

Perceived Organizational Support: Why Caring About Employees Counts

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Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav. 2020.
7:101–24

First published as a Review in Advance on
September 10, 2019

The *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and
Organizational Behavior* is online at
orgpsych.annualreviews.org

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-044917>

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Keywords

perceived organizational support, social exchange theory, leadership, fairness, employee well-being, socioemotional benefits

Abstract

According to organizational support theory (OST), employees develop a general perception concerning the extent to which their work organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (perceived organizational support, or POS). We explain OST and review empirical POS findings relevant to OST's main propositions, including new findings that suggest changes to OST. Major antecedents of POS include fairness, support from leaders, and human resource practices and work conditions, especially to the extent that employees perceive these as the discretionary choices of organizations. Among more recent findings, the average level of POS has modestly increased over the past three decades in the United States. Furthermore, POS appears to have stronger positive outcomes in Eastern cultures than Western cultures. Some additional promising recent areas of research on POS include trickle-down effects, POS of groups, and POS as relevant to creativity and innovation, positive emotional outcomes, and well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al. 1986). POS was conceived three decades ago when the first author and his graduate students were discussing how research on employees' commitment to the organization failed to take into account the organization's commitment to them. We reasoned that POS might contribute to employees' commitment to the organization and to other positive employee attitudes and behaviors.

Research on POS has been widespread because of its clear antecedents and major consequences, including favorable employee attitudes, performance, and well-being. Since the initial work on POS in the 1980s, research has gathered momentum with more than 1,200 studies conducted to date. The present selective qualitative review is designed to introduce readers to the theory underlying POS [organizational support theory (OST)], fundamental POS findings, and notable findings too few in number to be included in the most recent POS meta-analysis (Kurtessis et al. 2017). We first discuss the basics of OST, followed by our review of contemporary research as guided by the model in **Figure 1**. With each topic, we include practical implications and future research directions. Because OST was developed three decades ago to explain employee-organizational relationships and was developed in an individualistic culture, we also examine the changing workplace as relevant to POS and provide a consideration of research on cultural values as relevant to POS.

OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT THEORY

The work organization is, of course, a nonliving entity with no personality or motives of its own. However, Levinson (1965) argued that humans personify powerful entities such as the work organization. According to Levinson, the following features of the organization contribute to such personification: The organization has (a) responsibility for the actions of its agents, (b) continuity provided by organizational culture and norms, and (c) considerable power exerted, through its agents, over individual employees. OST (Eisenberger et al. 1986) posits employees view the organization as a living being, having purpose and intention. Thus, employees form POS as a

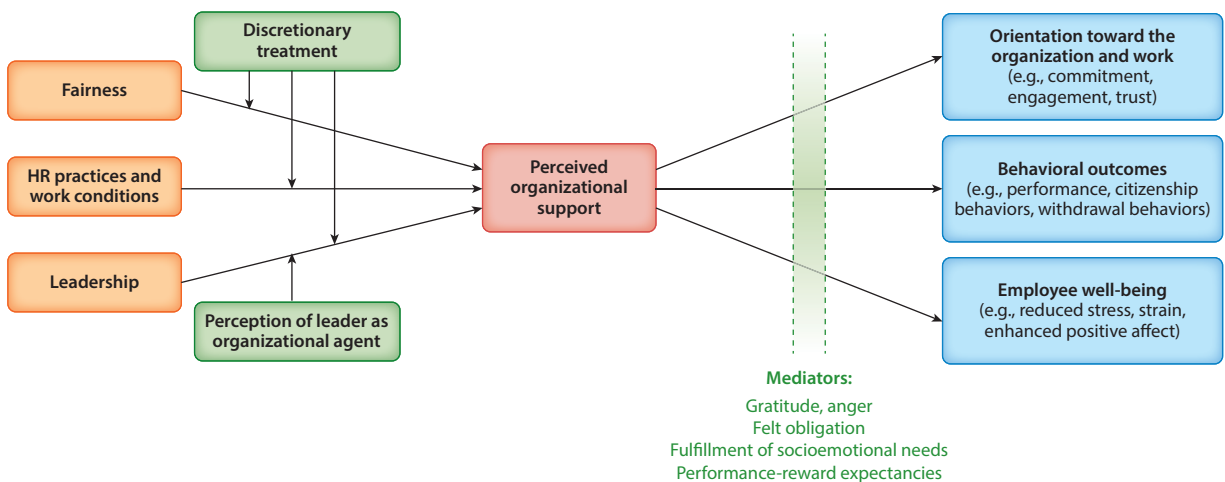


Figure 1

Theoretical model of antecedents (orange), outcomes (blue), and mechanisms (green) involved in organizational support theory. Figure adapted from Baran et al. (2012) with permission from SpringerNature.

meaningful explanation for past perceived favorable or unfavorable treatment from the organization and to help predict future treatment. As an outcome of personification, POS meets employees' socioemotional needs (e.g., approval, affiliation, esteem, and emotional support) and indicates the potential benefits of exhibiting greater efforts on the organization's behalf.

As **Figure 1** shows, major antecedents of POS are organizational fairness, support from leaders, and human resource practices and work conditions (Kurtessis et al. 2017, Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). OST invokes both social exchange theory and self-enhancement processes to explain how these antecedents contribute to favorable attitudes and behaviors directed toward the organization. Concerning social exchange, POS should elicit the norm of reciprocity, leading to greater efforts on behalf of the organization because of perceived indebtedness or felt obligation and expected reward. Recent research suggests gratitude and other positive emotions resulting from POS may also contribute to enhanced employee performance based on social exchange processes (Ford et al. 2018). Self-enhancement processes involve POS's fulfillment of employees' socioemotional needs: High POS may fulfill needs for approval, esteem, emotional support, affiliation, etc., resulting in employee identification with the organization. Employees who identify with the organization may, in turn, develop similar values to the organization, resulting in affective organizational commitment (Meyer et al. 2006).

According to OST, a major determinant of POS concerns whether employees attribute perceived favorable treatment to the voluntary choice of the organization or to external factors that forced the favorable treatment (Eisenberger et al. 1997). For example, a new policy of sharing profits would be likely to be considered by employees to be a voluntary act by the organization and therefore to produce an increase in POS. In contrast, an increase in wages mandated by a change in government regulation should have little effect on POS because an extraneous factor forced the favorable treatment.

Turning now to outcomes of POS, POS leads to behaviors that are specified in employees' stated job responsibilities (in-role performance) and even more so in activities that go beyond standard performance and contribute to the organization's welfare (extrarole behavior) (Kurtessis et al. 2017, Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). POS also reduces behaviors harmful to the organization (counterproductive work behaviors) (Kurtessis et al. 2017, Shanock & Eisenberger 2006). For example, the first article on POS (Eisenberger et al. 1986) found teachers' absenteeism was lower among those with high POS, especially if they strongly endorsed the norm of reciprocity as applied to the workplace. POS is also related to increased employee well-being, including overall job satisfaction and work-family balance (Kurtessis et al. 2017). POS directly reduces stress or moderates the relationship between stressors and strain. As an example, an early study found nurses exposed to AIDS patients (as part of their jobs) experienced less negative affect at work if their POS was high (George et al. 1993). We now consider in more detail the relationships of POS with its major antecedents and consequences including the processes that mediate these relationships and moderators that influence their strength.

We developed 36 statements to assess POS and administered the items to employees of varying vocations. Logically, the two halves of the definition of POS, "valuing contributions" and "caring about well-being," are separate issues. However, we found employees form a holistic view of perceived support from the organization incorporating both aspects of the definition of POS. Responses to every one of the 36 statements were highly predictive of each other. **Table 1** provides 10 items from the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al. 1986) for researchers and practitioners to use in their research or practice. The table contains highly loading items from the original 36-item scale that capture both halves of the POS definition. All 10 items are exclusively positively worded to avoid such problems as reduced internal consistency and multiple factors structures (e.g., Barnette 2000).

Table 1 Recommended Survey of Perceived Organizational Support items for use in research or practice

| Item | Factor loading ^a |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. The organization values my contribution to its well-being. | 0.71 |
| 2. The organization strongly considers my goals and values. | 0.74 |
| 3. Help is available from the organization when I have a problem. | 0.74 |
| 4. The organization really cares about my well-being. | 0.83 |
| 5. The organization wishes to give me the best possible job for which I am qualified. | 0.67 |
| 6. The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work. | 0.82 |
| 7. The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work. | 0.76 |
| 8. The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part. | 0.66 |
| 9. The organization is willing to extend itself to help me perform my job to the best of my ability. | 0.80 |
| 10. The organization cares about my opinions. | 0.82 |

^aFactor loadings are from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) original scale development and validation article.

CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT WITH ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES

In a previous review, Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) noted the widespread use of bivariate cross-sectional procedures involving the same source to assess POS and its hypothesized antecedents and consequences. These designs often leave substantial doubt concerning the direction of the relationship between POS and the presumptive antecedent or consequence. Empirical methods used by most studies on POS have since advanced by providing one or more of the following: (a) covariates that may account for the association, (b) temporal separation of POS with hypothesized antecedents or consequences, (c) mediational designs that may include tests of alternative models, (d) panel designs that examine the temporal change in the outcome variable and (e) experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which different groups of employees are assigned supportive versus control treatments. Most of the studies we examine are theory-derived and incorporate procedures *a*, *b*, and *c*, providing a moderate improvement over the state of the literature reported on in the 2002 review. Furthermore, many studies of consequences of POS now report outcomes from sources distinct from POS, and the same is true for a more limited number of studies of antecedents of POS (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). With regard to the direction of causality between POS and hypothesized antecedents or consequences, some studies are beginning to provide relatively strong evidence of direction of causality. For example, panel studies report that POS is positively related to changes in affective commitment (Rhoades et al. 2001) and performance (Chen et al. 2009). Also, experimental or quasi-experimental studies found that the favorableness of support reported in written communications influenced students' POS (Caesens et al. 2017) and that supervisor support training reduced abusive supervision and increased supervisor supportive behavior (Gonzalez-Morales et al. 2018). We recommend investigators enhance their contributions to the POS literature by continuing to use research designs that lessen same source bias and by providing evidence concerning the causal direction the theory suggests.

ANTECEDENTS OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Fairness and Perceived Organizational Support

Fairness is a commonly studied antecedent of POS. Justice researchers often divide fairness into three types: distributive, procedural, and interactional (e.g., Colquitt 2001). Distributive justice involves the fairness of resource distributions. Procedural justice concerns the fairness of the

decision-making process that decides the distributions of resources (Colquitt 2001). Interactional justice is often divided into two subtypes: informational justice, which refers to employees' access to information regarding organizational procedures, and interpersonal justice, which refers to the dignity and respect with which individuals are treated during decision processes (Colquitt 2001).

Of the justice types, procedural justice has been found to be particularly relevant for POS (Kurtessis et al. 2017, Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). These meta-analytic findings are not surprising because organizations are generally perceived to have considerable control over the procedures involved in resource distributions (including rewards and human resource benefits), so judgments of fairness regarding procedures can greatly influence perceptions of organizational support. In the most recent POS meta-analysis, procedural justice has the strongest fairness association with POS, followed by distributive justice and interactional justice, respectively (Kurtessis et al. 2017).

The evidence supporting a strong relationship between procedural justice and POS suggests procedural justice is a good candidate for convincing employees of the organization's positive view of them. Features of procedural justice such as transparency and consistency in decision making, impartiality, and employee input into the decision-making process readily influence procedural fairness judgments and therefore could be used to promote POS. Because anticipation of POS begins to form early in the job application process, strategies that promote perceptions of procedural justice could be used to increase POS among new employees (Zheng et al. 2016). Research also suggests employees may distinguish between justice from different sources, which may have different levels of influence on POS. For example, Karriker & Williams (2009) examined the multifoci model of justice (i.e., justice perceptions from either the organization or supervisors) and found organization-referenced procedural and distributive justice were more closely associated with POS than agent-referenced procedural and distributive justice.

The relationship of organizational justice with POS has also been investigated in nontraditional work relationships. Contingent employees working for two organizations simultaneously (a staffing agency and a client organization) have two sources of perceived justice, which might influence their POS regarding each source. Consistent with this view, procedural justice of the staffing agency was found to be associated with POS related to the staffing agency, and procedural justice of the client organization was found to be positively associated with POS for the client agency (Liden et al. 2003). This finding suggests associations between justice and POS could play important roles in the maintenance of contingent employees' relationships with both staffing agencies and client organizations. Thus, in the case of contingent workers, OST could be extended to consider the fact that contingent workers have relationships with both a client organization and a staffing agency and that the antecedents of OST, in addition to justice, could be tested to see if they hold similarly as predictors of POS for contingent workers.

Leader Support and Perceived Organizational Support

Kurtessis et al.'s (2017) meta-analysis reported various forms of supportive leadership perceptions, such as leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived supervisor support, and transformational leadership, were positively related to POS. Transformational leadership, which includes conveying caring and concern for employees, was more closely related to POS than transactional leadership, which is more focused on dispensation of rewards in exchange for high performance. These findings are consistent with OST. An important postulate of OST is that favorable treatment contributes to POS to the extent that an organizational unit providing favorable treatment is perceived to embody the organization. An organizational unit can be a person

(such as a coworker, supervisor, upper manager, or CEO) or a more-encompassing organizational unit (i.e., a workgroup, team, or division): Employees may view all these units as embodying the organization to some degree. OST contends employees often view supervisors as embodying the organization because they act as agents of the organization, having the responsibility of directing and evaluating subordinates' performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). Therefore, employees attribute favorable treatment received from supervisors to their work organization.

Some studies have directly assessed employees' perceptions of organizational embodiment. Consistent with OST, the relationships of LMX and transformational leadership with POS were greater for employees who perceived their supervisors to have high organizational embodiment (Eisenberger et al. 2001, Stinglhamber et al. 2015). Interestingly, supervisors who employees rate as embodying the organization have been found to make more favorable comments to subordinates about the organization; this favorable treatment from such supervisors was more strongly linked to high subordinate POS (Eisenberger et al. 2010). As salient faces of the organization, supervisors may enhance POS by giving or sharing credit with the organization for the favorable treatment of subordinates. Thus, organizations could train supervisors and managers to give public credit to the organization, as well as themselves, for favorable treatment of employees to build employee POS.

Trickle-Down Effects of Supporting Leaders

Supervisors may repay the organization for favorable treatment through their own more supportive leadership (Masterson 2001). Such downward reciprocity behaviors have been called trickle-down effects (Masterson 2001) (**Figure 2**). As evidence of the trickle-down effect in POS, several studies have reported supervisors who perceived support from the organization, or their manager passed on supportive treatment to subordinates. Shanock & Eisenberger (2006) found supervisors' POS was positively related to subordinates' perceived support from their supervisor which, in turn, was related to the subordinates' POS. Another study found that the relationship of LMX with employee satisfaction and performance was greater for supervisors who experienced high POS (Erdogan & Enders 2007). Similarly, the relationship between LMX and POS for a supervisor and subordinate was greater when that supervisor had a good relationship with their own boss (Tangirala et al. 2007; see, however, Sluss et al. 2008). Also, supervisors who believed

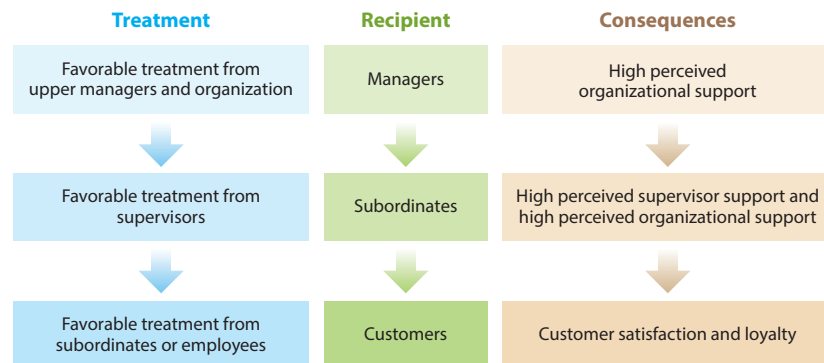


Figure 2

Trickle-down effects of perceived organizational support. Figure adapted from Eisenberger & Stinglhamber (2011) with permission of the American Psychological Association.

the organization treated them fairly (an antecedent of POS) treated their subordinates more supportively (Tepper & Taylor 2003).

The findings discussed above support the OST assertion that favorable treatment of supervisors or managers enhances their treatment of subordinates, with positive consequences for the subordinates' POS (trickle-down effect). One recent study directly assessed mechanisms through which the supervisor's own POS trickles down to result in favorable consequences for subordinates (Frear et al. 2018). The two mechanisms examined included (a) supervisors' felt obligation to reciprocate to the organization's supportive treatment and (b) supervisors' belief that supportive treatment of subordinates is what the organization expects and desires. The findings of the study suggest leaders' belief that their organization prefers supportive treatment, resulting from leaders' own POS, contributes more to subordinates' perceptions of supervisor support than does felt obligation. This important finding, based on concurrent measurement of the constructs, warrants replication with repeated measurements to assess the causal directions among the constructs. Similarly, as Eisenberger & Stinglhamber (2011) suggest, positive treatment by supervisors may signal to subordinates that the organization expects similar positive treatment of customers or internal clients and coworkers.

Next steps in research on the trickle-down effect could also include investigating what antecedents might be most strongly associated with supervisors' POS. That is, how can the organization effectively communicate support to supervisors to create high levels of their own POS that may trickle down to subordinates? Applying OST, supervisors, as with their subordinates, desire fair treatment from their managers, as well as favorable human resource practices and work conditions. As an extension of OST, decision latitude when it comes to budget and personnel decisions, resources that help subordinates better carry out their jobs, and training geared toward the development of leadership skills may be antecedents of leaders' POS.

Abusive Supervision and Perceived Organizational Support

Another recent trend in POS research as relevant to leadership involves abusive supervision. In three samples of employees, abusive supervision was associated with reduced POS, particularly when the supervisor strongly embodied the organization (Shoss et al. 2013). However, the negative relationship between POS and abusive supervision was substantially less than the size of the relationship commonly found between POS and supportive supervision (Kurtessis et al. 2017). Perhaps, more than in the case of positive treatment, employees abused by supervisors ascribe the treatment to the personal characteristics of the supervisor rather than to the organization. Alternatively, the use of extremely negative wording of abusive supervision surveys may produce a range restriction which hides the true relationship.

Human Resource Practices and Work Conditions and Perceived Organizational Support

Many favorable human resource practices and work conditions communicating the organization's positive regard for employees should be substantially related to POS (Shore & Shore 1995) (Table 2). The most recent POS meta-analysis reported significant associations between POS and the perceived favorableness of a variety of human resource practices including developmental opportunities and family supportive organizational practices as well as job conditions including job enrichment conditions, role stressors, and benefit use (Kurtessis et al. 2017). Kurtessis et al. found the human resource practice of providing developmental opportunities was found to be most strongly related to POS (corrected $r = 0.57$). Because developmental training opportunities

Table 2 Summary of practical implications

| Category | Practical implications |
|---|---|
| Fairness and perceived organizational support (POS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Procedural and distributive fairness are strongly linked to POS. ■ Transparency and consistency of, and input into, the decision-making process could be used to promote POS. ■ Because anticipation of POS begins to form early among new employees, strategies that promote perceptions of procedural justice early in employment are advisable. |
| Leader support and POS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As salient representatives of the organization, supervisors may enhance POS by sharing credit with the organization for the favorable treatment of subordinates. Thus, organizations could train supervisors and managers to give public credit to the organization, as well as themselves, for favorable treatment of employees. ■ When leaders with high POS treat subordinates more favorably they, in turn, display greater POS. Therefore, organizations should promote leaders' POS. |
| Human resource practices and work conditions and POS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developmental opportunities that further professional goals may be very effective in increasing the POS of many employees. Thus, managers can implement creative and strategic human resource practices to position their organizations as supportive of employees, such as offering personalized developmental opportunities. ■ It appears that for favorable treatment by the organization to have much influence on POS, the treatment must be viewed by employees as involving the free choice of the organization. Pointing out the voluntary aspects of favorable treatment and the involuntary aspects of unfavorable treatment should enhance POS. ■ When organizations offer generous benefits, repeated communication of their value in comparison with what other organizations offer may help stave off adaptation to the benefits. |
| POS and employees' orientation toward the organization and work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employees who feel supported by the organization are likely to have a combination of high levels of affective and normative commitment. ■ In contingent workers, POS from the client organization may be associated with outcomes for the staffing organization, and vice versa. ■ POS has been found to be positively related to employees' intrinsic interest and engagement in their work. |
| POS and behavioral outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ POS is associated with increased extrarole behaviors that help the organization meet its objectives and with reduced behaviors harmful to the organization. POS can be used by organizations as a tool for enhancing various employee outcomes because it is a valued resource that employees are obliged to reciprocate because of the reciprocity norm and because POS creates an increased expectation that high effort on behalf of the organization will be rewarded. ■ POS has been found to reduce risky creative behavior but increase safe creative behavior. ■ Employees with high POS are more likely to speak up about safety problems. ■ POS promotes acceptance of new technologies perhaps by relieving the stress associated with fear of failure and by increasing intrinsic motivation to look for ways to perform better. |
| POS and employee well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ POS has been found to be associated with increased job satisfaction and reduced stress. Thus, POS may be useful in reducing the emotional or cognitive burden felt by employees when jobs are stressful or distressing. |
| POS and groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coaching leaders to better communicate how much they value the contributions of their workgroup has the promise of enhancing employee workgroup POS. ■ Leaders may be trained to treat subordinates more favorably by helping them understand the situational pressures that produce supervisor abusive behavior and teaching them supportive ways to address employee errors. |
| POS and evolving jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some have suggested POS may be declining because organizations treat employees more poorly than in the past. However, POS has actually increased in the United States over the past 30 years. |
| POS across cultures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ POS and organizational support theory may have been developed within the context of Western culture, but the influence of POS on outcomes appears even stronger among collectivistic nations. |

are viewed by most employees as highly discretionary practices on the part of the organization, their implementation may contribute substantially to POS (Eisenberger et al. 1997, Wayne et al. 1997). Developmental opportunities attract and retain employees not only by increasing POS but also by furthering professional goals. Perhaps because their benefits were restricted to use by a limited portion of employees, weaker relationships with POS were found for flexible work schedule ($r = 0.21$) and family supportive practices ($r = 0.26$). A practical implication of these findings is that managers can implement creative and strategic human resource practices such as offering personalized developmental opportunities or family supportive practices that will position their organizations as supportive of employees. Also, future research examining how and why certain human resource practices aid development of POS in new employees would be useful.

In addition to human resource practices, work role characteristics including job enrichment conditions and role stressors have been studied in relation to POS. Specific work conditions such as autonomy and participation in decision making convey the organization's trust in employees to make wise decisions (Eisenberger et al. 1999). Accordingly, the Kurtessis et al. (2017) meta-analysis found job enrichment conditions, autonomy, and participation in decision making were substantially correlated with POS. In contrast, three role stressors—role ambiguity, concerning the absence of clarity of role expectations; role conflict, concerning the conflict among multiple role expectations; and work overload, concerning the job responsibility that exceeds what one can handle in a given time—showed weak negative correlations with POS (e.g., Panaccio & Vandenberghe 2009, Stamper & Johlke 2003). Notably, Eisenberger et al. (1997) reported that employees attributed stress and pressure much more to the nature of the job than to the intent of their organization. Although stress and pressure do not appear to be a strong source of POS, research reviewed in Baran et al. (2012) and Kurtessis et al. (2017) suggests POS may serve to reduce the outcomes of stress and pressure on employee burnout and other well-being outcomes. POS also sometimes buffers the relationships of stress and pressure with attitudinal and behavioral responses (e.g., job satisfaction, intent to remain, and role-based performance) (Stamper & Johlke 2003, Wallace et al. 2009). We discuss these relationships in more detail in the section on POS and employee well-being.

Benefits specific to an individual's needs should elicit stronger POS as they symbolize the organization's concern for individual employees' well-being (Eisenberger et al. 1986, Gouldner 1960). Utilization of benefits, instead of their mere availability, indicates the benefits better meet individual needs and should be more strongly associated with POS (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011). Yet, Kurtessis et al.'s (2017) meta-analysis revealed only a weak relationship between benefit use and POS (corrected $r = 0.08$), which should be judged cautiously because few studies reporting this relationship were available. Future research could examine conditions under which benefit use relates more or less strongly to POS. For example, benefits widely used but of minimal benefit to employees (e.g., health insurance that is widely used but that has high deductibles or copay amounts) may contribute little to POS.

A related issue to benefit use is the importance of benefit value. Employees vary in their situations and needs, thus should differ in their perceptions of benefit value and importance (Weathington & Tetrick 2000). Lambert (2000) found a positive association between employees' perceived usefulness of benefits and POS. She argued that to the extent such benefits as work-life practices became commonplace in organizations, employees would no longer view them as a sign of the organizations' positive regard. Rather, they tend to consider the benefits more as a basic right than a privilege, which may contribute little to build perceptions of support. When organizations offer generous benefits, repeated communication of their value in comparison with what other organizations offer may help stave off adaptation to the benefits.

CONSEQUENCES OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Mechanisms Linking Perceived Organizational Support to Outcomes

OST attributes a variety of outcomes of POS to social exchange processes and the fulfillment of socioemotional needs (Eisenberger et al. 1986, Kurtessis et al. 2017). **Figure 1** lists these mechanisms horizontally and encloses them in dashed lines.

Social exchange processes. According to OST, POS is a valued resource, the receipt of which employees are obliged to reciprocate because of the reciprocity norm. The theory holds that meeting one's obligations for generous treatment helps maintain one's self-image as a worthwhile member of society who repays debts, avoids the disrepute that follows norm violations, and encourages future generous treatment (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011, p. 31). Two studies found that perceived indebtedness mediated the relationship between POS and outcomes. Eisenberger et al.'s (2001) study of postal employees found indebtedness mediated the relationships of POS and affective commitment, extrarole performance, and in-role performance. Caesens et al. (2016) reported change in indebtedness mediated the relationship between POS and proactive behavior directed toward the organization (e.g., making suggestions to improve organizational efficiency, improving organizational effectiveness). Also consistent with the view that the norm of reciprocity plays an important role in the consequences of POS, Eisenberger et al. (2001) found employees' dispositional tendency to accept the reciprocity norm had a positive relationship with perceived indebtedness to the organization. OST also holds that POS creates an increased expectation that high effort on behalf of the organization will be rewarded. Consistent with this view, Eisenberger et al. (1990) found a positive association between POS and performance-reward expectancies with a sample of manufacturing employees and their managers.

Positive emotion may be another important social exchange mechanism linking POS to employee performance and well-being. Lawler's (Lawler & Thye 1999, Lawler 2001) affect theory of social exchange maintains social exchanges with positive outcomes produce global feelings of affective uplift that individuals are motivated to reinstate. The theory holds that individuals are motivated to understand the causes of positive feelings in order to reinstate them. Favorable treatment attributed to a concern with the recipient's welfare would lead to the emotion of gratitude (Weiner 1985). In the case of POS, the organization's perceived positive valuation of the employee, in terms of both the employee's well-being and respect for the employee's contributions, should produce gratitude. Accordingly, gratitude was found to mediate the relationship between sales employees' POS and performance beyond any influence of perceived indebtedness (Eisenberger et al. 2018).

In contrast, low POS signifies an organization's perceived lack of concern with an employee's welfare and its failure to meet its exchange responsibilities, which has been found to lead to anger in the workplace (Ford et al. 2018). Accordingly, anger has been found to mediate the relationship between low POS and increased turnover intentions, absences, and accidents on the job (O'Neill et al. 2009). Anger also mediated the relationship of low POS with the well-being outcomes of increased alcohol consumption and other high-risk health behavior (O'Neill et al. 2009).

The findings on POS and gratitude and anger suggest that OST should be updated, as in **Figure 1**, to incorporate emotion as a mechanism connecting POS and job-related outcomes. Organizations wishing to enhance gratitude and reduce anger in employees may use basic concepts from OST. OST posits that favorable treatment, attributed to organizational discretion, leads to POS (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). Thus, if employees believe favorable treatment and human resource policies are under the discretionary control of the organization, they would be much more likely to attribute such treatment to the organization, with resulting POS and feelings

of gratitude for the favorable treatment. Providing diverse favorable job conditions and human resource policies and pointing out the voluntary aspects of favorable treatment and the involuntary aspects of unfavorable treatment should enhance POS and result in more favorable emotions. Also, supervisors may be trained to treat subordinates more favorably by helping them to understand the situational pressures that produce supervisor abusive behavior and teaching them supportive ways to address employee errors. Such training increased supportive supervision and reduced abuse (Gonzalez-Morales et al. 2018) and may also help reduce negative emotions such as anger experienced by employees.

Self-enhancement processes. POS should help fulfill socioemotional needs including approval, affiliation, esteem, and emotional support, leading, in turn, to enhanced organizational identification, employee well-being, and affective organizational commitment. For example, POS would indicate to employees that the organization views them as superior performers and takes pride in their accomplishments, which should fulfill the need for esteem. POS would also convey that the organization considers employees to be valued members and takes pride in their association with the organization, which should fulfill the need for affiliation. POS would convey a sympathetic understanding of stressful situations at work and indicate a willingness to aid employees in such situations, which should fulfill the need for emotional support. Finally, POS would convey to employees that their behaviors are successfully meeting organizational norms and standards, which should fulfill their need for social approval (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011).

The Kurtessis et al. (2017) meta-analysis found that organizational identification partially mediated the relationships of POS with affective commitment, in-role performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. For example, Marique et al. (2013) found organizational identification partially mediated the relationship between POS and affective commitment for postal employees. On the basis of OST, we would also expect that employees with strong socioemotional needs would find POS especially rewarding. Thus, employees with high socioemotional needs should display a stronger relationship between POS and performance outcomes. Accordingly, Armeli et al. (1998) found that the relationships of POS with speeding citations and driving-under-the-influence arrests were greater for police patrol officers with high needs of esteem, affiliation, emotional support, and social approval.

To date, empirical work examining the various mechanisms responsible for the relationship between POS and outcomes such as perceived indebtedness and organizational identification have typically been studied in isolation. More studies should attempt to investigate multiple mechanisms to assess their relative strengths. We now examine the benefits of POS for employees and their organization.

Perceived Organizational Support and Employees' Orientation Toward the Organization and Work

We first consider the relationship between POS and employees' positive psychological states directed toward the organization such as organizational commitment, work engagement, trust, and cynicism. These outcomes result from the social exchange and self-enhancement mediating processes previously discussed.

Organizational commitment. POS has been consistently found to be the strongest antecedent of affective organizational commitment (Meyer et al. 2002, Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). According to OST, affective organizational commitment occurs when POS meets socioemotional needs of employees and results in increased organizational identification to the organization.

Identification, in turn, leads to affective commitment through the development of shared values between employees and the organization (Meyer et al. 2006). Rhoades et al. (2001) found with two samples of employees that POS was positively related to temporal changes in affective commitment. In addition to affective commitment, POS was also strongly related to normative commitment in the Kurtessis et al. meta-analysis. Normative commitment was originally defined as the obligation to remain with the organization, but the normative commitment construct has become similar in recent years to the social exchange construct of perceived indebtedness (Kurtessis et al. 2017), including activities that aid the organization in addition to retention of organizational membership (Meyer et al. 1993).

Continuance commitment is the third type of organizational commitment and refers to feelings of having to stay with the organization (Meyer & Allen 1991). Although not many studies to date have examined POS and continuance commitment, Shore & Wayne (1993) found POS was positively correlated with affective commitment but not continuance commitment. This finding makes sense given continuance commitment involves the perception of entrapment in the organization by such factors as a romantic partner's unmovable job or the lack of new job opportunities. POS, in contrast, involving positive valuation by the organization, should not be related to such entrapment (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011). Research on commitment profiles (naturally occurring clusters of characteristics in a population) is consistent with these findings. Meyer et al. (2015) investigated profiles of affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment among employees and found that employees with high POS were more likely to have a profile characterized by high levels of affective commitment and normative commitment than a profile characterized by high levels of continuance commitment. In other words, employees who felt supported by the organization were more likely to have a combination of high levels of affective commitment and normative commitment.

POS-organizational commitment relationships have also been studied in work agency arrangements in which agencies hire out employees to an organization temporarily. Studies suggest POS from staffing agencies is associated with contingent employees' commitment to the staffing agencies, whereas POS from client organizations is associated with their commitment to the client organizations (e.g., Coyle-Shapiro & Morrow 2006, Coyle-Shapiro et al. 2006, Liden et al. 2003). Furthermore, Connelly et al. (2007) found the client organization's POS was positively related to contracted employees' affective commitment and continuance commitment to both the staffing agency and the client organization, indicating employees would attribute the favorable treatment from the client organization not only to the client organization, but also to the staffing agency. As such, the effects of POS from one organization may spill over, contributing to the development of a commitment to the other organization. The degree of spillover may be influenced by organizational embodiment, the extent to which employees consider the staffing agency and client agency as much the same entity (Eisenberger et al. 2010).

Work engagement. Work engagement has become a popular topic in business settings as well as in academia in recent years. Work engagement, as defined by Bakker et al. (2008), is a positive, fulfilling, motivational state comprised of vigor, dedication, and absorption. POS could contribute to each of these motivational components. Through the self-enhancement processes discussed previously, POS may enhance employees' self-efficacy and encourage the use of higher-level skills, producing greater intrinsic interest in work (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011). Moreover, POS communicates the organization's valuation of employees' efforts and meets their needs for esteem and approval, which could also promote employees' intrinsic interest and thus their work engagement (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011). Only a few studies have examined the relationship between POS and work engagement. Saks (2006) found POS was positively related to both job

engagement (i.e., engagement with one's work-related role) and organization engagement (i.e., engagement with one's role as a member of the organization), whereas Kinnunen et al. (2008) found POS was positively related to the major aspects of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption). Future research could examine the potential self-enhancement mechanisms involved in the relationship between POS and engagement, such as enhanced self-efficacy or intrinsic motivation. Given that organizations often assess and monitor engagement and are interested in enhancing employee engagement in their firms, the link between POS and engagement gives organizations insight into using support as a malleable lever for enhancing engagement.

Trust and cynicism. Trust is a key component of social exchange and thus may help explain how supported employees develop a positive orientation toward the organization. According to OST, POS should enhance employees' trust in the organization and/or management because trust indicates the organization will not take advantage of employee vulnerabilities (Eisenberger et al. 1990, Shore & Shore 1995). In agreement with this view, meta-analytic findings indicate a positive relationship between POS and trust (Chiaburu et al. 2013). Whitener (2001) found trust in management partially mediated the relationship between POS and affective commitment. Chen et al. (2005) reported trust in the organization mediated the relationships of POS with affective commitment, in-role performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. A related construct to trust is organizational cynicism, which involves a negative appraisal of the motives and values of one's work organization (Bedeian 2007). Meta-analytic findings showed a negative association between POS and organizational cynicism (Chiaburu et al. 2013). Low POS apparently creates cynicism perhaps because it lessens the trust in the organization required to build a solid social exchange relationship.

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

Perceived Organizational Support and Performance, Citizenship Behaviors, Withdrawal Behaviors, and Counterproductive Work Behaviors

POS is related to a wide range of employee behavioral outcomes. For example, the first study on POS by Eisenberger et al. (1986) found POS was related to low absenteeism, especially for employees with a strong exchange ideology. POS was found to be positively associated with changes in in-role performance (Chen et al. 2009). Wayne et al. (1997) reported POS was positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors and negatively related to intentions to quit. Armeli et al. (1998) found a positive relationship between POS and patrol officers' work performance (i.e., driving-under-the-influence arrests and speeding citations).

More generally, the Kurtessis et al. (2017) meta-analysis found that POS was positively related to in-role performance, organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward the organization and toward individuals, and was negatively related to withdrawal behaviors (e.g., absenteeism and turnover intentions) and to counterproductive work behaviors directed toward the organization and toward individuals. Such results are expected given OST's assertion that POS would lead to both a felt obligation to help the organization reach its goals and an enhanced expectation that performance will be rewarded. The meta-analysis also found POS was more strongly related to organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward the organization than to organizational citizenship behavior directed toward individuals. This finding is consistent with OST in that POS should result in a felt obligation to help the organization reach its goals, whereas targeting individuals for help aids the organization less directly and less clearly. This notion is also consistent

with the multifoci model of social exchange in dyadic relationships according to which employees should reciprocate POS more to the organization than to its agents (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005).

Creativity and Innovation

Employee creativity (the generation of novel and useful ideas) plays a pivotal role in organizational effectiveness (Amabile 1988, 1996). POS has been positively related to the constructiveness of new ideas for organization improvement (Eisenberger et al. 1990), idea promotion behaviors (Khazanchi & Masterson 2011), and general measures of creativity (Yu & Frenkel 2013, Zhang et al. 2016). According to OST, POS may enhance creativity through increased employee organizational identification, feelings of obligation, and expectations of future reward (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011). Yu & Frenkel (2013) examined these three mechanisms simultaneously, finding organizational identification and reward expectancy were more potent mediators for the POS-creativity link than felt obligation, whereas the association between POS and task performance was primarily explained by felt obligation. However, reward expectancy in this study was measured in the form of general expectancy of career success rather than expectation of rewards from the organization in exchange for creative performance, which would be more consistent with OST. Future research might examine the role of expectations of rewards specifically for creative performance in the POS-creativity relationship.

Additionally, acting creatively could be risky and stressful as it might challenge the status quo, conflict with other employees' interests and goals, and result in failure (Dewett 2006, Janssen 2004). By conveying to employees the organization's willingness to provide work-related and socioemotional support, POS might make risky creative behavior less worrisome (Khazanchi & Masterson 2011). Accordingly, employees and supervisors with high POS were found to be more trusting than those with low POS, and this trust was related to increased risky behavior helpful to the organization (Neves & Eisenberger 2014).

Safety-Related Behaviors

As Baran et al. (2012) suggest, POS is likely an important part of the overall workplace experience that influences safety at work. OST argues that POS conveys a concern for employees' well-being, which includes keeping them safe from workplace hazards. Therefore, POS, if held widely by employees, might contribute to a general safety climate that could foster safety-related behaviors. Evidence from empirical studies supports this view (e.g., DeJoy et al. 2004, Wallace et al. 2006). For example, DeJoy et al. (2004) found a positive association between POS and safety climate. Wallace et al. (2006) found that organizational support aggregated at the group level led to an enhanced safety climate that, in turn, was associated with fewer accidents. Also, POS was positively related to safety communication; employees with high POS were more likely to speak up about safety problems (e.g., Hofmann & Morgeson 1999). Such communication, Hofmann & Morgeson argued, would result in greater commitment to safety behavior and reduced accidents. Thus, increasing POS may provide a useful way of enhancing safety climate.

Acceptance and Utilization of Technology

Many employees resist new information technology because software and other technologies appear difficult to learn. Research suggests employees' resistance to new information technology is both widespread and costly (Venkatesh et al. 2008). POS might promote acceptance of new technologies by relieving the stress associated with fear of failure (Baran et al. 2012). For instance,

Magni & Pennarola (2008) found POS was positively related to the perceived ease and usefulness of adopting newly introduced technology, which, in turn, affected employees' intention to use the technology. Also, when employees believe they are valued and respected by the organization, they might be more intrinsically motivated to look for ways to perform better, including the adoption of new technology (Mitchell et al. 2012). As such, POS was found to be positively related to the acceptance and enjoyment of information technology via increased intrinsic motivation (Mitchell et al. 2012). These findings are consistent with OST, suggesting that POS helps reduce stress, which then could lead to a host of positive outcomes including acceptance of new technology. More generally, the role of POS in increasing intrinsic interest is a very promising new direction of research.

Customer Service

As the service market becomes more competitive, there has been an increased interest in exploring factors influencing service quality and customer satisfaction (Bowen & Schneider 1995). Service employees receiving favorable treatment from the organization might respond by treating customers better (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber 2011, Masterson 2001). Accordingly, several studies found positive relationships between POS and customers' perception of service quality (e.g., Bell & Menguc 2002, Susskind et al. 2003).

POS may also influence service employees' emotional performances required for their jobs that do not reflect their true emotions (e.g., feigning interest in customers) (Grandey 2003). Such "emotional labor" is often described as containing two types of emotional performances: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting refers to inauthentic emotional displays, whereas deep acting refers to attempts to self-impose appropriate emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993). Deep acting has been more closely related to service quality and employee well-being than surface acting (Grandey 2003, Morris & Feldman 1996). In a recent study of POS and emotional labor, Kumar Mishra (2014) found POS was positively related to deep acting and negatively related to surface acting; the relationship between POS and deep acting was mediated by organizational identification. Perhaps POS meets service employees' socioemotional needs and motivates them to do a more effective job for their organization by treating customers better through strategies such as deep acting. Alternatively, perhaps POS cues employees when the organization expects them to treat customers supportively. Further research is needed to understand how and when POS translates into improved customer service.

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Direct Effects of Perceived Organizational Support on Well-Being and Strain

Baran et al. (2012) noted that the work organization plays a central role in many people's lives and is an important source of socioemotional need fulfillment. According to OST, POS enhances perceptions of approval, affiliation, and competence (Eisenberger et al. 1986, Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). OST also holds that POS reduces strain to the extent that a supportive work organization provides the instrumental or informational support needed to do one's job (Baran et al. 2012, George et al. 1993). Accordingly, meta-analyses and a qualitative review of the literature on POS have found positive relationships between POS and employee well-being (i.e., employee well-being variables such as job satisfaction and positive mood, improved health, and reduced strains such as emotional exhaustion and burnout) (Baran et al. 2012, Kurtessis et al. 2017, Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). Research in POS and employee well-being has been largely cross-sectional and involves self-reported well-being measures. A useful direction

for future research would be to conduct longitudinal studies of relationships between POS and reduced strains and improved physical and mental health to demonstrate potential long-term benefits of POS and to provide stronger evidence for the direction of causality. Also, the use of physiological measures of health in addition to self-reported measures would provide more rigorous evidence of the positive benefits of POS for employee health.

Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support Between Work Stressors and Strain

Work stressors refer to conditions of the work environment (e.g., task stressors, physical stressors, role stressors, social stressors) that may lead to negative consequences for employees (Sonnentag & Frese 2003, Sonnentag & Fritz 2015). The negative consequences of such stressors are often referred to as “strain,” which include affective, physical or behavioral reactions to stress (Sonnentag & Frese 2003). POS, through its socioemotional need-fulfilling function, may change the strength of the relationship between stressors and strains. Baran et al.’s (2012) qualitative review of the POS literature summarized the numerous research studies on such buffering effects of POS (e.g., Byrne & Hochwarter 2008, George et al. 1993, Ilies et al. 2010, Jawahar et al. 2007, Stamper & Johlke 2003). For example, Jawahar et al. (2007) found POS buffered the relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion. Similarly, George et al. (1993) found POS buffered the relationship between nurses’ extent of exposure to AIDS patients and their negative mood. George et al. noted POS might have helped reduce anxiety associated with working with AIDS patients. Through the self-enhancement processes discussed earlier, POS may also have boosted nurses’ self-efficacy in dealing with such patients. Employees with high POS would also have had confidence that their organization would provide them with the information needed to protect themselves against infection.

The findings reviewed above suggest POS may be useful in reducing the emotional or cognitive burden felt by employees when jobs are stressful or distressing. In some cases, organizations might be able to target reducing the actual stressors for employees. In cases where stressors are an inherent part of the job, perceiving support from the organization can help buffer employees from experiencing negative outcomes for their well-being.

Although numerous studies have shown buffering effects of POS on the relationship between stressors and strains, at least one study has shown a three-way interaction between POS and different types of stressors (i.e., work interfering with family conflict and family interfering with work conflict) (Casper et al. 2002). Other studies show a simple negative relationship between POS and strain. More research is needed to understand the conditions under which buffering occurs (Baran et al. 2012). Baran et al. suggest it may be harder for POS to serve as a buffer if stressors are immediate and acute or are very specific to one’s job (support from a leader or coworkers might be a better buffer in that case). It may also be challenging for POS to serve as a buffer if employees of an organization are widely geographically distributed, as their interactions with the organization and its agents would be more diffuse and perhaps less salient. Future research can aid our understanding of the nuances of such moderating effects. Specifically, what ways of supporting employees would be more effective when employees are geographically distributed? How can the organization best provide guidance or decision-making autonomy to supervisors so that they can help buffer stress when stressors are immediate and specific to their subordinates’ jobs?

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

We consider here three recent trends in the workplace environment having basic implications for OST. First, the downsizing of organizations has led to an emphasis by management on

collaboration among members of groups or teams to make up for the leaner workforce. Second, increased use of layoffs and elimination of pensions, together with increased use of temporary employees, have led to challenges to employee loyalty to the organization. Third, organizations are now often operating in a global business environment. However, OST was developed in an individualistic culture, before most of the internationalization of organizational psychology. Thus, it is important to consider how cultural values may moderate POS relationships.

Perceived Organizational Support of Groups

Recent research has begun to examine the effects of group-level and organization-level perceptions of organizational support, beyond the individual-level POS considered in almost all POS research. Wang et al. (2011) found increased benevolence and reduced authoritativeness in communications from CEOs was related to organization-wide positive attitudes of managers, including POS. Similarly, Berson et al. (2008) found CEO benevolent values were positively associated with organization-wide POS which, in turn, was positively related to employee satisfaction. Wallace et al. (2006) found shared perceptions of POS by group members were positively related to safety climate, which, in turn, was associated with reduced accidents. González-Romá et al. (2009) found that group-wide perceptions of support were positively associated with team performance. These findings suggest that coaching leaders to communicate a positive valuation of the contributions of their workforce as a whole and groups within it may broadly enhance favorable employee attitudes, performance, and well-being.

Perceived Organizational Support and Changing Jobs

Most US employees today have a less stable relationship with their work organization than in the past. Tenure, especially in the private sector, has been decreasing during the past several decades (Farber 2005). Although the percentage of employees reporting their job security fell only modestly, from 34% to 29% during the period from 1989 to 2016, it is unfortunate that such a small portion of the overall workforce (29%) feel their job is secure. With wages stagnant and medical costs high in the United States, employees may be fearful about losing their current job. Thus, it is not surprising the percentage of employees who report job security is an important issue has increased from 55 to 74% (Smith et al. 2018).

Despite these statistics, there has yet to be a major change in the overall work arrangements for a substantial majority of US employees. Regardless of hype concerning a supposed shift to a “gig” economy of contractors and freelancers, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2018) reports from 1980 to 2015 only small increases of temporary employees (from 9.2 to 11.3%) and part-time employees (from 13.2 to 16.8%) across the 34 economically developed nations in the OECD. A few major employers, such as Uber and FedEx, have many part-time employees or independent contractors, but the substantial majority of jobs remain long-term and full-time. Thus, social exchange relationships involving long-term, full-time jobs, and POS specifically, are still relevant in work organizations.

Some in academia and the media have argued economic disadvantages of the majority of employees, compared to top management over the past few years (Mischel et al. 2015), have led to the replacement of employees’ social exchange relationships with short-term economic relationships. They argue that employees no longer expect their socio-economic needs to be met or their efforts on behalf of the organization to be rewarded (e.g., Clarke & Patrickson 2008). In contrast, one might argue some factors of the changing workplace might motivate managers to be more supportive of employees than in the past. Recently, there seems to be widespread agreement that income disparity and economic uncertainty are national US problems, resulting in moral suasion

on business to treat employees more favorably. For example, business classes and textbooks increasingly emphasize the moral ethic of treating employees well (Robbins & Judge 2018). Also, companies often compete for the prestige and recruitment advantages of awards for being recognized as excellent places to work (<https://www.greatplacetowork.com/about>).

If social exchange relationships between employees and work organizations have been replaced with short-term, economic relationships, POS should have decreased over the past three decades. In a meta-analysis of 317 studies (Eisenberger et al. 2019), we found over the past quarter century, US employees' average level of POS increased from near neutral (0.53 on a scale from 0 to 1) to slightly positive (0.61), a change of approximately 15%. Thus, our meta-analysis showed the mean level of POS, although increasing, was relatively low: Most employees are lukewarm in their views regarding their support from the organization. In contrast, we found the relationships of (a) perceived fairness with POS and (b) POS with extrarole performance remained high throughout this period. The modest average level of POS for most employees indicates there is plenty of room for improvement. The strong relationship of fairness (and other antecedents) with POS indicates that organizations can readily enhance their exchange relationship with employees by providing favorable treatment.

Although the findings discussed above show support for the notion that employee-organization relationships and OST are still relevant, they open additional questions. More research is needed regarding whether the increasing average level of POS over the past quarter century is due to overall better employee treatment or because employees expect less and therefore perceive greater support when treated favorably. There are some indications favorable treatment may be on the rise. For example, as unmarried cohabitation has increased in the United States, so have benefits to unmarried partners. Also, opportunities for flexible working hours or work-from-home arrangements have increased (Matos et al. 2017). In the coming years, POS could become even more important in the changing workplace as a way to signal to employees the organization provides developmental training and assignments that promote professional development.

Perceived Organizational Support Across Cultures

POS and its underlying OST conceptualization were formulated within a Western cultural context. Most nations in the West are inclined toward horizontal individualism (HI). According to Triandis (1995), this combination of cultural values fosters independence, competition, and low obedience to authority. In contrast, most Asian nations and Western nations with a Catholic religious tradition are inclined toward a combination of collectivism and high power-distance, the latter involving an acceptance of traditional power relationships in society. The resultant vertical collectivistic (VC) values involve an enhanced tendency to unquestioningly accept leaders' dictates and a concern with favorable group outcomes over those of the individual (Singelis et al. 1995). An implication for OST is that in VC nations, POS may be very important because it signals the employee's identification of in-group membership and approval (Kurtessis et al. 2017). Thus, POS might be more strongly associated with positive attitudes and behaviors directed toward the organization in VC nations than in HI nations. Consistent with this view, a meta-analysis found that the relationship between POS and extrarole performance was greater in collectivistic nations than individualistic nations (corrected correlations: 0.39 versus 0.23; Chiaburu et al. 2015).

Moreover, another meta-analysis with additional studies found that VC nations, as opposed to HI nations, had stronger relationships with organizational citizenship behavior, organizational identification, affective commitment, and job satisfaction (Rockstuhl et al. 2015). The difference between VC and HI nations in the POS-organizational citizenship behavior relationship was dramatic ($r = 0.60$ versus 0.23). POS and OST may have been developed within the context of

Western culture, but the influence of POS is apparently even stronger among collectivistic nations. Future research directly assessing mechanisms, such as organizational identification, responsible for these stronger effects in VC nations would help extend OST to include cross-cultural outcomes.

With regard to the antecedents of POS across cultures, Baran et al. (2012) noted the many possible avenues for future cross-cultural research. Future research could examine how employees of different cultures may vary in their interpretation of attempts by their organization to demonstrate support. Methods of support ripe for investigation include group versus individual rewards, various forms of treatment by supervisors such as respect, and public versus private recognition programs. Public recognition or individual rewards might be less welcomed in collectivistic cultures where recognition of team successes is promoted.

SUMMARY POINTS

1. POS represents a unified perception by employees concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. POS is enhanced by such favorable treatments of employees as fairness, support from leaders, and human resource practices, more so when these are perceived to be the discretionary choice of organizations.
2. Research shows various kinds of fairness are related to POS. Procedural justice is the type of justice most strongly related to POS, perhaps because employees view procedural justice as the type of justice under the greatest control by the organization. Procedural justice principles, such as employee input and transparency, used during the selection process and continuing into adaption to the new job, may help organizations develop high POS among its employees.
3. A large amount of research indicates transformational and other forms of supportive leadership relate positively to POS to the extent that leaders are perceived as sharing the views and characteristics of the organization, i.e., organizational embodiment. Also, recent research on trickle-down effects indicates that when supervisors feel supported by their work organization, they are more likely to treat subordinates supportively, leading to a cascade of POS. Providing resources, decision latitude, and other forms of support to supervisors provides ways to enhance the POS of the supervisors and convey POS to subordinates.
4. Research has established substantial relationships of POS with diverse attitudinal (e.g., engagement, commitment), behavioral (e.g., performance, turnover) and well-being (e.g., positive mood, reduced strain) employee outcomes. Some additional promising recent areas of research on POS include trickle-down effects, POS of groups, and POS as relevant to creativity and innovation, positive emotional outcomes, and well-being.
5. POS relates to a wide variety of positive outcomes through social exchange (e.g., norm of reciprocity and gratitude) and self-enhancement (e.g., organizational identification and affective commitment).
6. Temporal meta-analytic and cross-cultural findings indicate POS and OST are as relevant today as they were at their inception some three decades ago. POS has increased slightly in the United States over the past 25 years, and the relationships of (a) fairness with POS and (b) POS with performance remain strong. Cross-cultural meta-analyses

indicate POS has reliable outcomes in Western cultures and even stronger outcomes in Eastern cultures. The central concept of POS seems to have universal appeal to employees beyond the vicissitudes of time and place.

7. A summary of practical implications from our review of organizational support theory and POS empirical findings is presented in **Table 2**.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors are not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

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