham defined principled dissent as "the effort by individuals in the workplace to protest and/or to change the organizational status quo because of their conscientious objection to current policy or practice" (1986: 2), and Micoli and Near (1992) defined whistleblowing as the act of reporting illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices to persons or organizations that might be able to effect a remedy. There are three primary differences between these activities and taking charge. First, principled dissent and whistleblowing are typically motivated by superorganizational interests and are often undertaken irrespective of whether the change will be organizationally functional. Taking charge, in contrast, is motivated by desire for organizational improvement and is not necessarily rooted in principle or in a belief that current practices are wrong or bad. Second, the primary goal of whistleblowing or principled dissent is to expose, criticize, or eliminate something negative. Taking charge, however, is aimed at implementing something positive. Third, unlike principled dissent and whistleblowing, taking charge occurs solely through internal and organizationally sanctioned tactics.

The taking charge construct can also be distinguished from voice as conceptualized in the work of Withey and Cooper (1989) and Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, and Mainous (1988). Voice has been defined as "any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs" (Hirschman, 1970: 30). Although voice is change-oriented, its objective is not to bring about organizational improvement, but to eliminate personal dissatisfaction (Withey & Cooper, 1989). Voice is also broader and more multifaceted than taking charge. It includes grievance filing, union participation, use of suggestion boxes, sharing concerns with others, complaining to supervisors, appealing to a higher authority, and external protest (Farrell, 1983). Although this list includes activities that would be considered taking charge, it also includes activities that involve much less effort (for instance, complaining), as well as activities intended to harm the employing organization (for instance, external protest). Because voice is defined so broadly, measures have tended to exhibit low internal consistency, and researchers have had difficulty predicting voice (Withey & Cooper, 1989). In light of these difficulties, we saw it as valuable to focus specifically on activities that (1) entailed active efforts to initiate and implement change (that is, not just voicing concerns) and (2) were intended to be constructive for the organization.

Taking charge also has features in common with issue selling (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Issue selling entails calling an organization's attention to key trends, developments, and events that have implications for its performance. Like taking charge, issue selling may enhance an organization's effectiveness by bringing about adaptive change (Ashford et al., 1998). A key difference between these two constructs, however, is that issue selling focuses on strategic issues (Dutton & Ashford, 1993), whereas taking charge focuses on the internal means for accomplishing organizational goals, such as work methods, policies, and procedures. Further, whereas issue selling calls attention to problems or opportunities, it does not offer suggestions about how to address those problems or opportunities, nor does
it entail efforts to implement solutions. Two other constructs related to taking charge are task revision and role innovation. The former is defined as "taking action to correct a faulty task or misdirected work role" (Staw & Boettger, 1990: 537), and the latter refers to changing or improving a job role or the procedures for performing that role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). An important difference, however, is that taking charge can be directed beyond the scope of an individual's job role.

Recently, Frese and his colleagues (Frese, Kring, Soose, & Zempel, 1996) proposed a construct that they termed personal initiative. This construct also shares features with taking charge. Personal initiative refers to "a behavioral syndrome resulting in an individual's taking an active and self-starting approach to work and going beyond what is formally required in a given job" (Frese et al., 1996: 38). Some of the examples of initiative that Frese and colleagues identified could be classified as examples of taking charge (for instance, attempts to reorganize a work structure). However, other examples of personal initiative reflect more traditional forms of extrarole behavior (such as offering suggestions or trying to prevent problems). It is also important to note that Frese and colleagues conceptualized personal initiative as a relatively stable behavioral tendency. Yet we believe that taking charge will be variable depending on the situation.

A MODEL OF TAKING CHARGE

Despite the recognized importance of extrarole efforts to bring about change in the workplace, relatively little is known about what motivates such behavior. Because taking charge significantly differs from more traditional forms of extrarole behavior, such as OCB, models that have been advanced to explain those behaviors are inappropriate for explaining taking charge. Thus, to develop our model, we drew from works on discretionary activities that, like taking charge, challenge the status quo. Specifically, we looked to the literatures on voice (Rusbult et al., 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989), issue selling (Ashford et al., 1998; Dutton & Ashford, 1993), task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990), innovation (Bunce & West, 1995; Scott & Bruce, 1994), personal initiative (Frese et al., 1996), principled dissent (Graham, 1996), and whistleblowing (Miceli & Near, 1992). Our review of these literatures provided a foundation for our model and indicated two important starting points. The first was that effortful, discretionary behavior such as taking charge reflects a calculated, deliberate decision process. The second was that both contextual and individual-level factors affect this decision process and, through it, taking charge.

Ashford and colleagues' (1998) model of issue selling and Withey and Cooper's (1989) model of voice were particularly helpful for understanding the decision process behind taking charge. Both of these works provided coherent theoretical frameworks rather than merely sets of variables, and both built upon established theories of human behavior (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Vroom, 1964). From these models, we can conclude that two key judgments underlie the decision to take charge. First, employees assess the probability that taking charge will be successful. This argument is consistent with evidence that willingness to engage in issue selling relates to beliefs about likely success (Ashford et al., 1998) and with evidence that "expected efficacy" affects the decision to engage in voice (Withey & Cooper, 1989) and whistleblowing (Miceli & Near, 1992). It is also consistent with the prominent role of expectancy beliefs within more general models of motivated behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Vroom, 1964).

Models of issue selling and of voice also indicate that an assessment of anticipated consequences will play an important role in the decision to take charge. Ashford and colleagues (1998) focused specifically on impression management risks and argued that employees will be less likely to engage in issue selling if they fear that doing so will harm their images. Missing from this framework, however, is an explicit discussion of the role of anticipated benefits. Whereas taking charge clearly has potential risks—a damaged reputation if the initiative fails or disapproval if it is seen as inappropriate or threatening, for example—it also has potentially positive consequences. Subjective expected utility frameworks such as expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) suggest that employees will weigh anticipated costs against anticipated benefits when deciding whether to engage in taking charge. In other words, it is not anticipated risks alone that enter into the decision process, but rather, a joint consideration of relative costs and benefits. This argument is consistent with research on voice. Withey and Cooper (1989) argued that, in deciding whether to engage in voice, employees implicitly weigh possible payoffs against likely costs. Rusbult and coauthors (1988) argued that actors considering voice assess consequences both for themselves and for others with whom they are interdependent.

To conclude, we argue that the decision to take charge will be affected by two judgments: an assessment of likely success and an assessment of likely consequences. It is important to note, however, that we did not empirically assess the two proposed
judgments in this study. These judgments vary from one taking charge opportunity to another, and our objective was to understand the type of person and context that might favor this activity in general. Hence, we focused on identifying specific contextual and individual-level factors that would predict an employee's overall tendency to take charge, and we used the mediating judgments as theoretical justifications for relating these variables to our phenomenon of interest.

There was no single theory that we could use to identify a set of relevant contextual and individual-level variables. We therefore drew from the literatures on voice, innovation, issue selling, personal initiative, and principled dissent. Although those literatures have addressed a wide range of independent variables, in the interest of parsimony we focused on variables suggested by more than one of those literatures. Our main criterion in selecting variables was consistency with our underlying model. Specifically, we focused on variables that could be directly related, at a theoretical level, to the two judgments underlying the decision to take charge. Our conceptualization of taking charge as based on a deliberate decision process also steered us away from the attitudinal and dispositional variables that have been emphasized in the OCB literature, as very different motivational processes have been posited for those variables (Organ, 1990). The contextual variables that we identified as important determinants of taking charge were top management openness and supportive group norms. The individual-level variables that we focused upon were self-efficacy, felt responsibility for change, and expert power.

Contextual Factors

Top management openness is defined as the degree to which top management is believed to encourage and support suggestions and change initiatives from below. As Ashford and her coauthors (1998) argued in their work on issue selling, employees attend to the actions of top management to obtain clues about how management is likely to respond to various types of risky initiatives. Their work suggests that if employees perceive that top management will respond favorably (or at least not negatively) to a risky change-oriented activity, they will feel more confident of success and less concerned about political and image risks. Research from other areas also suggests that top management openness will be an important variable affecting taking charge. Scott and Bruce (1994) emphasized that employees will be more likely to engage in individual innovation if they perceive that there is a “climate for innovation,” or in other words, that their organization supports new ideas and change efforts. Further, Graham (1986) argued that principled dissent will be more likely if an organizational culture supports independence and innovative responses from employees.

Hypothesis 1. Taking charge will be positively related to perceptions of top management openness.

Research on innovation (Bunce & West, 1995; Scott & Bruce, 1994), as well as work on issue selling (Ashford et al., 1998), suggests that work group norms that support and encourage change will also motivate employees to take charge. Norms are shared standards of behavior that emerge within a group. Because most individuals attach positive value to meeting the behavioral expectations of their group, they gain personal benefits by behaving in a way that meets those expectations and incur costs by violating them (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Hence, if there are work group norms that support change, employees should be more likely to take charge because they will regard doing so as a way to gain group approval (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Further, they will regard taking charge as less costly (Ashford et al., 1998), because supportive norms imply less risk of group disapproval or rejection. Supportive group norms also imply a higher likelihood of success, because coworkers will not stand in the way of the change effort and may even actively facilitate it (Ashford et al., 1998).

Hypothesis 2. Taking charge will be positively related to work group norms that support change.

Individual-Level Factors

Research from several related literatures suggests that one of the most important individual-level variables that will predict taking charge is self-efficacy, or an employee’s estimate of his or her capacity to perform (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Although self-efficacy is typically conceptualized as a task- or situation-specific construct, Sherer and colleagues (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982) argued that individuals also possess generalized self-efficacy beliefs that apply across situations. Evidence that generalized self-efficacy will relate to taking charge comes from recent work showing that self-efficacy increases personal initiative at work (Speier & Frese, 1997). We argue that, relative to employees with low self-efficacy, those with high self-efficacy will tend to attach a higher likelihood of success to
taking change and will thus be more likely to attempt this behavior. This argument is consistent with Graham's (1986) conceptual model of principled dissent, which suggests that employees with high self-confidence see principled dissent as a more feasible (that is, potentially effective) way to bring about change than employees with low self-confidence. It is also consistent with Withey and Cooper's (1989) argument that individual differences in beliefs about personal efficacy will affect the decision about whether to engage in voice. There is also evidence that self-efficacy will affect the perceived costs and benefits associated with taking charge. In particular, Sitkin and Pablo (1992) demonstrated that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to underestimate the risks associated with any given course of action and tend to overestimate their ability to overcome those risks.

**Hypothesis 3. Taking charge will be positively related to self-efficacy.**

A second individual-level variable hypothesized to affect taking charge is felt responsibility, or an individual's belief that he or she is personally obligated to bring about constructive change. Felt responsibility has been cited as an important variable in several works on discretionary employee behavior that entails risks (Frese et al., 1996; Graham, 1986; Pearce & Gregersen, 1991; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Most notably, Graham (1986) argued that the decision to respond to an issue of principle is heavily dependent on perceived responsibility, and Frese and coauthors (1996) proposed that felt responsibility relates to employee initiative. Although neither of these works is explicit about the mediating process linking initiative taking to felt responsibility, we would argue that this effect is mediated both by judgments about likely outcomes (costs and benefits) and by judgments about likely success. To the extent that employees have a high sense of personal responsibility regarding change, they will attach positive valence to taking charge because it will provide a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment (Frese et al., 1996; Graham, 1986). Indeed, Graham (1986) suggested that employees with high felt responsibility may attach negative valence to not taking action when an opportunity arises. Graham also proposed that individuals with a high level of felt responsibility will regard challenging behavior as more feasible, or in other words, as more likely to succeed.

**Hypothesis 4. Taking charge will be positively related to an employee's felt responsibility for bringing about change.**

Finally, our framework suggests that taking charge will relate to an employee's expert power, or the degree to which the employing organization is dependent on the employee for critical knowledge or skills (French & Raven, 1959; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). Because power implies greater discretion and credibility and less resistance from others, employees with a high level of expert power should feel more confident that they can bring about change successfully. Similar arguments have been made in discussions of issue selling (Dutton & Ashford, 1993), role innovation (Ashford & Taylor, 1990), task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990), and personal initiative (Frese et al., 1996). Power is also likely to encourage taking charge by reducing the perceived costs associated with that activity. Relative to an employee with little expert power, one with a high level of expert power will be less likely to suffer organizational or group sanctions if he or she tries to initiate change. This argument is supported by research on voice, which has shown that individuals with more job alternatives, and hence greater power, are more likely to engage in voice because they are less concerned about retaliation (Rusbult et al., 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989).

**Hypothesis 5. Taking charge will be positively related to the amount of expert power that an employee possesses.**

**METHODS**

**Sample and Procedures**

The sample pool for this study consisted of 1,010 employees enrolled in a part-time master’s of business administration (M.B.A.) program at a large urban university. In July 1996, we visited each of 22 classes to introduce the study and encourage participation. Surveys were then sent by mail to employees' homes, with a cover letter assuring confidentiality. To provide an incentive to participate, we told potential respondents that their names would be entered into a drawing whose winner would receive dinner for two at the restaurant of his or her choice (maximum value $200). The surveys were followed by reminder postcards after two weeks and by replacement surveys after four weeks. Four-hundred eighty-one completed surveys were returned (47.6%). A drawing was held for the prize, which was subsequently awarded.

The focal employee survey assessed the five independent variables in the model. It also assessed age, gender, organizational and job tenure, hierarchical level, and number of "direct reports," as
potential control variables. The average age of respondents was 28.7 years (s.d. = 3.8), the average organizational tenure was 2.8 years (s.d. = 3.8), and 39 percent of the respondents were women. For hierarchical level, 38 percent indicated that they held nonsupervisory positions, 27 percent indicated that they held lower-level management positions, and 23 percent indicated that they were in middle management. Forty-nine percent had no direct reports, and only 12 percent had more than four direct reports.

The dependent variable, taking charge, was assessed via a different survey sent to coworkers. The last part of the focal employee survey asked respondents to provide the names, phone numbers, and addresses of two coworkers with whom they worked closely and who they thought would be willing to provide some additional information. They were told that they could list their direct supervisors, peers, or subordinates—anyone who worked with them and was familiar with their work. To minimize selection bias, they were not told the nature of the questions that would be asked. We asked for the names of two coworkers in the hope that we could obtain data from at least one of them. Two-hundred thirty-six employees provided names and addresses for two coworkers, and 75 provided the name and address of one coworker. In total, 65 percent of the respondents (n = 311) provided the name and address of at least one coworker.

The survey sent to each of the identified coworkers (n = 547) asked them to assess the relevant focal employee’s taking charge behavior. Assessing our dependent variable via coworker surveys enabled us to avoid common source bias and also to minimize the social desirability bias that might significantly distort self-reports of taking charge. Each coworker was also asked to indicate age, gender, job and organizational tenure, hierarchical position relative to the focal employee, and how long he or she had known the focal employee. The surveys were followed by reminder postcards after two weeks and then by phone calls to anyone who had not responded after four weeks. In total, 417 coworkers returned completed surveys (76%), providing us with data on taking charge for 275 focal employee respondents. This final sample of 275 (which was used for hypothesis testing) represented 88 percent of the respondents who had provided at least one coworker name, 57 percent of those who had completed surveys, and 27 percent of those originally solicited.

**Scale Development**

Because taking charge is a new construct, we engaged in a multistage process to develop a measure. First, we administered an open-ended survey to 148 part-time M.B.A. students. The survey asked them to think of individuals with whom they had worked who had actively tried to bring about improvement within their organization. They were told that these change efforts could be aimed at any aspect of the organization, including the person’s job, how work was performed within their department, and organizational policies or procedures. Further, they were asked to focus on efforts that went beyond the person’s formal role or, in other words, efforts that were not required or formally expected. Respondents were then asked to list specific behaviors that reflected or exemplified the person’s change efforts. The number of behavioral statements respondents made ranged from 1 to 5, with an average of 3.00. In total, respondents provided 445 statements.

We reduced the list of 445 statements to 180 by eliminating redundancies, statements that reflected general tendencies rather than behaviors, and statements that were too vague to be formulated in terms of observable behaviors. We then sorted the behavioral statements into groups based upon their similarity to one another. For each group we developed a statement that we believed captured the general meaning of the specific behaviors in the group. This process yielded a total of 19 general behavioral statements. We then independently assessed which statements best reflected the construct of taking charge. Inconsistent assessments were resolved during discussion. In the end, we constructed a list of ten prototypical activities that best reflected the construct of taking charge.

We then presented the list of ten behaviors to 20 M.B.A. students with the following instructions: “Please think about your last full-time job and the person with whom you worked most closely. Indicate how frequently or infrequently that person engaged in each of the activities below.” Responses were on a five-point scale (1 = very infrequently, 5 = very frequently). Respondents were then asked a series of questions about the clarity of the instructions and were asked for suggestions about how the survey might be improved. Respondents indicated that they considered the instructions to be clear and that they had little difficulty thinking of specific instances that corresponded to each listed activity. We made two changes based on their feedback: We provided a “not applicable” option, in case some of the activities were not relevant in a given context, and we changed the response scale.
to an agree/disagree format, altering the wording of the items accordingly. The agree/disagree format is consistent with other scales used to assess extrarole behaviors (e.g., Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).

The third stage of instrument development involved pretesting the revised measure using a sample of 152 individuals who were similar to those who would be included in the actual study: part-time M.B.A. students with full-time jobs. The instructions were the following: "We are studying voluntary change-oriented behaviors at work. Please think about a particular coworker with whom you work closely. Then indicate the degree to which each of the statements below characterizes that person's behavior."

There were three objectives of this pretest. First, we wanted to assess the internal consistency of the items. We found the scale to be unidimensional and highly reliable, with an alpha coefficient of .92. Second, we wanted to ensure that there was reasonable variance on the items. The average standard deviation for the items was 1.12, which indicated that responses did sufficiently vary. Third, we wanted to test whether the ten activities could be considered extrarole for the types of employees who would be included in this study. To determine this, we asked respondents to indicate with a check any behaviors that went above and beyond what was expected as part of their coworker's job. We intentionally worded the question this way (instead of asking them to indicate any behavior that was not extrarole) in order to provide as conservative a test as possible. The responses left us reasonably confident that the activities represented extrarole behaviors for our sample. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents checked a majority (six or more) of the behaviors.

The final stage of instrument development was designed to more rigorously assess the levels of discriminant validity provided by the scales measuring (1) taking charge and in-role behavior and (2) taking charge and other forms of extrarole behavior. We collected questionnaire data from a new sample of part-time M.B.A. students (n = 165), who were instructed to rate a coworker. The questionnaire assessed taking charge, in-role behavior, and OCB. We measured in-role behavior with the four positively worded items from Williams and Anderson's (1991) scale (cf. Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and measured the altruism and civic virtue dimensions of OCB using the scales developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990). The latter two scales have been used in several studies of OCB. Cronbach's alpha was .94 for in-role behavior, .79 for civic virtue (four items), .91 for altruism (five items), and .95 for taking charge. All items were measured using a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

We investigated the construct validity of the taking charge measure via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). We specified a four-factor measurement model (in-role behavior, altruism, civic virtue, and taking charge) with a 23 × 23 "polychoric" correlation matrix. Convergent validity was evaluated in terms of whether each item had a statistically significant loading on its posited underlying construct factor. As shown in Table 1, the factor loadings were all highly significant (p < .01) and corresponded to the hypothesized latent constructs. These results demonstrate clear convergent validity.

To establish discriminant validity, we tested a series of hierarchically nested models: a one-factor model (all items together), a two-factor model (in-role behavior versus extrarole behavior), and our hypothesized four-factor model. We employed a chi-square difference test to examine which model best fitted the data. The hypothesized four-factor model provided a fit superior to the next-best-fitting model (Δχ² = 564.88, p < .001, n = 165), providing evidence of good discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was also supported by the fact that correlations among the four latent constructs were all significantly less than 1.0. These values ranged from .34 to .63, with a mean of .49.

To assess overall model fit, we considered several goodness-of-fit indexes: the incremental fit index (IFI; Bollen, 1989), recommended by Gerbing and Anderson (1993); the nonnormed fit index (NNFI; Bentler & Bonett, 1980); and both the comparative fit index (CFI) and the root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA), recommended by Jaccard and Wan (1996). The IFI, NNFI, and CFI indicate the relative improvement in fit of a hypothesized model over a null model. The general rule of thumb for these indexes is that values of .90 or greater indicate good fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Bollen, 1989; Jaccard & Wan, 1996). For the RMSEA, Browne and Cudeck (1993) argued that values of less than .08 imply adequate fit. As reflected in these various indexes, our hypothesized measurement model demonstrated good fit with the data (IFI = .93, NNFI = .93, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07). In sum, the results of the CFA provide strong evidence that the taking charge measure is distinct from both in-role behavior and two of the most commonly assessed forms of extrarole behavior.
TABLE 1
Results of Factor Analysis of the Hypothesized Measurement Model with Taking Charge, In-Role Behavior, Civic Virtue, and Altruisma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>In-Role Behavior</th>
<th>Civic Virtue</th>
<th>Altruism</th>
<th>Taking Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This person fulfills the responsibilities specified in his/her job description.</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person performs the tasks that are expected as part of the job.</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person meets performance expectations.</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person adequately completes responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This person attends meetings that are not mandatory, but that are considered important.</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person attends functions that are not required, but that help the company image.</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person keeps abreast of changes in the organization.</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person reads and keeps up with organization announcements, memos, and so on.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person helps others who have been absent.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person helps orient new people even though it is not required.</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person helps others who have heavy work loads.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This person helps others who have work-related problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This person is always ready to lend a helping hand to those around him/her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This person often tries to adopt improved procedures for doing his or her job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This person often tries to change how his or her job is executed in order to be more effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This person often tries to bring about improved procedures for the work unit or department.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often tries to institute new work methods that are more effective for the company.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often tries to change organizational rules or policies that are nonproductive or counterproductive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often makes constructive suggestions for improving how things operate within the organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often tries to correct a faulty procedure or practice.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often tries to eliminate redundant or unnecessary procedures.</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often tries to implement solutions to pressing organizational problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This person often tries to introduce new structures, technologies, or approaches to improve efficiency.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Data are from the final scale validation sample (n = 165). All factor loadings are completely standardized lambda loadings and are significant at p < .01.

Assessment of Dependent Variable for Hypothesis Testing

The taking charge measure appeared on the surveys sent to coworkers. The coworkers were presented with the ten statements and asked to indicate (on a five-point agree/disagree scale) the degree to which each statement characterized focal employees' behavior. The coworkers were also asked to indicate the extent to which the activities exceeded what was expected as part of the focal employees' jobs (1 = not at all, 3 = somewhat, 5 = completely) and the extent to which the focal employees had discretion to engage in the various activities (1 = none at all, 3 = a moderate amount, 5 = complete discretion).

The data from each coworker were used to compute a measure of taking charge for the corresponding focal employee. This measure was formed by averaging the responses to the ten items (α = .93). For approximately half of the focal employees (n = 142), we had two separate measures of taking charge—one from each coworker. This was a much greater proportion than anticipated, because we did not expect to have such a high response rate from the coworkers.

To determine whether it was appropriate to create an average rating for each coworker pair, we computed an intraclass correlations coefficient (ICC). Because our data consisted of ratings from different judges for each focal employee, we employed ICC(1,1) (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). This form of intraclass correlation provides a point estimate of the agreement of ratings made by two or more judges (James, 1982). The ICC indicated a low, and not quite significant, level of agreement (ICC = .11, p < .10).

Because the ICC was so modest, we examined the raw data, making two observations. First, respondents tended to use the high end of the five-point scale, causing a restriction of range that most likely attenuated the correlation. Second, whereas in most cases there was reasonable agreement be-
between the two coworkers, in a few notable cases the two coworkers provided highly discrepant ratings. In those cases, it was impossible to determine which coworker (if either) was the more accurate, but it seemed clear that averaging the two responses was unlikely to provide a valid measure of the focal employee's behavior.

Given these conclusions, we decided that the most appropriate course of action was to eliminate the cases in which the two coworkers provided highly divergent assessments. We were conservative in doing so, eliminating ten cases where the difference between the two coworker measures exceeded 2.00 on the five-point scale. The ICC between the two measures of taking charge for the remaining pairs of coworkers was .36 (p < .001). This value compares favorably to other reported ICC values. In an extensive review of organizational climate studies, James (1982) reported that the range of agreement as measured by ICC(1,1) was .00 to .50, with a median of approximately .12. With an ICC of .36, we decided that it was appropriate to average the two ratings when we had data from two coworkers (n = 133) and to use the single rating when we had data from a single coworker (n = 132). Thus, the final sample size for hypothesis testing was 265.

Assessment of Independent Variables

The surveys sent to the focal employees contained measures of the five independent variables: top management openness, group norms, self-efficacy, felt responsibility, and power. All variables were measured on five-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Top management openness was assessed with a six-item scale used by Ashford and colleagues (1998), which they adapted from House and Rizzo's (1972) top management receptiveness measure. House and Rizzo (1972) demonstrated their scale to be reliable, and Ashford and colleagues also provided strong support for the reliability of the scale (α = .92). In addition, Ashford and colleagues provided evidence of the scale's convergent validity and demonstrated that it could be empirically discriminated from other perceptual constructs measured via self-reports. A sample item from this scale is “Good ideas get serious consideration from management above me.” Coefficient alpha for the scale was .90.

We measured group norms using a 12-item scale adapted from Scott and Bruce's (1994) support for innovation measure. Scott and Bruce demonstrated this scale to be both unidimensional and highly reliable (α = .92), and they provided evidence of convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity. Whereas the original scale asked individuals to indicate the degree to which their organizations supported innovation, we adapted the scale by asking respondents to use their immediate work groups (the individuals with whom they worked on a regular basis) as their referents in responding. We provided a “not applicable” option for respondents who did not consider themselves to be part of a work group. A sample item is “My work group can be described as flexible and continually adapting to change.” The internal reliability coefficient (α) for the 12-item scale was .91. As described in the results section, however, because of a strong reverse-coding effect, we eliminated the 7 negatively worded items. Coefficient alpha for the remaining items was .84.

To assess self-efficacy, we used the general self-efficacy scale developed by Sherer and colleagues (1982) and used by several other researchers (e.g., Schaubroeck & Merrit, 1997; Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994). This scale originally consisted of 17 items (α = .86), but we deleted an item that Sherer et al. found to be problematic. Those authors demonstrated their scale to be adequately unidimensional and provided evidence of both nomological and criterion validity. A sample item from the scale is “When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.” The 16 items had a coefficient alpha of .85.

Felt responsibility was measured using five items designed specifically for this study (α = .80). These items were as follows: “I feel a personal sense of responsibility to bring about change at work,” “It's up to me to bring about improvement in my workplace,” “I feel obligated to try to introduce new procedures where appropriate,” “Correcting problems is not really my responsibility,” and “I feel little obligation to challenge or change the status quo.” Although we did not engage in any systematic construct validation for this scale, the fact that it was significantly correlated with hierarchical level (r = .24, p < .01) provides at least some evidence of validity. That is, one would expect that individuals at higher organizational levels would feel more responsible for change than those at lower organizational levels.

We measured expert power using four items developed and used by Morrison and Robinson (1997). The items all related to an employee's possession of critical and unique skills or expertise. A sample item from this measure is “I possess unique skills that increase my value to the organization.” The internal reliability coefficient (α) for the scale was .79 in both this study and in Morrison and Robinson.
Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Independent Variables

Because all 5 independent variables were assessed via self-reports on a single questionnaire, we felt that it was important to assess discriminant validity before testing the hypotheses. This was done via a first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the data from the entire sample of focal employee respondents, who numbered 462 after “listwise” deletion of cases with missing data. As there were 44 items, it would have been extremely difficult to fit a measurement model (Bentler & Chou, 1987; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1991; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989). Thus, we followed Bentler and Chou’s and Harris and Schaubroeck’s recommendations that only 20 or so observed variables be analyzed.

To reduce the number of observed variables, we followed procedures delineated by Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994). For the scales that employed 5 or fewer items (responsibility and expert power), we used the individual scale items as observed indicators of the latent constructs. For the remaining scales, we reduced the number of observed indicators by creating subscales from pairs or triplets of original scale items. We reduced the number of indicators for top management openness from 6 to 3 by randomly pairing items and reduced the number of indicators for group norms from 12 to 4 in a similar manner.

We employed a slightly different approach with the self-efficacy items. Although Sherer and colleagues (1982) argued that their scale represented a single construct, there is evidence that it may have three dimensions, representing the strength, magnitude, and generality of efficacy (Woodruff & Cashman, 1993). Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994) provided a framework for modeling such multidimensional constructs. In their partial aggregation model, a single higher-order latent construct is represented by multiple lower-order dimensions. Each lower-order dimension is represented by a composite of observed indicators. Bagozzi and Heatherton argued that because there is a one-to-one correspondence between each composite and the associated lower-order factor, the composites can be treated, in a CFA, as multiple indicators of a single higher-order factor. Drawing on their work, we reduced the number of observed indicators for self-efficacy by developing three composite measures consisting of the items that correspond to the three proposed dimensions of general self-efficacy (Woodruff & Cashman, 1993).

After reducing the number of observed indicators from 44 to 20, we performed a CFA using LISREL 8. We specified our five-factor measurement model (top management openness, group norms, self-efficacy, felt responsibility, and expert power) using a $20 \times 20$ polychoric correlation matrix. Fit statistics for the hypothesized measurement model indicated a relatively poor fit with the data. An examination of factor loadings, standardized residuals, and modification indexes indicated that the misspecification resided with the group norms scale. The evidence indicated that the scale did not represent a unidimensional construct, violating a crucial assumption of measurement theory (Hattie, 1985).

In order to modify the measurement model, we followed the cross-validation approach suggested by Cudeck and Browne (1983), whereby the sample is divided into two random subsamples. Modifications are based on results from the first subsample and are then cross-validated with the second subsample. Using the first subsample ($n = 231$), we conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the group norms items. The results indicated two factors. Seven items loaded on the first factor, with loadings ranging from .56 to .84, and the remaining five items loaded on the second factor, with loadings ranging from .64 to .87.

Further investigation indicated that the first factor corresponded to all negatively worded items, and the second factor corresponded to all positively worded items. This phenomenon is known as a reverse-coding effect and is not uncommon (Herche & Engelland, 1996; Magazine, Williams, & Williams, 1996). As Herche and England pointed out, this methodological artifact poses a significant threat to a scale’s unidimensionality and thus, validity. Although numerous theoretical rationales have been offered to explain this phenomenon (see Herche and England [1996] for a review), there has been little work on how to best solve the problem. Following the arguments of Nunnally (1978) and Schriesheim, Eisenbach, and Hill (1991), we decided to eliminate the negatively worded items. We then performed an EFA with the five remaining items together with the items for the other four independent variables. Five clear factors emerged, corresponding to the five constructs. Primary loadings ranged from .56 to .93, and cross-loadings did not exceed .20.

Next, we performed a CFA using the second subsample ($n = 231$). Fit statistics for the hypothesized measurement model indicated a good fit ($IFI = .91$, NNFI = .90, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .08). Following Cudeck and Browne (1983), we then tested the modified measurement model in the full sample. Fit statistics indicated a good fit ($IFI = .92$, NNFI = .91, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .07). In addition, the correlations among the latent constructs were all
significantly less than 1.0. They ranged from .16 to .55, with a mean of .29. From these results, we could conclude that there was sufficient discriminant validity among the five independent variables.

**Test for Sampling Bias**

Of the 481 focal employees who responded to the survey, 206 lacked coworker data and were thus excluded from the study. This exclusion raised concerns about whether there were systematic differences between those respondents with coworker data and those without. To test for such differences, we performed a set of ten t-tests comparing the two groups on the five control variables: age, gender, hierarchical level, organizational tenure, and job tenure. Only two of the differences were significant. The individuals with coworker data were slightly younger (mean difference = .82 years, \( t = 2.30, p < .05 \)) and had slightly less time with their company (mean difference = .64 years, \( t = 2.52, p < .05 \)). These data suggested little basis for concluding that there were meaningful differences between the two groups.

**RESULTS**

**Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are in Table 2. The mean for taking charge was 3.84 (s.d. = 0.72), indicating that taking charge was relatively common. There were significant correlations between taking charge and each of the independent variables.

Although the pretest provided evidence that taking charge was distinct from in-role behavior, we also assessed the extent to which the coworker informants regarded it as extrarole. In response to the item "To what extent do the above activities exceed what is actually expected for this person?" 65 percent responded with a 4 or a 5 on the five-point scale (5 = completely). The mean for this item was 3.9 (s.d. = 0.99). This value indicated to us that the activities were seen as more extrarole than in-role. Coworkers also responded that the focal employees had some discretion about engaging in the ten activities if they wished to do so. The mean for the item "How much discretion does the person have to engage in each of the activities?" was 3.4 (s.d. = 0.82), where 3 corresponded to "a moderate amount" and 5 reflected "complete discretion."

**Tests of Hypotheses**

To test the hypotheses, we regressed the taking charge measure on the measures representing each of the five independent variables: top management openness, group norms, self-efficacy, felt responsibility, and expert power. We entered job tenure and hierarchical level as control variables, because they were correlated both with taking charge and with some of the independent variables. We did not control for age, gender, or organizational tenure. These variables were not significantly correlated with taking charge or with any of the independent variables under investigation. Hence, there was no basis for including them as control variables.

As shown in Table 3, the independent variables explained a significant amount of variance in tak-

---

**TABLE 2**

Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Reliabilities, and Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Taking charge</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Top management openness</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Group norms</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. General self-efficacy</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Felt responsibility</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Expert power</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organization level</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Job tenure</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Organizational tenure</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Age</td>
<td>28.71</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Genderb</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a The final sample size was 265 because 10 cases were eliminated. Cronbach's alphas appear on the diagonal for multiple-item measures.

*b Coding: 1 = woman.

*p < .05

**p < .01
TABLE 3
Results of Regression Analysis for Taking Charge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top management openness</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>2.87**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group norms</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General self-efficacy</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>4.43***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt responsibility</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>5.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert power</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job tenure$^b$</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational level$^b$</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>17.50***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$The final sample size was 265 because 10 cases were eliminated.
$^b$Control variable.

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

...ing charge ($R^2 = .27$, adjusted $R^2 = .23$, $F = 17.50$, $p < .001$). In support of Hypothesis 1, top management openness was significantly related to taking charge ($\beta = .15, t = 2.87, p < .01$). Hypothesis 2, on the other hand, did not receive support. Group norms were unrelated to taking charge ($\beta = .02, t = 0.36, \text{n.s.}$). Hypotheses 3 and 4 were both supported. Taking charge was related to both self-efficacy ($\beta = .20, t = 4.43, p < .001$) and felt responsibility ($\beta = .28, t = 5.62, p < .001$). However, taking charge was unrelated to expert power ($\beta = .05, t = 1.02, \text{n.s.}$), providing no support for Hypothesis 5.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Consistent with our predictions, the results of this study indicated that employees were more likely to take charge when they perceived top management as open to employee suggestions and to employee-initiated change. This finding highlights the importance of a context that conveys to employees that this form of extrarole behavior will not be met with resistance or entail high political risks. When employees perceive that top management supports constructive efforts to bring about improvement, they may be more confident that taking charge will be effective and less concerned about potential costs.

Also consistent with our predictions, employees were more likely to take charge to the extent that they had a high level of self-efficacy and an internalized sense of responsibility for bringing about change in their workplaces. These results demonstrate that the decision about whether or not to take charge is affected not only by context, but also by individual characteristics. Hence, even within the same organization, some individuals may be more likely to take charge than others—specifically, those with high self-efficacy and felt responsibility.

We had predicted that taking charge would also be encouraged by supportive group norms. However, norms did not explain any unique variance in the dependent variable; there was a significant zero-order correlation between norms and taking charge, but the fact that norms did not have an effect when other variables were controlled implies that the correlation was most likely spurious. One possible explanation for the nonsignificant effect is that we did not control for group cohesiveness. Hackman (1983) noted that group norms only affect individual behavior where group cohesiveness is high, and respondents in this study may not have been members of cohesive work groups. The lack of support for our prediction may also reflect the fact that we did not assess perceived need for change. It is possible that within some work groups that are highly supportive of change, enough change is initiated by others that a given employee will feel less need to initiate change him- or herself. Because these ideas are merely speculative, we encourage researchers to explore in more depth the relationship between work group characteristics and taking charge.

The other unsupported prediction was that the amount of power possessed by an employee would explain unique variance in taking charge. We focused specifically on expert power (French & Raven, 1962; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). It is possible, however, that this is not the most relevant form of power with respect to taking charge. Alternatively, the lack of support for this hypothesis may reflect methodological shortcomings. The scale that we used to assess expert power has not been used in previously published work, and there is relatively limited evidence of the measure's construct validity.

Implications for Research and for Practice

The results of this study make an important contribution to the literature on extrarole behavior. Despite a growing body of work in this area, existing research has provided a limited view of extrarole behavior by neglecting activities aimed at changing the status quo (cf. Van Dyne et al., 1995). This study takes a first step toward addressing that gap, by providing insight into more challenging, risky, and effortful forms of discretionary employee behavior. It thereby broadens current conceptual-
izations of extrarole behaviors within organizations, going beyond the more mundane cooperative and helping behaviors that have been the focus of existing research. Our results indicate that taking charge is conceptually distinct from these more traditional forms of extrarole behavior, and they suggest that it is motivated by factors that have not previously been studied in the context of these more traditional forms of extrarole behavior.

This study also contributes to research on extrarole behavior by developing and validating a measure that can be used in subsequent studies. We engaged in a rigorous and multistep process to develop a measure of taking charge. This process focused on developing a representative set of activities with high face validity. Steps were also taken during the scale development process to demonstrate discriminant validity and, in particular, that the activities fell outside of what is generally expected or required for the types of employees included in this study. An additional methodological strength of this study was the use of coworker reports and the fact that for many of the respondents, we had data from two different coworkers. Many past studies of extrarole behavior have relied upon self-reports, which tend to exhibit inflated correlations with predictor variables because of common method bias (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Further, of those studies that have assessed extrarole behavior from supervisors' or peers' reports, most have relied upon a single report per focal employee, which makes it impossible to determine whether that source is providing a reliable assessment of the focal employee's behavior. Although the level of agreement between coworkers in this study was not as high as we would have liked, it provides at least reasonable evidence of interrater reliability.

In addition to their implications for research on extrarole behavior, the results of this study are also relevant to research on other forms of employee-initiated change. Although several scholars have highlighted the importance of employee-driven change for ensuring organizational effectiveness (Ashford et al., 1998; Frese et al., 1996; Frohman, 1997; Hornstein, 1986; Kanter, 1983; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Staw & Boettger, 1990; Van Dyne et al., 1995), relatively little is known about motivating factors (Scott & Bruce, 1994). This study addressed that gap in the literature by suggesting ways in which organizations can encourage employees to bring about change in their workplaces. At a practical level, our results suggest that top management can encourage more employee-directed change by conveying that they are open to recommendations from below and by behaving in a way that signals this openness. The results also suggest that in situations where a high level of employee-initiated change and innovation are desirable, organizations should try to select employees with high levels of self-efficacy and felt responsibility, or alternatively, try to develop those attributes among their employees.

This study also provides insight (albeit speculative) into the emergence of informal leaders within organizations. Kotter argued that a fundamental function of leadership is "constructive or adaptive change" (1990: 5). As such, individuals who take charge can be viewed as demonstrating a form of leadership, and our results suggest conditions under which they will be more likely to do so. This argument is significant since the term leadership often implies a particular hierarchical level and role—one in which the incumbent is not just expected to initiate change, but also has legitimate authority and the power to do so. In contrast, individuals who take charge are not formally expected to initiate change and may undertake change initiatives without the benefit of formal authority. Individuals who are effective at taking charge are those who can exercise influence without relying upon mere position, a form of leadership that is becoming increasingly important as organizations become less hierarchical and more reliant on horizontal networks, cross-functional teams, and informal influence.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The contributions of this study must be considered in light of its limitations. One limitation is that not all of the individuals surveyed responded to the survey, and of those who did respond, not all provided coworker names. It is possible that individuals who do not exhibit much taking charge behavior were less likely to complete the survey or less likely to provide coworker names. It is also possible that coworkers were less likely to respond if the employee whom they were rating did not exhibit much taking charge behavior. Either of these dynamics may have created selection bias. The high mean for taking charge suggests that we may have indeed ended up with a sample of people disproportionately inclined to take charge, although there is no way to determine this with certainty.

Another factor that may have contributed to the high mean for taking charge is that some of the focal employees were in managerial positions, where taking charge is apt to be more common and accepted. Our data provide some evidence of a link between managerial position and taking charge. There was a small yet positive correlation between taking charge and our measure of organizational level (r = .13, p < .05). Given our focus on professional/managerial employees, we recommend that
future studies test whether our model will generalize to other populations, particularly populations where taking charge is likely to be more unusual (for instance, clerical or blue-collar employees).

Another limitation of this study is that in some cases where there were two coworker informants, those individuals provided divergent evaluations of the focal employee's behavior. Although we took detailed steps to develop the measure of taking charge, these divergent evaluations raise some questions about construct validity and about the scale's reliability. We recommend that in future studies in this area, researchers obtain ratings from multiple sources so that issues of interrater agreement can be more clearly addressed.

The discriminant validity of our measure of taking charge should also be further assessed. Although taking charge is part of a large domain of extrarole behaviors, we view it as conceptually different from extrarole behaviors that do not challenge the status quo. The results of our confirmatory factor analysis support this viewpoint: taking charge was shown to be related to, yet distinct from, the altruism and civic virtue forms of OCB. However, the fact that it was related to altruism and civic virtue raises the question of whether the antecedents of taking charge that we identified are unique to taking charge. In other words, is there discrimination among the nomological networks of the various forms of extrarole behavior?

Although we did not collect data to address this issue, we do have some indirect evidence that the nomological network for taking charge is distinct from the nomological network for OCB, which has been the main focus within the extrarole behavior literature. There have been numerous studies of antecedents to OCB, yet none has identified the variables that we assessed in this study (Organ & Ryan, 1995). That suggests to us that these variables are unlikely to be major determinants of nonchallenging forms of extrarole behavior. The antecedents to taking charge that we studied have been discussed in the context of other change-oriented behaviors, because we intentionally drew upon research on related constructs in developing our model. The presence of these antecedents in the literature on related constructs raises concerns about whether the set of antecedents that we studied is equally predictive of other forms of challenging behavior. Examining this issue was outside of the scope and intent of this study. However, we recommend future research assessment of the degree to which the nomological networks of various extrarole behavior constructs are convergent or discriminable.

An additional limitation of this study is that, because data were not collected over time, the results fail to reflect the dynamic nature of the decision about whether to take charge. We suspect that there are feedback loops in this process and that at any given point in time, this decision is heavily influenced by the success of past efforts to initiate change. Further, the independent variables affecting the decision about whether to take charge may change as individuals attempt to take charge and are either successful or unsuccessful. These changes may in turn affect an individual's level of persistence. For example, an employee who decides to take charge partially because of his or her evaluation that top management is supportive may decide to discontinue the effort if he or she learns that top management views the change initiative the employee is putting forth unfavorably. By obtaining measures of our variables at a single point in time, we obviously missed some of these temporal dynamics. We encourage longitudinal research so that this dynamic process can be more fully understood.

Although this study provides a useful first step toward understanding the construct of taking charge, it is important to recognize that it assessed only a few of the many variables that may encourage this activity. Future research should focus on identifying a broader set of predictors, especially those that are counterintuitive or novel. This initial study also leaves unanswered some important questions about the taking charge construct. One such question relates to the organizational implications of this activity. We have argued that, like other forms of extrarole behavior, taking charge is organizationally functional. Yet this argument is a bit simplistic. In most cases, it is impossible to predict with complete certainty whether the outcomes associated with a given course of action will be positive or negative. Thus, an action that is intended to bring about functional change may in some cases have a dysfunctional effect. Furthermore, because organizations are characterized by multiple stakeholders and multiple goals, an outcome regarded as positive from the perspective of one stakeholder or goal may be viewed as negative from the perspective of another.

It must also be recognized that taking charge entails behavior that deviates from prescribed roles and, consequently, that it may be viewed as threatening by peers or supervisors. Thus, an employee who is trying to bring about improvement may actually incite disharmony and tensions that will detract from performance. It is also possible that excessive amounts of taking charge will be dysfunctional. Unfortunately, it is often hard to determine the dividing line between change-directed behavior that contributes something valuable and
that which goes too far and thus results in the
destruction of a reasonably well-functioning sys-
tem. An important task for future research is to
identify conditions under which taking charge is
likely to harm rather than help an organization.
Identifying these conditions will provide an even richer understanding of this phenomenon.

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