Cognitive organizational obstruction: Its nature, antecedents and consequences

by

Raymond Francis Gibney Junior

Bachelor of Science, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1990

Master of Business Administration, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1993

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Marick F. Masters, Ph.D., Chair
Professor of Business Administration and of Public and International Affairs
Katz Graduate School of Business

Carrie R. Leana, Ph.D.
Professor of Business Administration and of Public and International Affairs
Katz Graduate School of Business

Audrey J. Murrell, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Business Administration, Psychology, Public and International Affairs
Katz Graduate School of Business

Frits K. Pil, Ph.D.
Research Scientist and Associate Professor of Business Administration
Katz Graduate School of Business

Robert R. Albright, Ph.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
Lally School of Management and Technology
Rennsselear Polytechnic Institute

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Abstract

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The concept of cognitive organizational obstruction is developed in this dissertation. Cognitive organizational obstruction is defined as an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives and is a detriment to his or her well-being. In addition to developing the COO construct, COO is theoretically differentiated from the related constructs of psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration.

In addition to being theoretically distinct, a new concept should be empirically differentiated from existing related constructs. The development of the COO scale is described. One major implicit assumption running throughout the theoretical development of the cognitive organizational obstruction construct is that employees distinguish between the treatment received from the organization and from agents of the organization. Employees' ability to differentiate between similarly conceptualized constructs of cognitive organizational obstruction, cognitive supervisor obstruction (CSO) and organizational frustration is assessed. A cognitive supervisor obstruction scale is created by changing the referent of the COO scale from organization to supervisor. Results suggest that employees are able to distinguish between these sources of obstruction and frustration.

The results from a validation study are presented next. The main objective of this study is to validate the COO scale and empirically distinguish COO from the related constructs of organizational frustration, perceived organizational support (POS), psychological contract breach (PCB), and perceived organizational politics (POP). Results suggest that employees are able to distinguish between these concepts.

Additional analysis evaluates whether COO explains additional variance beyond POS, PCB, POP and frustration is described next. The overarching hypothesis of this study is: COO explains additional variance in the exit, voice, loyalty and neglect outcome framework beyond the existing constructs of psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration. More specific hypotheses are developed and tested using hierarchical multiple linear regression. Results suggest that COO explains additional variance for exit, voice and neglect, but not loyalty.

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1. CHAPTER ONE

1.1 OVERVIEW

Employees' behavior within organizations can be classified into three categories of in-role performance, positive extra-role behavior, and negative extra-role behavior (Dunlop & Lee, 2004). In addition, people return the type of treatment they receive to the source of treatment (Gouldner, 1960) and perform positive extra-role behaviors on behalf of the organization because the organization treats them in a favorable or positive manner. For example, employees perform more positive extra-role behaviors when they believe that the organization is committed to them (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001) or employees want to repay their employers for providing satisfying job experiences (Organ, 1988). Employees may also perform negative extra-role behaviors to repay organizations for negative treatment (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004).

To understand the totality of relationships, researchers need to include both positive and negative aspects to relationships in their analysis (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004). Social network researchers have recently begun to include both positive and negative social relationships in their research (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001). For example, Sparrowe et al. (2001) developed the concept of a hindrance network, which is described as relationships which hamper task performance. Since employees enter into exchange relationships with the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Organ, 1988; Rousseau, 1995), researchers who study employer-employee relationships should capture both positive and negative aspects of the employer-employee relationship to fully understand these relationships. However, these researchers should not conceptualize negative aspects just as departures from the positive (Eby et al., 2004).

While social network researchers have suggested that employees can identify other employees who hinder task performance in the organization, organizational researchers have also suggested the employees can identify other hindrances of task performance (Peters & O'Connor, 1980; Spector, 1978). Building on the frustration-aggression (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939), Spector (1978) argued that when employees' goal attainment is obstructed within an organizational context, employees respond in an aggressive manner. However, organizational frustration (Spector, 1978) does not capture employees' belief that the organization is the hindrance. In order to capture employees' belief that the organization is a source of harm and a hindrance to goal attainment, I offer the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction.

Cognitive organizational obstruction (COO) is defined as an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives and is a detriment to his or her well-being. When introducing a new concept, theorists need to show that their concept is theoretically and empirically different from existing, constructs (Dean Jr., Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998). Since COO is conceptualized as a social exchange relationship between the employee and organization, both psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995) and perceived organizational support(POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986) are related in that these concepts are conceptualized as measures of the strength of the social exchange relationship between the employer and employee (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). In addition, psychological contracts and POS are both employees' perception of this relationship. Therefore, I will theoretically distinguish COO from POS and psychological contracts.

Cognitive organizational obstruction is based in part on Spector's (1978) concept of organizational frustration. When introducing a new construct that is based in part on an existing construct, the researcher is obligated to distinguish the new construct from the construct on

which it is based. Therefore, cognitive organizational obstruction should be distinguished from organizational frustration.

Finally, organizational members can act in a self-interested manner which is opposition to other members' interests. More succinctly, organizational members can act politically (Gandz & Murray, 1980). When organizational members are successful in their political activity, they accomplish their goals which are opposed to other members' interests. This successful political activity could impede other members' goal attainment. It is possible that the "losers" may attribute this interference with their goal attainment to the organization. As such, organizational politics is related to cognitive organizational obstruction. Thus, cognitive organizational obstruction should be theoretically distinguished from organizational politics.

Before researchers can empirically distinguish a construct from related constructs, a scale must be developed to capture the new construct. In order to empirically distinguish COO from psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational frustration and organizational politics, a cognitive organizational obstruction scale is developed. The scale development process is described, as well as a validation study which lends support to the notion that employees distinguish between these concepts.

In order to enter into a social exchange relationship with the organization, employees anthropomorphize the organization. In attributing human-like characteristics to the organization, Levinson (1965) argued that employees attribute the actions of organizational agents to the organization. When developing a construct which purports to capture an employees perception of the organization acting, researchers need to show that employees make the distinction between organizational agents, such as supervisors, and the organization (Hutchison, 1997). This dissertation provides evidence that employees make this distinction.

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While theoretically and empirically distinguishing a new construct from related constructs is necessary, it is not sufficient to show the construct's worth. In light of this view, Brackett and Mayer (2003) accurately point out that the value in a new construct is its ability to explain addition variance beyond existing constructs. Therefore, in order to show that COO makes a significant contribution to the literature, a research study is described which suggests that COO explains additional variance above the existing concepts of psychological contracts, POS, organizational frustration and organizational politics utilizing a common set of employee behaviors.

The exit, voice, loyalty and neglect (EVLN) framework has been argued to provide a systematic framework for understanding employee behavioral reactions to dissatisfying job experiences (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Since COO is most likely to be a dissatisfying job experience, the EVLN framework provides a useful structure for understanding behavioral reactions to COO. Feelings of cognitive dissonance may drive the responses to COO. Cognitive dissonance theory holds that individuals holding two or more contradictory attitudes or beliefs, or when inconsistency exists between behavior and attitudes and beliefs, feelings of cognitive dissonance occur (Festinger, 1957). Employees attempt to relieve feelings of cognitive dissonance by changing behaviors or aligning attitudes and behaviors.

Employees may leave the organization to escape the organization's harm of their well-being because working for an organization that is harmful may create feelings of cognitive dissonance. In contrast, employees may look to others for help in overcoming the organization's interference with goal attainment. Voice behaviors include a desire for collective bargaining (Freeman, 1976), complaining (Spector, 1975) and discussing problems with coworkers and supervisors (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous III, 1988). Defending the organization to

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outsiders, a loyalty behavior, may create cognitive dissonance when employees believe that the organization is detrimental to their well-being. According to the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), employees seek to return harm to the organization when they believe the organization is a source of harm. Neglect behaviors have been argued to include working on personal tasks instead of job tasks and taking longer breaks (Withey & Cooper, 1989). These behaviors have also been described as retaliatory behaviors directed at the organization (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Vardi & Weitz, 2004). Thus, employees may engage in neglect behaviors based upon the norm of reciprocity.

In addition to understanding the outcomes of a new construct, discerning how these perceptions are created is also important. A research agenda for understanding the antecedents of COO is presented. These antecedents include individual differences, procedural justice perceptions and frustrated events.

The remainder of this dissertation will unfold as follows. Chapter 2 argues for the existence of a new construct which captures employees' perception that an organization is an obstacle and is harmful to employees; Chapter 3 outlines the development of the COO scale and provides evidence of employees' ability to distinguish between obstruction from the organization and their supervisor; Chapter 4 describes the results of a study which suggests that employees distinguish between perceptions of organizational obstruction, psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, perceived organizational politics and organizational frustration; Chapter 5 tests a whether COO explains additional variance in the EVLN framework; Chapter 6 presents the results of a qualitative study utilizing executives from various organizations; and Chapter 7 provides conclusions and outlines future research as well as outlining a proposed research agenda.

2. CHAPTER TWO

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction is developed. Cognitive organizational obstruction is defined as an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives and is a detriment to his or her well-being. In addition to developing the COO construct, COO is theoretically differentiated from the related constructs of psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Behavior in organizations can be separated into three main groupings of: (1) in-role performance; (2) positive extra-role (e.g. organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational spontaneity); and (3) negative extra role (e.g. organizational retaliatory behaviors, workplace deviance (Dunlop & Lee, 2004). Research regarding negative extra role behaviors in organizations is becoming increasingly prevalent because of the high costs associated with this type of behavior in organizations (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2002). Often a social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964) is applied when studying negative behaviors in organizations, such as organizational retaliatory behaviors (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004; Tripp et al., 2002; Vardi & Weitz, 2004), and is used in conjunction with the norm of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Snape & Redman, 2004), which, at a basic level, states that

people return the type of treatment that is received, i.e. help to help or harm to harm[1] (Gouldner, 1960).   In addition, the norm of reciprocity asserts that the returned treatment should be directed at the source of the treatment. However, Gouldner focused on individuals and not non-corporal entities such as organizations.

While Gouldner addressed individuals, his perspective is often applied to abstract entities, such as organizations, as providing both help (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and harm (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004; Tripp et al., 2002; Vardi & Weitz, 2004). When applying the negative norm of reciprocity, i.e. harm to harm, to employees' relationship with the organization, the employee would have to identify the organization as a source of harm or negative treatment. It has been noted that "although many inanimate objects do not logically qualify as culpable actors, people nonetheless often treat personifications… as transgressors and deem them accountable for negative outcomes" (Skarlicki & Folger, 2004, p. 375). This suggests that employees can hold the organization responsible for negative treatment or harm.

After identifying the organization as a source of harm, the employee would then return the negative treatment to the organization. While employees endorse this "eye for an eye" norm to varying degrees (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004), there is a "human tendency to seek revenge against harmdoers" (Tripp et al., 2002, p. 966). While there may be individual differences that would moderate the strength of the relationship between identifying the organization as a source of harm and the return of the harm to the organization, it has been noted that "aggression can also be directed against the organization." (Vardi & Weitz, 2004, p. 67). Thus, theorists argue that employees perceive the organization as a source of harm and seek to return the harmful treatment.

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[1] Harm and detriment are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Webster's Dictionary defines detriment as causing harm. In addition, Roget's Thesaurus and Webster's Dictionary state the harm and detriment are synonyms.

The organizational retaliation research stream does not, however, currently assess an employee's belief that the organization is a source of harm. The negative norm of reciprocity and social exchange theory suggest that individuals return harm for harm (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Thus, when applying a social exchange perspective to organizational retaliatory or revenge behaviors, researchers should capture the perception that the organization is a source of harm. The concept of cognitive organizational obstruction fills this gap in the literature. Before introducing this concept, the literatures on social exchange (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) will be briefly reviewed.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3.1 Social Exchange

Scholars have argued that people enter into various types of exchange relationships with one another (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Homans, 1958). Exchange relationships include economic exchange, social exchange and sentimental exchange relationships (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). A purely economic exchange relationship is the impersonal exchange of items which have an agreed upon value, i.e. I buy a pack of gum for a dollar. A purely sentimental exchange relationship is based on the exchange of purely intrinsic items of value to the participants, i.e. my wife loves me and I am happy. These relationships exist on a continuum ranging from a purely economic transaction to an exchange relationship based purely on love or sentiment with social exchange as a midpoint (Blau, 1964). According to Blau, social exchange relationships incorporate aspects of both economic and sentimental exchange relationships. In contrast to purely economic transactions, the benefits involved in social exchange do not have an exact price in terms of a single, quantitative medium of exchange such as dollars. Social exchange also contains elements of intrinsic significance for the participants. In addition, social

exchange includes benefits of some extrinsic value, which distinguishes it from transactions based purely on love or sentiment that are intrinsic in nature. Thus, social exchange contains both elements of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for people.

In describing social exchange, Blau (1964) argued that people engage in voluntary behaviors with the belief that these behaviors will bring future benefits, either of intrinsic or extrinsic value. As well as receiving benefits, individuals in a social exchange relationship also incur costs (Homans, 1958). Some have argued that people determine whether to remain in the relationship by utilizing a rational or calculative rule which compares the costs with the benefits of remaining in the relationship (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). According to the calculative rule, when the costs of being in the relationship exceed the benefits of being in the relationship, people will leave the relationship. In contrast, when the benefits of being in the relationship exceed the costs of being in the relationship, the person will remain in the relationship. While Blau (1964) and Homans (1958) argued for a calculative rule, Emerson (1976) believed that people can use any one of a variety exchange rules in these relationships such as the norm of reciprocity.

While social exchange theory is widely applied, it is not without its critics (Emerson, 1976). One criticism of social exchange theory is that it fails to account for a person's relationship with a collective (Emerson, 1976). In order to overcome this limitation, some scholars anthropomorphize the collective (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Organ, 1988; Rousseau, 1995; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Tetrick, 1995). Anthropomorphization of the collective entails attributing human-like characteristics to the group (Levinson, 1965). As Levinson notes, "they (employees) generalize their feelings about people in the organization, who are important to them, to the organization" (Levinson, 1965, p. 377). According to Levinson, employees attribute

actions of these important organizational members to the intent of the organization itself rather than to the intent of the organizational agent. The reasons for this attribution include: (1) an organization is legally, morally and financially responsible for the actions of its agents; (2) the actions of agents are based on some organizational policy, procedure or tradition and (3) an employee has difficulties in determining who in an organization is responsible for treatment provided to employees, so employees speak of "they" when referring to the organization (Levinson, 1965, pp. 378-379). While Levinson (1965) focused on the organization as the collective, the attribution of human-like characteristics to an organization has been applied to other collectives such as labor unions (Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Tetrick, 1995). Thus, people believe that groups such as employers and labor unions can be seen as acting irrespective of their corporal existence. As such, employees can enter into exchange relationships with these entities (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Organ, 1988).

2.3.2 Norm of Reciprocity

After entering into an exchange relationship, people decide whether to stay in that relationship based upon some mental calculus. People can utilize a calculative rule or employ a variety of exchange rules when determining to remain in an exchange relationship (Emerson, 1976). One such alternative to the calculative exchange rule is the reciprocity norm (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1976; Gouldner, 1960). Gouldner (1960) defined the norm of reciprocity as a universal trait which explains people's behavior in exchange relationships. The norm of reciprocity demands that people should help those who have helped them and not injure those who have helped them. This explication articulates the positive form of the norm of reciprocity. According to Gouldner, people are obligated to repay the benefit provider at some time in the future. The repayment can be of equal value and in the same form, or in-kind. Thus,

I borrow a cup of sugar when I am baking a cake and I must return a cup of sugar. The repayment need not be in-kind, or homeomorphic reciprocity, but can also entail heteromorphic reciprocity. Heteromorphic reciprocity is the return of benefits of equal value, but differs in the form of the benefit. For example, instead of repaying the cup of sugar with a cup of sugar, I watch your dog when you go away for the day.

However, Gouldner (1960) also describes a negative norm of reciprocity. The negative norm of reciprocity is a sentiment of retaliation and revenge emphasizing the return of injuries and harm and not on the return of benefits. As noted by Tripp, Bies and Aquino (2002), people have a tendency to exact revenge for harm. People will engage in retaliatory or vengeful behaviors directed at the source of harmful or negative treatment. One potential source of this harmful or negative treatment is the organization itself. According to the negative norm of reciprocity, people will retaliate against the organization when the person believes that the organization is a source of harmful or negative treatment.

2.3.2 Social Exchange, Norm of Reciprocity, Personification of the Organization

The combination of social exchange, the norms of reciprocity and the attribution of human-like characteristics to the collective has been used to explain various behaviors and attitudes directed at organizations or labor unions. In an organizational environment, these behaviors and attitudes include commitment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986), organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), organizational retaliatory behavior (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), misbehavior in organizations (Vardi & Weitz, 2004), and workplace deviance (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002). In a union context, this combination has been applied to union commitment (Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995), union citizenship behaviors (Aryee & Chay, 2001; Snape & Redman, 2004) and union participation (Fuller & Hester, 2001).

When combining social exchange and the norms of reciprocity to explain behaviors and attitudes directed at the organization, theorists implicitly assume that employees attribute the experienced treatment to the organization or labor union and not to the organizational agent. While examining a positive social exchange relationship with the collective, theorists assume that employees develop a perception that the organization or labor union treats them in a positive manner (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995). This would also imply that while examining a negative social exchange relationship with the collective an employee develops a perception that the organization or union treats them in a negative manner.

Positive employee-collective relationship utilizing a social exchange perspective have been assessed (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995). Examples of this perspective include perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1988), psychological contract fulfillment (Rousseau, 1995) and perceived union support (Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995). In developing perceived organizational support (POS), Eisenberger et al. (1986) assessed an employee's belief that the organization cares about his or well-being and values his or her contributions. Industrial relations scholars have applied POS to the union-member relationship (Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995). However, researchers have not explored a negative social exchange relationship. A negative social exchange relationship is a relationship that is predicated on the negative norm of reciprocity, or the return of harm to harm. For ease of discussion, I will focus on the organization, but the following comments apply to other employee-collective relationships such as labor unions.

In order to explore a negative social exchange relationship with the organization, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the negative reciprocity norm (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Gouldner, 1960) and anthropomorphization of the organization (Levinson, 1965) are utilized. These

perspectives predict that individuals will react differently to others who *fail to provide help* to them than they will to those who *work against them or actively prevent them* from reaching their goals. Accordingly, employees who believe the organization fails to help them will respond by failing to help the organization such as not performing positive extra-role behaviors like organizational citizenship behaviors directed at the organization. However, employees who believe that the organization works against them and behaves in a way that is detrimental to their well-being will go beyond simply not helping the organization. They will seek revenge and retaliate by actively working against the organization or attempting to harm the organization by engaging in negative extra-role behaviors such as sabotage.

In order to more fully assess the employer-employee relationship, the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction is offered. Cognitive organizational obstruction assesses employees' belief that the organization is a source of negative treatment and is detrimental to them. Cognitive organizational obstruction makes an important contribution to the employer-employee literature because it predicts employees' retaliation, cognitively or behaviorally, against the organization. In the following sections, cognitive organizational obstruction is defined and distinguished from related constructs, and research agenda is offered.

2.4 COGNITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL OBSTRUCTION

Researchers have argued that employee performance can be hindered by situational constraints (Peters & O'Connor, 1980), which are often referred to as frustrated events (Fox & Spector, 1999; Spector, 1978). Employee's cognitive and affective responses to situational constraints include frustration and dissatisfaction (Peters, O'Connor, & Rudolf, 1980). In addition, employees will engage in aggressive behavior directed at other employees and the organization in response to frustrated events (Spector, 1978). However, according to

Gouldner's negative reciprocity argument, aggressive behaviors are directed at the source of the perceived harmful treatment. Therefore, employees will direct aggressive behaviors at the organization in response to frustrated events if they perceive the organization is the source of these frustrated events.

In addition to situational constraints, other employees can hinder an employee (Sparrowe et al., 2001). Social network researchers have also established that employees are able to identify other employees who make it more difficult for them to complete their jobs. Sparrowe et al. (2001) define a hindrance network as a set of employee relations that impede task behavior. Employees who are central in the hindrance network are described as making it difficult for coworkers to complete their work by withholding valuable information, resources and opportunities. One conclusion from the situational constraints and hindrance network literatures is that employees are able to identify persons and things that hinder their performance.

In accordance with Levinson's (1965) argument and Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) findings, employee's attribute human-like characteristics to the organization by ascribing experienced treatment within the organization to the organization itself and use the same attributional processes with social representations as with individuals. Combining the findings of Sparrowe et al. (2001) and Eisenberger et al. (1986), employees can attribute hindrance behaviors within the organization to the behavior of the organization itself and by doing so employees can include the organization in the hindrance network. In doing so, they believe that the organization interferes with the attainment of goals and is a detriment to their well-being. This belief is labeled cognitive organizational obstruction. Cognitive organizational obstruction (COO) is defined as an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives and is a detriment to his or her well-being.

This definition of COO may suggest two separate dimensions of the construct: (a) an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders, or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives, and (b) an employee's global belief that the organization is a detriment to his or her well-being. However, there is a reason to believe that COO represents a single conceptual space. Any obstruction, hindrance, or interference with goal accomplishment is a partially frustrated event for an employee. Organizational frustrators, which could include the organization, are a subcategory of work stressors (Chen & Spector, 1992). Work stressors have been consistently found to be related to an employee's well-being (Chen & Spector, 1992; Narayanan, Menon, & Spector, 1999; Sales, 1969). Hindrance stressors are defined as "constraints that interfere with or hinder an individual's ability to achieve valued goals"(Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000, p. 67) and as stressors that are harmful and detrimental to a person's well-being (Sales, 1969). This evidence suggests that hindrance stressors are harmful, so we conclude that COO represents a single conceptual space. Therefore, the organization's obstruction of goal attainment and being a detriment to an employee's well-being can be logically considered a single conceptual space.

Defining COO as employees' belief implies that when an unbiased, objective third party would state that the organization is not interfering with goal attainment, the employee may perceive the organization as interfering with the attainment of personal or professional goals. In addition, while the organization may interfere with the accomplishment of goals, this does not necessarily mean that the employee does not accomplish the goal. In sum, COO reflects an employee's belief regarding the organization's negative role in the process of accomplishing goals regardless of (a) objective obstruction, or (b) inability to accomplish the goal. At a basic level, COO answers the following question: Does the organization hinder or not hinder me in my

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attainment of goals? The employee may obtain the goal, but the organization hinders the process

of obtaining the goal. However, employees will react most strongly when the goal is not

obtained and the organization is perceived to be an obstruction.

Employee experiences in the organization are the basis of COO, but it is the perception

and interpretation of the experience that influences COO and not the reality of experience.

However, for COO to be affected, the employee must attribute the received treatment to the

organization instead of the agent of the organization. Since each employee construes

experiences in the organization differently, COO will vary among employees depending on their

unique interpretation of the received treatment. Thus, COO will decrease when employees

perceive that the treatment received from the organization is less obstructive.

While experiences within the organization form the basis of COO, not all experiences

will affect obstruction perceptions. Experiencing frustrating events will increase hindrance

perceptions, however, only those attributed to the organization will impact COO. By building on

Levinson's work (1965), COO assumes that employees attribute actions of an agent of the

organization to the organization itself.   Thus, when employees experience hindrance by

organizational agents, the employee may attribute this treatment to the organization and not to

the agent.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that employees use the same attributional process for

individuals and for organizations. "Attribution theory focuses on the antecedents and

consequences of making causal inferences of another person's (and one's own) behavior or

performance" (Murrell & Curtis, 1994, p. 225). In addition, actors and observers make different

attributions regarding behavior (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). As noted by Jones and Nesbit (1972),

"there is pervasive tendency for actors to attribute their actions to situational requirements,

whereas observers tend to attribute the same actions to stable personal dispositions" (p. 80). Clearly, one could interpret employees as observers of the organization's obstruction or hindrance of goal attainment. Thus, employees will perceive that the organization's personal disposition as obstructive and harmful. One could therefore interpret COO to be a characteristic of the organization and part of the organization's identity.

While COO is a subjective, personal belief of the employee, perceptions of organizational obstruction can be socially influenced by others, as are other perceptions of the organization (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). An employee's beliefs regarding levels of obstruction may increase or decrease after discussing treatment received from the organization with others.

However, observing the organization interfering with others' goals will not impact COO. By definition, COO is an employee's belief that the organization obstructs the attainment of *his or her* goals. Thus, observing the organization obstructing the attainment of other people's goals will not impact the focal employee's level of COO unless this observation causes a reevaluation of the treatment that he or she experienced.

2.4.1 Distinction from Related Constructs

In addition to introducing the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction, a second objective of this chapter is to conceptually distinguish COO from related constructs. As Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar (1998) note, "in proposing a new construct…, we must differentiate it from those that already exist in order to avoid the appearance of 'old wine in new bottles'" (p. 348). COO is most closely related to the concepts of organizational frustration, perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach and organizational politics. The following sections will elaborate on the distinctions between COO and these related constructs.

2.4.1.1 Organizational Frustration

Frustration is defined as "an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behavior sequence" (Dollard et al., 1939, pg. 5). According to these authors, individuals will respond to frustration through increased aggression. This concept has been labeled as the frustration-aggression hypothesis. Building on the frustration-aggression hypothesis developed by Dollard and colleagues (1939), Spector (1978) reasoned that employees will engage in aggressive behavior when goal attainment is frustrated within the organization. According to the organizational frustration literature, employees' goal attainment can be obstructed by the physical environment and other people within the organization (Spector, 1978; Storms & Spector, 1987). Spector (1978) focused on sources of frustration *within* the organization. In addition to engaging in aggressive behavior, employees may attempt alternative paths to the goal or withdraw from the situation in response to the frustration (Spector, 1978).

Organizational frustration has been found to be associated with interpersonal hostility (Chen & Spector, 1992; Spector, 1975; Storms & Spector, 1987), job satisfaction (Fox & Spector, 1999) and job dissatisfaction (Keenan & Newton, 1984), and complaints (Chen & Spector, 1992; Spector, 1975). Organizational frustration has been found to be related to sabotage directed at individuals and the organization (Fox & Spector, 1999; Spector, 1975; Storms & Spector, 1987). As expected based on the negative norm of reciprocity, the relationship between sabotage directed at the organization and organizational frustration is weaker than the relationship between sabotage directed at individuals within the organization and organizational frustration.

COO differs from organizational frustration in several important ways. First, unlike organizational frustration, COO focuses on the organization as a source of frustration and not sources of frustration within the organization. Organizational frustration can be attributed to

such things as the weather, lack of time, and the work environment being too bright or too cold (Fox & Spector, 1999; Spector, 1975). Second, COO is strictly cognitive, whereas organizational frustration has been described as experiential (Fox & Spector, 1999) and an emotional state (Ambrose et al., 2002). Finally, for organizational frustration to occur, the goal should not be obtained (Spector, 1978). In comparison, COO is concerned with the employee's belief regarding the organization's role in the process of goal. The employee can believe that the organization has been a hindrance in obtaining goals and still obtain the goal.

2.4.1.2 Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger et al. (1986) utilized a social exchange perspective to organizational commitment in the development of POS by arguing that employees' commitment to the organization would be dependent on their beliefs regarding the organizational commitment to them. In addition to taking a social exchange perspective, Eisenberger et al. (1986) also assumed that attribution theory is a pivotal to POS. The same attributional processes are used by employees for individuals as for organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Eisenberger et al. (1986) originally argued that POS is a signal of the organization's commitment to its employees. To assess employees' perceptions of the organization's commitment to them, these researchers developed POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS has also recently been described as the strength of the social exchange relationship that exists between the employee and the organization (Tekleab, Takeuchi, & Taylor, 2005).

A growing body of research shows that POS mediates the relationship between an organization's treatment of its employees including fair treatment, support from organizational agents and HR policies and key employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and in-role performance (for a review, see Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Specifically, when employees believe that treatment provided

by the organization is discretionary, it serves as a signal to the employees that the organization values them and cares about their well-being. Discretionary actions are favorable job conditions that the organization had some control over, whereas non-discretionary actions were beyond the control of the organization (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). For example, a pay increase associated with a labor contract is non-discretionary. Discretionary conditions were associated with POS, but non-discretionary conditions were associated with job satisfaction. Thus, employees attend to existing job conditions and who is responsible for those conditions. When employees believe that the organization values and cares about their well-being, employees are more likely to engage in behaviors that help the organization to accomplish its goals (Eisenberger et al., 1997).

While research shows that POS consistently predicts positive employee attitudes and behaviors, POS is limited because it only captures the extent to which an organization supports or does not support its employees. At one end of the continuum, an employee may feel a very high level of organizational support. At the other end of the continuum, an employee can perceive that the organization does not support him or her. POS does not capture employees' beliefs that the organization goes beyond not supporting them and actually obstructs or hinders their attempts to accomplish their work-related and personal goals. COO provides a greater understanding of employees' beliefs that their organization hinders or obstructs the attainment of their goals. Perceptions of organizational obstruction range from hindrance to non-hindrance. POS and COO therefore exist on different continuum since POS focuses on supportive treatment from the organization, whereas COO focuses on interference from the organization. In support of this distinction, Eby, Butts & Lockwood (2004) note, "negative relational experiences should

not be conceptualized simply as a 'deviation from the positive, but (rather) a phenomenon that also composes the totality of relational experience (Duck, 1994, p. 5)'"(p. 415).

2.4.1.3 Psychological Contract Breach

Researchers have noted that employees develop psychological contracts with their employers (Rousseau & Schalk, 2000; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994). Rousseau (1995) conceptualizes the psychological contract as a relatively stable mental model that employees hold regarding promises the organization has made to them in exchange for their efforts on behalf of the organization.

The majority of research on the psychological contract has focused on psychological contract breach (Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003). Robinson and Rousseau (1994) argue that breach, occurs "when one party in the relationship perceives another to have failed to fulfill promised obligation(s)" (p. 247). Generally, research has shown that psychological contract breach is related to key workplace outcomes such as job satisfaction (Kickul & Lester, 2001; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 2000), turnover (Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 1999), in-role performance (Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino, 2002), organizational citizenship behavior (Robinson & Morrison, 2000), and organizational commitment (Bunderson, 2001; Conway & Briner, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000).

Fundamental differences exist between cognitive organizational obstruction and psychological contract breach. A key difference between these constructs is that psychological contract breach is limited only to employee beliefs concerning the organization's failure to meet its obligations to the employee. In order for breach to occur, an organization must fail to make good on an obligation. COO makes no such requirement, as an employee may believe that his or her organization makes goal attainment more difficult regardless of whether or not an obligation

existed or was not fulfilled, if it did exist. Therefore, while psychological contract breach is a measure of an employee's perception that the organization has failed to live up to its obligations, COO is a global assessment of the organization's role in the process by which goals are attained.

A second difference between breach and COO relates to the attainment of a desired employee outcome. Psychological contract breach requires that a perceived obligation by the organization to an employee is not received, whereas COO can occur regardless of whether a specific outcome is obtained. For example, your university may promise that you will be allowed to attend a conference. In order to get to the conference, however, you must take a Greyhound bus from Delaware to Atlanta. While the organization still fulfilled its promise, goal attainment was made more difficult by having to take a bus.

2.4.1.4 Perceived Organizational Politics

While there is no agreed upon definition of politics (Drory & Romm, 1988), a widely recognized definition of perceived organizational politics was offered by Gandz and Murray (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). The use of Gandz and Murray's definition also facilitates the comparison to COO since both are perceptions, by definition. Gandz and Murray (1980) defined organizational politics as "a subjective state in which organizational members perceive themselves or others as intentionally seeking selfish ends in an organizational context when such ends are opposed to those of others" (p. 248). From this definition, the focal employee has the ability to perceive him- or herself as acting politically. COO assumes that individuals will not purposefully block the attainment of their own goals and attribute this obstruction to the organization, whereas a focal actor can perceive him- or herself as acting politically. In addition, perceived organizational politics can be based on third party observation of others' behavior. Also, categorizing an organization's environment as political is not the same as saying the

organization is acting politically. In comparison, cognitive organizational obstruction requires that the employee perceives this his or her goal attainment is obstructed by the organization.

COO is conceptualized as actions of the organization, whereas organizational politics is conceptualized as the actions of individuals within the organization (Gandz & Murray, 1980). In addition to having different referents, politics is not necessarily considered harmful to an employee (Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995). When employees act politically, they are acting in their own self-interest (Parker et al., 1995). In acting in a self-interested manner, these employees may see their behavior as beneficial (Parker et al., 1995). By definition, COO is detrimental and harmful to an employee.

To sum up, Table 1 illustrates the comparison of these related constructs on six dimensions. These dimensions include the major theoretical basis for the construct, the focal actor, whether the relationship is positive and supportive, whether the relationship is negative and harmful, whether the construct is obligation based, and whether the construct is goal-based and if so, whether the goal is attained. Since no two constructs are the same on all characteristics, there is reason to believe that these concepts are all distinct.

Table 1 Matrix of similarities and differences of related constructs

Construct	Major Theoretical Basis	Focal Actor (s)	Positive\ Supportive	Negative\ Harmful	Obligation Based	Goal Based (Attained)
Cognitive Organization Obstruction	Organizational Frustration, Social Exchange, Organizational Misbehavior	Organization	No	Yes	No	Yes (Possibly)
Organizational Frustration	Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis, Situational constraints	Other People, Weather, Situational Constraints	No	Yes	No	Yes (No)
Perceived Organizational Support	Organizational commitment, Social Exchange	Organization	Yes	No	No	No
Psychological Contracts	Contract Law	Employee and organization	No	Yes	Yes	Possibly (No)
Organizational Politics	Power Theory, Decision-Making	Employee and other employees	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table 2 contains a listing of empirical studies regarding organizational frustration, perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach by the organization, and organizational politics. The table includes a summary of the setting, the sample and size, the manner in which construct was operationalized, the data analysis technique and a brief summary of the findings.

2.5 SUMMARY

When applying the negative norm of reciprocity to an employee's social exchange relationship with his or her organization, theorists have not captured an employee's belief that the organization is a source of harm. To fill this gap in the literature, the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction is introduced. Cognitive organizational obstruction is an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with an employee's personal and professional goal attainment and is a detriment to his or her well-being. While COO is related to existing constructs of organizational frustration, perceived organizational support,

psychological contract breach and organizational politics, it is theoretically distinct from these

related concepts.

Table 2: Summaries of selected studies of focal constructs

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Allen et al. (2003)	POS	Study 1- Beauty and cosmetics areas of a large department store in the Southeastern US; Study 2 -Large US national insurance company	Study1 -215 department store salespeople; Study 2- 197 insurance agents	16 items from Eisenberger et al. (1986)	LISREL	Perceptions of supportive human resources practices (participation in decision making, fairness of rewards, and growth opportunities) contribute to the development of POS; POS mediates their relationships with organizational commitment and job satisfaction; Organizational commitment and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between POS and intention to quit.
Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002)	POS	Various	58 research reports		Meta-analysis	Fairness, supervisor support and organization rewards\job conditions were associated with POS; POS was related to job satisfaction, affective commitment, performance and lessened withdrawal behaviors.
Rhoades et al. (2001)	POS	Study 1 - Various organizations ; Study 2 - Large electronics and appliance sales organization located in the Northeastern US; Study 3 - A sales organization and a chicken and an egg processor	Study 1 - 367 alumni of an Eastern university; Study 2 - 333 employees; Study 3 - 1249 employees at the sales organization and 309 employees at the chicken and egg processor	8 item short form from Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Structural equation modeling	POS mediated the associations of organizational rewards, procedural justice, and supervisor support with affective commitment (AC); POS mediates the effect of work experiences on AC and that over time, POS seems to be associated with changes in AC, but not the reverse; AC mediated the relationship between POS and subsequent turnover

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Eisenberger et al. (1986)	POS	Study 1 - Nine organizations; Study 2 - US school	Study1 - 361 employees; Study 2 - 97 high school teacher	Developed for this study	Study 1 - exploratory factor analysis; Study 2 - regression	Findings are that (a) employees form global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being; (b) such perceived organizational support reduces absenteeism; and (c) the relation between perceived organizational support and absenteeism is greater for employees with a strong exchange ideology than those with a weak exchange ideology.
Tekleab et al. (2005)	POS; Psychological contracts	A large public university in the Eastern US	191 nonfaculty employees	POS - 3 items from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale; Psychological contract violation - 3 items used by Robinson et al. (1994). Note both scales changed to refer to the university	EQS 6.0	POS and psychological contracts violations are distinct; POS at time 1 was negatively related to psychological contract violation at time 2; psychological contract violation at time 2 was negatively related to job satisfaction at time 2; psychological contract violation fully mediated the relationship between POS at time 1 and job satisfaction at time 2.
Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005)	POS; Psychological contracts	Local government located in the southeast of England	347 public sector employees	POS - 7 of Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale; Psychological contract fulfillment - 12 item list of obligations used by Turnley and Feldman (1999; 2000)	Factor analysis; Regression	Findings suggest that: (a) POS is distinct from the components of the psychological contract; (b) POS leads to a reduction in employees' perception of employer obligations; (c) psychological contract fulfillment is not a strong predictor of organizational citizenship behavior relative to its component elements and POS.

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Turnley et al. (2004)	Psychological contracts	Two US organizations	109 union employees	Psychological contract breach-Robinson and Morrison's (1995) 21 item scale	Multiple regression	Union instrumentality moderated the relationship between psychological contract breach by the organization and commitment to the union.
Turnley et al. (2003)	Psychological contracts	Medium sized, state supported universities in the US; Telecommunication center employees in a health care company	68 supervisor-MBA employee dyads; 66 subordinate-employee; Total of 134 dyads	Developed for this study	Hierarchical regression	Psychological contract fulfillment is positively related to supervisor's rating of employee in-role performance, OCB-I, and OCB-O; The relationship was stronger for OCB-O than for OCB-I; The employee's attribution for the breach moderated the relationship between contract breach and performance.
Conway and Briner (2002)	Psychological contracts	Major retail banking institution in the UK; MSc Organizational Behavior/Psychology students at Birkbeck College in the UK.	21 managers; 24 students	Daily diary with open ended question regarding breach of contract on that day	Regression	Results show that broken\ exceeded promises occur regularly and in relation to virtually any aspect of work, that the importance of the promise contributes significantly to emotional reactions following broken and exceeded promises, and that the psychological contract is an important concept for understanding everyday fluctuations in emotion and daily mood.

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Kickul & Lester (2001)	Psychological contracts	Large Midwestern university	183 part-time MBA students	Developed for this study	Hierarchical multiple regression	Entitled individual responded more negatively to psychological contract breaches that affected tangible extrinsic outcomes (i.e., pay, benefits); The benevolent individual reacted more negatively when promises of autonomy and control were broken by the organization; Entitleds responded more negatively than benevolents to contract breaches regarding growth and development.
Bunderson (2001)	Psychological contracts	Not-for-profit health care organization located in the Midwestern US	167 clinicians	Developed for this study based on Morrison and Robinson's (1997) method	Regression	Results suggest that perceived breaches of administrative role obligations are most strongly associated with dissatisfaction, thoughts of quitting and turnover; Perceived breaches of professional role obligations are most strongly associated with lower organizational commitment and job performance (productivity and client satisfaction)
Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler (2000)	Psychological contracts; POS	Public sector agency in the South East UK	703 managers and 6953 employees	Psychological contract breach-One scale based on Robinson and Morrison's (1995) global measurement and one scale based on Robinson's (1996) method; POS - 7 items from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) scale	Hierarchical regression	Various types of psychological contracts exist; The greater the extent of psychological contract fulfillment, the greater the level of POS; Fulfillment of transaction and training obligations increase organizational commitment; Psychological contract fulfillment, as well as POS and organizational commitment is an antecedent to OCB.

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Turnley & Feldman (2000)	Psychological contracts	Various	213 alumni of an MBA program, 263 alumni of an international business program, 223 managers from a Fortune 500 bank, and 105 employees of a state agency	Developed for this study	Hierarchical regression analysis; Structural equation modeling	Psychological contract breach is common, but varied by location; Breaches are associated with increased job searching efforts by employees, neglect of job duties and reduced OCB performance; Unmet expectations and job satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between psychological contract breach and employee behaviors.
Turnley & Feldman (1999)	Psychological contracts	Various	213 alumni of an MBA program, 263 alumni of an international business program, 223 managers from a Fortune 500 bank, and 105 employees of a state agency	Developed for this study	Hierarchical regression analysis	Psychological contract breach resulted in increased levels of exit, voice and neglect and decreased loyalty; Alternative employment alternatives, justification of sufficiency of the contract violation and degree of procedural justice in organization processes moderated the relationship between contract breach and outcomes.
Robinson & Rousseau (1994)	Psychological contracts	Various	128 MBA alumni of a Midwestern US university	Developed for this study	Regression	Psychological contracts are frequently violated; Violation was positively associated with turnover and negatively related to job satisfaction, intention to remain and trust in the employer; Violations and unmet expectations act differently; Organizations breach contracts regarding diverse topics.
Robinson (1996)	Psychological contracts	Midwestern graduate business school alumni working for various organizations	125 alumni employed as managers	Two stage survey - 1st stage asked about explicit obligations, 2nd stage asked extent of fulfillment of those obligations	Regression	Initial trust in the employer was negatively related to reports of breach; Breaches were negatively related to self-reported assessment of performance, civic virtue, and intention to quit.

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Fox & Spector (1999)	Organizational frustration	8 US corporations	185 full-time employees	37 items measuring situational constraints (Job Environment Survey)	Zero-order correlations; LISREL 8	Frustration is associated with counterproductive work behaviors and negatively correlated with job satisfaction
Jex & Gudanowski (1992)	Organizational frustration	Two US universities	154 nonfaculty members	Peter et al.'s (1980) 3-item measure	Regression	Individual and collective efficacy were related to frustration
Chen and Spector (1992)	Organizational frustration	14 US organizations	400 members from different occupations	11 item measure item scale measuring situational constraints (Spector et al. 1988)	Zero-order correlations	Frustration was correlated with hostility, interpersonal aggression, complaints, and turnover intentions.
Storms & Spector (1987)	Organizational frustration	Mental health facility in the US	160 employees	37 items measuring situational constraints (Job Environment Survey)	Zero-order correlations	Organizational frustration is related to perceived frustration; Perceived frustration is related to aggression, sabotage, hostility, withdrawal and intent to quit. Perceived frustration is Peters et al.'s organizational frustration.
Keenan & Newton (1984)	Organizational frustration	Multiple UK organizations	401 graduate engineers	Spector (1978) unpublished scale	Multiple regression	Environmental frustration was associated with anger reactions, latent hostility, job dissatisfaction, and work-related anxiety; Organizational climate, role stress and social support predicted environmental frustration.
Peters et al. (1980)	Organizational frustration	Southwestern University	60 students	Developed 3 item measure for this study	MANOVA	Persons in facilitating conditions reported less frustration
Spector (1975)	Organizational frustration	Mental Health Facility in the US and persons known to the author	82 respondents	Developed 29 item measure for this study	Zero-order correlations	Frustration is correlated with interpersonal hostility, complaining, sabotage, interpersonal aggression, and job apathy

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Zivnuska et al. (2004)	Organizational politics	Financial services organization in the Southwestern US	112 white-collar office workers	"Going along to Get Ahead" subscale of Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) POPS	Hierarchical moderated regression	Organizational politics was not related to supervisor's performance rating; organizational politics interacted with impression management to influence supervisor's rating of performance
Witt et al. (2002)	Organizational politics	Service sector organization	540 employees	"Going along to Get Ahead" subscale of Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) POPS	Hierarchical moderated regression	POP is negatively related to job dedication and interpersonal facilitation; The relationship between politics and contextual performance was not influenced by personality factors.
Randall et al. (1999)	Organizational politics; POS	2 manufacturing and 1 public sector organizations in three cities	128 total subjects	Organizational politics -Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) POPS; POS - 17 items for Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Confirmatory factor analysis; Regression	Politics and support were related to job satisfaction, commitment, turnover intentions and supervisor ratings of OCB; Only support was related to performance; There were mixed results regarding the distinction between perceptions of support and politics
Cropanzano et al. (1997)	Organizational politics; POS	Study 1 - Manufacturer located in Southwestern US; Study 2 - Large Western university	Study 1 - 69 members; Study 2 - 185 undergraduate students who were employed part-time	Organizational politics -Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) POPS; POS - 17 items for Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Study 1 and 2- Hierarchical regression	Both POS and politics added to explaining variance above and beyond one another suggesting distinct constructs; Both predicted job tension, somatic tension, general fatigue and burnout.
Parker et al. (1995)	Organizational politics	Government organization that manages R and D projects	1641 employees from varying occupations	6 items from Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) POPS	Confirmatory factor analysis; Regression; MANOVA	Intergroup cooperation, role clarity, and fairness of rewards and recognition predicted perceptions of politics; Minority status weakly predicted perceptions of politics; Perceptions of organizational politics were related to innovation.

Author (Date)	Construct	Setting	Sample Size	Operationalization	Data Analysis	Findings
Nye & Witt (1993)	Organizational politics; POS	Civilian government organization	1297 employees	Organizational politics -Kacmar and Ferris's (1991) POPS; POS - 16 items for Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Confirmatory factor analysis	Employees develop an overall perception of politics within the organization; SPOS and POPS were strongly and negatively related; SPOS and POPS were strongly and inversely related to organizational commitment; POPS is uni-dimensional
Kacmar & Ferris (1991)	Organizational politics	Large Southwestern university	822 employees	Developed for this study	Exploratory factor analysis	POPS is multi-dimensional consisting of general political behavior, going along to get ahead, and pay and promotion.

3. CHAPTER THREE

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

While it is necessary to theoretically distinguish a new concept from related constructs, it is also required that the new concept be empirically differentiated from existing related constructs. This chapter of my dissertation describes the development of a scale to measure cognitive organizational obstruction. One major implicit assumption running throughout the theoretical development of the cognitive organizational obstruction (COO) construct is that employees distinguish between the treatment received from the organization and from agents of the organization. A second goal of this chapter is to assess this assumption. Employees' ability to differentiate between similarly conceptualized constructs of cognitive organizational obstruction, cognitive supervisor obstruction (CSO) and organizational frustration is assessed. A cognitive supervisor obstruction scale is created by changing the referent of the COO scale from organization to supervisor. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic techniques are used to assess employees' ability to differentiate between COO, CSO and organizational frustration. Results suggest that employees are able to distinguish between these sources of obstruction and frustration.

3.2 COO SCALE DEVELOPMENT

The scale development method followed in this study was developed by Churchill (1979) and includes the following steps: (1) specify the domain of the construct; (2) generate sample items; (3) collect data; (4) perform factor analysis and assess reliability; (5) purify items; (6) collect additional data; and (7) assess reliability and validity.

The first step in developing a scale is to clearly define the domain of the construct, which stems from the definition of the construct. COO is defined as an employee's belief that the organization hinders the attainment of goals and is a detriment to his or her well-being. Generated items should sample this conceptual space and initial items therefore focused on the organization obstructing goals and being detrimental to the employee's well-being. During the item generation stage, a broader definition of detriment to well-being was used. Beyond utilizing the antonyms of detriment, generated items also considered detriment to well-being as illness, sickness and suffering.

When developing a scale, a researcher must be cognizant of the dimensionality of the underlying construct and the dimensionality of the scale (L. R. Flynn & Pearcy, 2001). In reference to the underlying construct, there is reason to believe that the underlying construct is unidimensional or a single conceptual space (see Chapter 2).

A researcher should utilize existing literature when developing items which tap the construct's domain (Churchill, 1979). Since COO is a new construct, there is no existing literature specifically related to it, but, the existing literature for related constructs provides an initial starting point for developing items for COO. The related construct that most closely approximates COO is organizational frustration. Therefore, the existing organizational frustration literature is used as a starting point for generating items for cognitive organizational obstruction. Spector (1978) argued that employee's can experience two types of goal frustration (personal and task performance) within organizations. Items were generated which focused on the organization obstructing personal goals.

While Spector (1978) argued that employee's task performance can be obstructed within the organization, COO assesses an employee's beliefs about goal attainment. Therefore, items

should focus on goal attainment and not task performance. However, task performance can be associated with professional goals. For example, a goal of attaining a promotion is based on task performance. Therefore, the belief that the organization obstructs task performance was assessed with a single item. In addition to utilizing the existing literature to create items drawing on the conceptual domain of COO, the generated items were also compared to responses to a questionnaire.

An open-ended questionnaire consisting of two randomized questions was provided to 70 MBA students at the University of Pittsburgh. Respondents were asked to describe situations in which their employer had provided support and situations in which the organization had obstructed the employee. Analysis of the responses suggested two overarching categories of obstructionist behaviors by the organization regarding interference with goal attainment (see Chapter 6). These categories were obstruction of personal and professional goals. In addition, respondents also identified situations where the organization was a detriment to their well-being

Seventeen items were generated which measure an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with the attainment of personal and professional goals and is a detriment to the employee's well-being (see Table 3 for a list of the items).

Table 3: Factor Analyses of Items

Item (Original item number)	Initial Factor Loadings (Confirmatory)	Initial Factor Loadings (Exploratory)	Final Factor Loadings (Confirmatory)
My organization hinders the attainment of my personal goals. (COO1)	.772	.837	
My organization hinders the attainment of my professional goals. (COO2)	.774	.845	
My organization interferes with the accomplishment of my personal goals. (COO3)	.829	.879	
My organization interferes with the accomplishment of my professional goals. (COO4)	.820	.881	
My organization obstructs the realization of my personal goals. (COO5)	.827	.881	
My organization obstructs the realization of my professional goals. (COO6)	.844	.890	.824
My organization harms me. (COO7)			
My organization is a detriment to my well-being. (COO8)	.735	.668	.764
The organization gets in the way of my performance. (COO9)	.732	.739	.792
The company blocks my personal goals. (COO10)	.847	.845	.893
My health suffers because I work for this company. (COO11)	.561		
When I think about going to work, I feel sick. (COO12)	.612		
My organization likes to see me suffer. (COO13)	.644		
The organization makes me "jump through hoops" for no apparent reason. (COO14)	.672		
I think the organization makes my work more difficult than necessary. (COO15)	.568		
My goal attainment is thwarted by the organization. (COO16)	.867	.841	.905
The organization frustrates me. (COO17)	.758	.735	

While the items draw on different aspects of the domain, the generated items are believed to measure a single conceptual space. One goal of this study is to create a scale which is reliable, homogeneous, and unidimensional. In a review of the role of factor analysis in scale development, Briggs and Cheek (1986) found that scales can "reach generally acceptable levels of internal consistency and homogeneity and still yield multiple factors" (p. 110). This distinction implies that these concepts (internal consistency, homogeneity and factor structure) are conceptually different (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). As a result of these distinctions, different statistical measures are used as indictors of these three concepts. Internal consistency is most often measured with Cronbach's alpha and homogeneity is measured with the mean inter-item correlation, whereas the existence of multiple factors is determined through factor analysis (Briggs & Cheek, 1986).

An initial review of the seventeen items by three executives (a bank president, a payroll director in the health care industry, and a director of a research institute in an academic institution) found that these executives would not allow a specific item to be included on a survey to their employees or research members. COO7 of the original survey was "My organization harms me" and was dropped from further analysis.

The next steps in Churchill's methodology are to collect data to perform a factor analysis and assess scale reliability. Factor analysis techniques are described in more detail in the analysis section. Survey responses were collected from 19 faculty and staff from the University of Pittsburgh, 7 employees from payroll and HRIS departments of a health care provider and 76 MBA students enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh for a total of 102 responses. A confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS was performed by forcing the items to factor onto a single factor. A confirmatory factor analysis using principal components analysis was

performed because the items were generated to assess a single conceptual space. Therefore, the

generated items should load on a single factor. The factor loadings of this confirmatory factor

analysis are contained in Table 3. While Churchill (1979) suggested that items with a loading of

.4 are acceptable when performing an exploratory factor analysis, it has been suggested that a

more stringent requirement is needed when utilizing confirmatory factor analysis procedures

(Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). A loading of .71 is generally accepted when using confirmatory

factor analysis (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This requirement has been utilized because it suggests

that approximately half of the variance in responses is due to the underlying construct. Based

upon this requirement, COO11, COO12, COO13, COO14 and COO 15 were dropped from

subsequent analysis.

As a next step, an exploratory factor analysis was performed utilizing principal

components analysis. The criterion utilized to determine the number of factors was eigenvalues

greater than or equal to one (1). An eigenvalue represents the amount of variance explained in

comparison to the original variable. The criterion of eigenvalues greater than or equal to one (1)

suggests that the factor accounts for as much variance as the average of the original factor, but

this criterion often overestimates the number of factors (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). The

exploratory factor analysis generated a single factor which accounted for approximately 68% of

the variance. The loadings from the exploratory factor analysis are also contained in Table 3.

The factor loadings from the exploratory factor analysis all exceed the .4 requirement suggested

by Churchill (1979).

Next, the internal consistency of the scale was assessed utilizing Cronbach's alpha.

When developing a theoretical scale, Cronbach's alpha is the more appropriate measure for

reliability (L. R. Flynn & Pearcy, 2001). Flynn and Pearcy (2001) argued that scales developed

for theoretical use should be tightly focused on a core construct and as such items should be internally consistent. The reliability for the eleven (11) item scale was .951. Commonly, a scale is considered reliable when the reliability indicator equals or exceeds .7 (Nunnally, 1978). Based upon this criterion, the eleven (11) item scale appears to be reliable.

Briggs and Cheek (1986) suggested that mean inter-item correlation should be utilized in assessing the homogeneity of a scale. They argued that the mean inter-item correlation should be between .2 and .4. A mean inter-item correlation of less than .1 indicates that the scale is not homogeneous and values exceeding .5 suggest that items are redundant. The mean inter-item correlation of the eleven (11) item scale was .644. Therefore, the eleven (11) item scale contains redundant items. However, the eleven (11) item scale is reliable and unidimensional.

In order to assess which items are redundant, inter-item correlations were calculated (see Table 4). All items were significantly correlated at the .001 level. Correlation coefficients equal to or above .90 signal redundancy (O'Connor & Morrison, 2001). Based upon this criterion, COO2 and COO4 are redundant items. However, the correlation matrix suggests that additional items are highly correlated, but do not reach the .90 criterion. The items fall into two groupings of redundant items. The first grouping of redundant measures contains four items (COO1, COO3, COO5, COO10) and pertains to the obstruction of personal goals. The second grouping contains three items (COO2, COO4, COO6) and pertains to the obstruction of professional goals. The path loadings from the confirmatory factor analysis were reviewed to determine which item from each group to retain. The item with the highest loading from each of the two groups was retained. COO10 and COO6 were retained for inclusion in the scale.

Table 4: Inter-item correlation matrix.

	COO1	COO2	COO3	COO4	COO5	COO6	COO8	COO9	COO10	COO16
My organization hinders the attainment of my personal goals. (COO1)										
My organization hinders the attainment of my professional goals. (COO2)	.717									
My organization interferes with the accomplishment of my personal goals. (COO3)	.823	.694								
My organization interferes with the accomplishment of my professional goals. (COO4)	.716	**.903**	.765							
My organization obstructs the realization of my personal goals. (COO5)	.792	.679	.856	.732						
My organization obstructs the realization of my professional goals. (COO6)	.675	.823	.733	.869	.795					
My organization is a detriment to my well-being. (COO8)	.455	.441	.525	.449	.506	.496				
The organization gets in the way of my performance. (COO9)	.554	.558	.554	.603	.562	.586	.418			
The company blocks my personal goals. (CO10)	.644	.575	.755	.616	.743	.657	.640	.660		
My goal attainment is thwarted by the organization. (CO16)	.625	.605	.642	.648	.699	.688	.649	.663	.767	
The organization frustrates me. (CO17)	.450	.582	.467	.560	.541	.627	.480	.596	.618	.655

Notes: All correlations are significant at .001. Bolded items exceed criterion for redundant

The remaining six (6) items were reviewed by researchers who are experienced in scale development. These researchers expressed two main concerns with the scale. First, COO17 does not sample the domain of the construct. COO is defined as an employee's belief that the organization obstructs goal attainment and is detrimental to his or her well-being. The item was worded as "The organization frustrates me" and does not appear to sample the domain. In light of this feedback, the item was removed from further analysis. Secondly, it was noted that the scale does not include a reverse coded item. General guidelines for scale development suggest that a reverse coded item should be included in a scale (Hinkin, 1995). A reverse coded item ("The company helps me attain my goals") was created and included in the scale.

The final five (COO6, COO8, COO9, COO10, COO16) items were reanalyzed. General guidelines suggest an item to response ratio of at least 1:10 for a factor analysis (Nunnally, 1978), but item-response ratios as low as 1:4 have been reported (Hinkin, 1995). The item to response for this final factor analysis was 1:20.4. Table 3 contains the path loadings from a final confirmatory factor analysis which accounted for approximately 70% of the variance. The Cronbach's alpha for the five (5) item scale was .890. A subsequent review of the inter-item correlations found that all correlations were significant at .001 level of analysis and ranged between .418 and .767. Thus, the five item scale met the generally accepted criteria for reliability, loadings and inter-item correlations. However, the five (5) item scale still exhibited redundancy based upon Briggs and Cheek's (1986) criteria. The mean inter-item correlation for the five item scale was .623. This suggests that the scale is still redundant. However, each item measured a single aspect of the construct domain suggested by the inductive and deductive approaches to item generation. Therefore, none of the remaining items were removed. This completed the purification stage of Churchill's methodology.

The next step in Churchill's methodology is to collect additional data and assess the validity of the scale. In accordance with Churchill's methodology, additional data were collected to assess the validity of the scale, but before discussing the data collection method, I will present the concept of cognitive supervisor obstruction.

3.3 COGNITIVE SUPERVISOR OBSTRUCTION

Levinson's (1965) observation that employees distinguish treatment that they receive from the organization from treatment received from supervisors is a key assumption underlying the development of cognitive organizational obstruction. According to Levinson, employees attribute actions of organizational agents to the organization because organizations control the actions of agents through rules and policies. Researchers should verify that respondents do in fact differentiate between actions of the organizational agent and the organization when developing a scale which measures organizational actions (Hutchison, 1997; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988).

Recently, social exchange researchers have begun differentiating between local and global social exchange relationships (Brandes, Dharwadkar, & Wheatley, 2004; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Local social exchange relationships are dyadic relationships between the focal employee and other employees, usually the focal actor's supervisor (Brandes et al., 2004). In comparison, global social exchange relationships focus on the employee's relationship with the organization (Wayne et al., 1997). Global social exchange relationships are based upon employees' understanding and beliefs about their perception of employer-employee relationship (Brandes et al., 2004). COO can be conceptualized as a global social exchange relationship based upon its definition. When developing a scale which purports to capture employees' social exchange relationship with the organization, scale developers should verify that respondents

distinguish between the social exchange relationship with the supervisor (local) and the organization (global) when measuring the same conceptual domain.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) developed POS arguing that employees reciprocate the organization's commitment to them by being more committed to the organization. Implicit in this argument is the idea that employees believe that the organization can act, or more specifically, that the organization can be committed. This attribution assumes that employees attribute some actions to organizational members and other actions to the organization, since the organization is an abstract, non-corporal entity. In one of the first studies to test this assumption, respondents distinguished between the supportive actions of the organization, supervisor and management (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). A consistent finding from various studies is that perceived supervisor support (PSS) and POS are distinct (Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). This robust finding has been replicated using samples of municipal government employees (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988), university employees (Hutchison, 1997), university alumni in the United States (Rhoades et al., 2001) and Belgium (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) and retail employees (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). The most common method of assessing discriminant validity between perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support has been the chi-square different test (Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades et al., 2001; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) which is described in the Analysis section.

Additional studies have shown that employees are able to distinguish between their social exchange relationships with their supervisor and their organization (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). According to Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997), since social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)

is the basis for both leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support, researchers should differentiate between LMX and POS since the concepts are conceptually linked. Settoon et al. (1996) and Wayne et al. (1997) found that employees distinguish between their social exchange relationship with their supervisor and the organization. Recently, Brandes, Dharwadkar and Wheatly (2004) found that employees not only differentiate between social exchange relationships with their supervisor and organization, but also identify social exchange relationships with top management and other employees in the organization. Overall, there is reason to believe that the respondents should be able to distinguish between organizational obstruction and supervisor obstruction. However, the goal of this study is to test this assumption.

Spector (1978) focused on sources of frustration *within* the organization and included an employee's supervisor as a source of frustration within the organization. Based upon the definition of COO, cognitive supervisor obstruction is defined as an employee's global belief that an employee's supervisor obstructs, hinders or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives and is a detriment to his or her well-being. Thus, supervisors are a source of organizational frustration and obstruction. Since supervisors are perceived to be both a source of frustration and obstruction, organizational frustration is included in the analysis to determine if employees differentiate between sources of frustration and obstruction within the organization.

3.4 PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of cognitive organizational obstruction scale and to test a key assumption of cognitive organizational obstruction that employees differentiate between treatment received from the organization and organizational agents when forming perceptions of obstruction. Both

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exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis techniques were used in this study. The COO scale

was compared to the organizational frustration scale (Peters et al., 1980) and a cognitive

supervisor obstruction scale, which was created by substituting supervisor for organization in the

COO scale.

3.5 METHODS

3.5.1 Sample and Procedures

An on-line survey was created by utilizing the software attainable through a contracted

web-host, Zoomerang. In addition to providing web-hosting, Zoomerang provides other fee-

based services such as survey deployment to members of their focus-group database.

Zoomerang was contracted to deploy the survey to a select number of respondents to provide 400

responses from a described sample. A sample consisting of individuals between the age of 18

and 65 who are employed full-time, evenly distributed between females and males, and

approximating an ethnic diversity approximately equivalent to the racial demography of the

overall population within the United States was requested. According to the Bureau of Labor

Standards, the demographic breakdown of the workforce is: 73% White, 10% Black\African-

American, 4% Asian and 12% Latino\Hispanic (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). While a

sample profile was requested and stratified sampling is employed to approximate the requested

sample profile, the actual composition of the database will differ.

Email invitations were sent to 1200 focus-group participants. Participants were not sent

any additional follow-up emails. After three days, responses were downloaded into Microsoft

Excel. Completed surveys were collected from 739 respondents for a response rate of 61.6%.

The collected sample was 50.8% female, 70% Caucasian, and 47.2% held a bachelors or masters

degree. 34.2% of the sample managed or supervised employees. Representative job titles

included teacher, customer service representative and accountant. Respondents' age in the sample ranged between 19 and 65 with a median of 39.8 and mean organization tenure was 7.1 years.

3.5.2 Measures

The response format for all scales consists of a 7-point Likert scale with endpoints of "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7) with a midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree" (4).

3.5.2.1 Cognitive Organizational Obstruction

The six item measure of cognitive organizational obstruction developed in the proceeding sections was utilized in this study.

3.5.2.2 Cognitive Supervisor Obstruction

Hutchison (1997) argued that the same conceptual space, such as support from the organization, top management and supervisors, should be tapped in making the distinction between actions of the organization and actions of the supervisor. Thus, to measure the same conceptual space of obstruction, a cognitive supervisor obstruction (CSO) scale was created by changing the referent of the COO scale from organization to supervisor. This is the same procedure that was used in creating the perceived supervisor support scale (Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades et al., 2001; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). Additional minor modifications were made to the scale for grammatical reasons. For example, the COO item of "The organization gets in the way of my performance" was reworded to "My supervisor gets in the way of my performance".

3.5.2.3 Organizational Frustration

Peters, O'Connor, and Rudolf (1980) developed a three item measure of perceived organizational frustration after reviewing the organizational frustration literature. Previously, researchers utilized an unpublished scale as a measure of organizational frustration (Spector, 1975) and subsequently have utilized a measure of situational constraints (e.g. Fox & Spector, 1999), which are "aspects of the immediate work situation (e.g. different levels of task preparation, job-relevant information, materials and supplies, tools and equipment) that interfere with the translations of abilities and motivation into effective performance" (Peters & O'Connor, 1980, p. 391). The reported alpha of the Peters et al.'s (1980) initial study was .76 with subsequent studies reporting alphas ranging between .78 to .84 (Chen & Spector, 1992; Jex & Gudanowski, 1992; Storms & Spector, 1987). A representative item from this scale is "Overall, I experience very little frustration on this job".

3.6 ANALYSIS

When developing a scale to measure a theoretical construct, Flynn and Pearcy (2001, p. 418) state that:

> Convergent validity, the battery's tendency to correlate highly with other measures of the same construct, discriminant validity, the battery's non-significant correlation with measures of non-related constructs, and nomological validity, the test's ability to correlate as expected theoretically with a group of related constructs in a network, must all be maximized.

Scale reliability will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of the internal consistency of items (Kopalle & Lehmann, 1997). The discriminant validity of the scales will then be assessed. Discriminant validity is assessed utilizing bivariate correlations and factor analytic techniques. Excessively high correlations between constructs indicate construct redundancy and, therefore, a lack of discriminant validity. Morrow (1983) suggests an upper level bivariate correlation of .8 to indicate construct redundancy.

Another technique for assessing discriminant validity was offered by Fornell and Larcker (1981) who argued that the average variance extracted can be compared to bivariate correlations. They developed a calculation for estimating the average variance extracted (AVE) of a construct. This measure captures the amount variance explained by the construct in proportion to measurement error. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), when the construct's average variance extracted is compared to the associated correlations and is greater than the squared correlations, there is evidence of discriminant validity. When the square root of the average variance extracted is greater than the correlations, in magnitude, there is evidence discriminant validity (Gefen & Straub, 2005).

Factor analytic techniques can also be utilized to assess discriminant validity. The overall goal of factor analytic techniques is determine which items are most related to a construct and different from other constructs (Gorsuch, 1997). Two general types of factor analysis techniques, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, are utilized in this analysis. Exploratory factor analysis allows for an underdetermined amount of factors which meet a certain criterion to be extracted from the data. The most common extraction method is principal components extraction with varimax rotation (Gorsuch, 1997). Principal components extraction creates factors that are maximally distinct from the previous factor (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). Varimax rotation is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. The most common criterion utilized to determine the number of factors is eigenvalues greater than or equal to one (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). An eigenvalue represents the amount of variance explained in comparison to the original variable. The criterion of eigenvalues greater than or equal to one suggests that the factor accounts for as much variance as the average of the original factor (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). In

this study, exploratory factor analyses are performed using SPSS for Windows version 13.0. All exploratory factor analyses were performed utilizing an extraction method of principal components with eigenvalues greater than 1.

Confirmatory factor analysis imposes limitations on the number of factors that are produced or the relationship of items to factors (Briggs & Cheek, 1986; Gorsuch, 1997). In this study, confirmatory factor analyses were performed using SPSS for Windows version 13.0 and LISREL 8.2, a structural equation modeling software. The SPSS confirmatory factor analyses utilize similar procedures as the exploratory factor analysis. The main difference between the exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic techniques performed in SPSS is the criterion used for extraction. Exploratory factor analyses used a criterion of eigenvalues that exceed one, whereas confirmatory factor analyses in SPSS forces the number of factors to the expected number of theoretical constructs. This method allows items to freely associate with the factor. Structural equation modeling (SEM) confirmatory factor analyses force items to latent constructs and evaluates item fit with that latent construct. Flynn and Pearcy (2001) suggest that exploratory factor analysis should be used early in a scale's validation and when the number of factors is unclear, whereas Gorsuch (1997) suggests that confirmatory factor analytic techniques should be employed when clear predictions exist as to the number of factors and how the factors are related. EFA and CFA can be used in conjunction with one another with EFA being employed to focus hypotheses and SEM confirmatory factor analysis provides indirect evidence of the factor structure (Gorsuch, 1997). SEM confirmatory factor analysis requires the clearest prediction regarding items and constructs since the researcher must identify the number of factors and the relationship of items to those factors a priori. I followed Gorsuch's suggestion to

employ both factor analytic techniques since these constructs are new, but there is theoretical justification for the number of factors to be expected.

Structural equation modeling can also be utilized to provide additional evidence of discriminant validity through chi-square difference tests (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1992).   A baseline model is created and the fit indices are recorded. The baseline model is then modified and changes in model fit are assessed by comparing the fit indices between models. Baseline models can be created by associating all items to a single latent construct (e.g. Hutchison, 1997; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) or associating items to their intended construct (e.g. Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). Depending on the method of creating the baseline model, subsequent models are modified by freeing items to be associated with their intended construct or constrained by combining items from different constructs. Models are freed after using a single factor as a baseline or constrained by combining latent constructs when the baseline contains multiple items. I utilized a single construct baseline model and subsequently freed items to their applicable latent construct. According to Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003), if a single latent construct most accurately fits the data, there is evidence of common source bias.

LISREL output identifies measurement errors which are correlated (Byrne, 1998). Correlated error terms suggests that the "measurement instrument does not cleanly measure what one would like it to measure" (Reddy, 1992, p. 551). Correlated error terms of items of different latent constructs imply that these items are measuring the same construct, which is different than the latent constructs to which the items are associated.

3.7 RESULTS

3.7.1 Construct-level

Reverse-coded items were recoded by subtracting item responses from eight, which is the highest scale response plus one. As an example, if a response to a reverse coded item was a one, the low end of the response format, it was subtracted from eight generating a response of seven, the high end of the response format. A separate index measure was created for the three constructs by averaging responses on the applicable items. Table 5 contains the mean, reliability and correlations.

Both the COO ($p<.05$, $t = -12.568$) and CSO ($p<.05$, $t = -14.165$) means are below the midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree", i.e. fall in the disagree portion of the response format (responses of 1, 2 or 3), suggesting that most respondents do not believe the organization and supervisor obstruct the realization of goals and are a detriment to their well-being. In contrast, the organizational frustration mean is slightly above the midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree", but not significantly different from the midpoint ($p>.05$, $t = 1.684$), which suggests respondents neither agree nor disagree that their organization is a source of frustration. Since the organizational frustration scale referent is the job, more specifically, respondents neither agree nor disagree that their job is a source of frustration.

All Cronbach's alphas, a reliability measure of internal consistency, exceed the .7 criterion suggested by Nunnally (1978). Specifically, the internal consistency of the COO, organizational frustration and CSO scales were .899, .832, and .932, respectively. Respondents utilized the full scale of responses for all items. Thus, items do not suffer from range restriction and the scale is internally consistent (reliable).

All bivariate correlations were positive and significant at the .001 level. When scales are highly correlated, there is a possible lack of discriminant validity. Using the .8 criterion, the correlations between the constructs do not suggest that these concepts are redundant since the strongest correlation was .760 (COO and CSO). The correlation between CSO and frustration was .546 and the correlation between COO and frustration was .559. These constructs are non-redundant, i.e. all correlations are below .8, which suggests that these concepts are distinct.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha	COO	FRUSTRATION	CSO
COO	3.35	.899	.776		
FRUSTRATION	4.10	.832	.559	.803	
CSO	3.22	.932	.760	.546	.849

Notes: Square Root of Average Variance Extracted presented on the diagonal. All correlations are significant at .001 (2-tailed)

In order to evaluate the distinctiveness of the constructs, various models were compared utilizing LISREL. A base model was created by assigning all variables to a single latent construct. From this base model, additional models were created by removing a single construct's items from the base model and associating the items with the applicable latent construct. For example, the second model was created by removing the three frustration items from the base model, creating a second latent construct of FRUST and assigning the frustration items to that latent construct. In the third model, COO, frustration, and CSO were analyzed as individual latent constructs. A chi-square difference test was performed on each model. A significant chi-square difference test indicates that the change to the model is a significant change, i.e. the separation of the measures into the different latent constructs is a better fitting model (Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades et al., 2001; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). All model

changes were significant (p<.05). The results of the chi-square difference tests (see Table 6)

suggest that: (a) the data do not suffer from a single source bias and (b) the constructs are

distinct.

Table 6: Chi-square difference tests

Model	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	PNFI
One factor	2895.28	-	-	.206	.66	.74	.49
Two factor	2214.90	680.38	1	.180	.71	.80	.68
Three factor	1271.49	943.41	2	.133	.82	.88	.73

Notes: All models are significant at p<.05. One factor = All items to one construct, Two factor= Frustration and all other items to one construct Three factor = Frustration, COO and CSO

Further analysis was performed to determine the discriminant validity of the constructs.

The average variance extracted (AVE) was calculated for each construct based upon Fornell and

Larcker's (1981) equation. The square root of the AVE is presented on the diagonal in Table 5.

The square root of the average variance extracted for each construct is greater than the bivariate

correlation in the associated row and column. The square root of the AVE for COO, CSO and

frustration are .776, .849 and .803, respectively. The square root of the AVE for COO (.776)

and CSO (.849) exceed the bivariate correlation of .760 between these constructs. The square

root of the AVE for frustration (.803) and CSO (.849) exceed the bivariate correlation of .546

between these constructs. The square root of the AVE for COO (.776) and frustration (.803)

exceed the bivariate correlation of .559 between these constructs. The results presented in Table

5 suggest that the constructs are highly correlated, but distinct.

3.7.2 Item-level

While support may be found for the convergent and discriminant validity at the construct

level, the item-level analysis may produce different results (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001). For

example, individual items may load on constructs other than the intended construct, may cross-

load on multiple constructs or have correlated error terms. Accordingly, additional analyses were performed at the item level of analysis.

Before combining the items, exploratory factor analyses were performed on individual constructs. This analysis was performed to provide a baseline for analysis. Individual items should load on a single factor when analyzed separately since all constructs have been conceptualized as representing a single domain. Knowing the factor structure of individual items will simplify analysis when the items are combined. For example, if COO and CSO each create a single factor when analyzed individually and create three factors when analyzed together, a researcher is able to attribute the three factor structure to the combined analyses of these constructs instead of multiple factors existing for single constructs before being combined. All items loaded onto a single factor in each of the analyses at .4 or above (see Table 7). The reverse coded items contained in the COO and CSO scales failed to load on its related construct at the .71 level. The low loading of reverse-coded items is consistent with prior research which indicates that reverse-coded items are consistently problematic when factor analytic techniques are performed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Since each construct's items factor onto a single factor, additional analysis were performed with all items in a single analysis.

Table 7: Exploratory factor analyses for individual constructs

	COO	Frustration	CSO
Variance Explained	66.7%	74.9%	75.3%
Item 1	.815	.879	.898
Item 2	.787	.894	.869
Item 3	.862	.821	.931
Item 4	.684		.681
Item 5	.854		.897
Item 6	.880		.907

Note: Principal Components Analysis with Eigenvalues greater than 1

An exploratory factor analysis was performed since these constructs have not been previously analyzed in prior research. The rotated solution is presented in Table 8.

As expected, a three-factor solution was extracted. The frustration items all loaded onto a single factor, but this factor explained the least amount of variance. Two additional items cross-loaded onto this factor, the reverse-coded item from the COO scale and the reverse-coded item from the CSO scale.

The reverse-coded COO item failed to load on what is best described as the COO construct and an additional COO item cross-loaded on what is best described as the CSO construct. In addition, two CSO items cross-loaded on the COO factor. These results lend support to Andrews and Kacmar's (2001) observation that convergent and discriminant validity can be observed at the construct level, but individual items may load incorrectly, cross-load or have correlated error terms.

Table 8: Exploratory factor analysis

	Component		
	1	2	3
Variance Explained	28.675	24.492	20.056
COO1	.253	**.811**	.157
COO2	.285	**.778**	.120
COO3	.334	**.707**	.337
RCOO4	**.401**	.247	**.601**
COO5	**.411**	**.642**	.313
COO6	.384	**.740**	.261
FRUST1	.226	.331	**.723**
FRUST2	.117	.286	**.772**
RFRUST3	.137	.063	**.867**
CSO1	**.759**	**.419**	.218
CSO2	**.770**	**.401**	.121
CSO3	**.817**	.349	.270
RCSO4	**.581**	.062	**.542**
CSO5	**.821**	.298	.226
CSO6	**.797**	.380	.213

Note: Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation with Eigenvalues greater than 1. Bolded items represent factors loading greater than .4.

Additional analysis was performed at the item level using the results of the three construct model previously described. The path loadings of this model are presented in Table 9. Notably, three items (FRUST3, COO4 and CSO4) failed to load on the associated construct at or above the .71 criteria. In addition, two items (COO4 and CSO4) have correlated error terms suggesting that they are not measuring their intended construct, but a different construct. Interestingly, the problematic items are the reverse-coded items for each scale. As previously noted, these results are consistent with known problems regarding reverse coded items (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Table 9: Completely standardized path loadings

	COO	Frustration	CSO
COO1	.75		
COO2	.72		
COO3	.83		
COO4 (r)	.63*		
COO5	.84		
COO6	.86		
FRUST1		.85	
FRUST2		.85	
FRUST3 (r)		.70	
CSO1			.88
CSO2			.85
CSO3			.92
CSO4 (r)			.63*
CSO5			.87
CSO6			.91

Note: * indicates items with correlated errors

A final exploratory factor analysis was performed. In this exploratory factor analysis, the reverse coded items for the COO and CSO scales were removed. A three factor solution was again extracted. The results of this factor analysis are presented in Table 10. The three frustration items loaded on a single factor which explained approximately 19% of the variance. All five COO items loaded onto a single factor which explained approximately 27% of the variance. Finally, all five CSO items loaded onto a single factor which explained approximately 31% of the variance. No items cross-loaded at or above the .4 criterion suggested by Churchill (1979).

Table 10: Exploratory factor analysis

	Component		
	1	2	3
Variance Explained	31.014	27.254	19.038
COO1	.265	**.809**	.145
COO2	.299	**.771**	.116
COO3	.335	**.730**	.299
COO5	.393	**.681**	.254
COO6	.387	**.758**	.228
FRUST1	.288	.273	**.778**
FRUST2	.185	.215	**.845**
RFRUST3	.137	.113	**.831**
CSO1	**.784**	.383	.210
CSO2	**.799**	.359	.126
CSO3	**.827**	.339	.257
CSO5	**.840**	.277	.225
CSO6	**.824**	.347	.221

Note: Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation with Eigenvalues greater than 1. Bolded items represent factor loading greater than .4

3.8 DISCUSSION

At the construct level, the results suggest that employees distinguish between obstruction from their organization, obstruction from their supervisor or manager and organizational (job) frustration. At the item-level, the results are more ambiguous. Items in the CSO had correlated error terms with items in the COO scale and CSO items cross-loaded on the COO factor and Frustration factor. However, these problems were not evidenced when the reverse-coded items from the COO and CSO scales were not considered.

Employees' ability to distinguish COO and CSO is consistent with other research that assesses whether employees can distinguish between the actions of organization and actions of the individuals who work in the organization. Research indicates that employees differentiate between the support received from the supervisor and the organization (Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees' attention to who obstructs the attainment of goals and is a detriment to their well-being has implications for the organization. For example, if an employee who believes that the supervisor is a source of obstruction may be willing to transfer to another department to escape the obstructionist behavior of the supervisor. However, when the organization is the source, employees may be more likely to leave the organization. A frustrating job may lead to job crafting behaviors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job crafting is defined as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179). As an employee becomes frustrated with her job, she may look to make changes in the job to alleviate the frustration.

The problems encountered with the reverse-coded items are also consistent with existing research (Podsakoff et al., 2003). When the reverse coded items were removed from the COO and CSO scales, the items from COO, CSO and organizational frustration scales loaded on

different factors and did not cross-load. However, the removal of reverse coded items from these scales violates Hinkin's (1995) suggestion that scales should include negatively worded items. He believed that reverse coded items alleviate the problem of respondent's tendency to enter into a response pattern, which Podsakoff et al. (2003) referred to this as creating cognitive speed-bumps for respondents. However, Podsakoff et al. (2003) concluded that reverse-coded items may be a source of method bias in and of themselves because reverse coded items tend to load together on a type of negatively worded latent construct. These authors concluded that reverse coded items may not be worth including in a scale.

3.9 LIMITATIONS

The main limitations of this study are the sample and data-collection method. The respondents in this sample were focus-group participants who are members of a national database. As such, the respondents participate in research studies more frequently. The frequent participation in research studies may bias response patterns.   Also, by volunteering to be members of the focus-group, participants may have a natural disposition which is more positive and helpful. This positive affectivity may bias response patterns (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

An on-line survey was utilized in this study. Response patterns differ between pencil-and-paper surveys and online-surveys (Ilieva, Baron, & Healey, 2002). On-line respondents appear to be more candid and verbose in replying to open-ended items in on-line surveys. However, no open-ended items were contained in this survey. The use of an online sample and focus-group participants limits the generalizability of this study as the Zoomerang database is limited to 2 million focus-group participants and those participants must have Internet access. Thus, the results of this study may not be generalizable to the US population.

3.10 CONCLUSION

The main conclusion drawn from this analysis is that cognitive organizational obstruction scale is internally consistent, valid and unidimensional. In addition, the results of this study suggest that employees are attentive to differences between treatment received from the organization and treatment received from their supervisor and differentiate between obstruction from the supervisor and frustration within the organization.

4. CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter of my dissertation describes a validation study. The main objective of this study is to validate the cognitive organizational obstruction (COO) scale and empirically distinguish COO from the related constructs of organizational frustration, perceived organizational support (POS), psychological contract breach (PCB), and perceived organizational politics (POP). I will review the measures that were selected from the literature to measure the aforementioned related constructs. Next, I will describe the methodology. Finally, conclusions based upon the results of the analysis are provided.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Sample and procedure

The Internet survey sample was described in Chapter 3. A sub-sample was utilized in this analysis. In order to provide support for convergent and divergent validity and to assess the internal consistency, responses to these twenty-three items (COO – six items, organizational frustration – three items, POS – six items, psychological contract breach – four items, and organizational politics – four items) were collected. Confirmatory factor analysis require an item to response ratio of 1:10 (Nunnally, 1978) suggesting a minimum of 230 usable. Others have argued for suitable sample sizes of: (1) between 100-200 respondents; (2) 300 respondents; or (3) item-responses of 1:4 (L. R. Flynn & Pearcy, 2001). A hold-out sample of 300 respondents was utilized for a factor analysis since it meets the most stringent of these requirements.

Churchill (1979) suggested that a different sample should be used for scale validation and hypothesis testing. To meet this requirement, a hold-out sample was used to perform scale validation. Those responses not used in the scale validation were used to test the hypotheses

described in Chapter 5. In order to assign respondents to the hold-out sample for use in the factor analyses, cases were assigned a single digit number between 0-9 using a random number generator. The first 300 cases with a digit between 0 and 4 were assigned to the factor analysis sub-sample. The factor analysis sub- sample was 48% female, 75.7% Caucasian, and 50.3% held a bachelors or masters degree. 35.8% of the sample managed or supervised employees. Respondents' age in the sub-sample ranged between 19 and 65 with a median of 40.0. The mean organization tenure for the sub-sample was 6.8 years.

4.2.2 Measures

Measures of the related constructs of organizational frustration, perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach and organizational politics were identified within the literature.   The response format for all scales consists of a 7-point Likert scale with endpoints of "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7) with a midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree" (4).   The organizational frustration and cognitive organizational obstructions were described in the previous chapter and will not be described here. The perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach and perceived organizational politics scales will be described below.

4.2.2.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) developed a thirty-six item measure of POS. In the initial study, Eisenberger et al. (1986) selected the seventeen highest loading items to create the survey of perceived organizational support. Subsequently, researchers have utilized an eight item measure of POS. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) suggested that shortened versions of the scale are acceptable because of the high internal reliability and the unidimensionality of the scale. Recently, Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel,

Lynch, and Rhoades (2001) have utilized a six (6) item measure of POS with a reported

reliability was .77.

4.2.2.2 Psychological contract breach

Psychological contract breach has been measured utilizing two distinct measurement

philosophies (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). One measurement methodology incorporates a

global assessment regarding the extent to which the organization has fulfilled its obligations.

The other measurement methodology focuses on specific obligations, such as pay and promotion

opportunities, and the extent to which the organization has fulfilled each of these obligations.

Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) found that results were broadly consistent between these two

measurement approaches. To be consistent with global measurement of COO and POS[2], the

acceptable psychometric properties of the scale and the consistency of results between the two

philosophies, I decided to utilize the global measurement method of psychological contract

breach. A five-item scale has been previously utilized in prior research (Robinson & Morrison,

2000) with a reported reliability of .92. I selected the items with path loadings which exceeded

.71 from Robinson and Morrison's confirmatory factor analysis, which resulted in a four (4) item

scale.

4.2.2.3 Perceived Organizational Politics

Kacmar and Ferris (1991) developed the perceptions of organizational politics scale

(POPS) based on Gandz and Murray's (1980) definition of politics. While the scale contains

twelve items and consists of three dimensions, Kacmar and colleagues have recently begun using

the single dimension of POPS, known as 'Going Along to Get Ahead' (Witt, Kacmar, Carlson, &

Zivnuska, 2002; Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). The 'Going Along to Get

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[2] Researchers have recently begun to assess perceptions of support regarding specific aspects of the organization's treatment, such as supportive treatment regarding training. In addition, the measures of COO are not directed as specific aspects such as obstruction of hindering the attainment of a promotion.

Ahead' sub-scale contains four items. The reported reliabilities in these studies were satisfactory (.71 and .70, respectively).

4.2.3 Validation Studies

Several studies have differentiated between (1) POS and psychological contract breach and (2) POS and organizational poltics (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Nye & Witt, 1993; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999; Tekleab et al., 2005). A literature search did not locate any published study which (a) provided evidence of the divergent validity of perceived organizational politics and psychological contract breach and (b) which distinguished organizational frustration from any of these constructs.

4.2.3.1 POS and psychological contracts

Perceived organizational support and psychological contract have been described as frameworks for assessing an employee's social exchange relationship with his or her employer (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). In 2003, Aselage and Eisenberger argued that these two concepts should be integrated. Until recently, however, these two research streams remained separate (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). In a study of public sector employees in Britain, Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) utilized the component method of measuring psychological contract breach and found that POS and employer obligations factored onto distinct factors when factor analyzed. This finding was replicated by Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005).   Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005) also reported that the POS and psychological contract fulfillment were significantly correlated (r=.61, p<.01)

Tekleab, Takeuchi and Taylor (2005) utilized the global measure of psychological contract breach. In their study, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed using a structural equation modeling technique. A single factor model, utilizing both POS and psychological

contract breach items, was compared to a model with the two latent constructs of POS and psychological contract breach. The two factor model more accurately fit the data, which provided support to the divergent validity of these two concepts.

4.2.3.2 POS and perceived organizational politics

The discriminant validity between POS and organizational politics was investigated much earlier than the relationship between POS and psychological contract breach (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Nye & Witt, 1993; Randall et al., 1999). However, the results of the POS-organizational politics studies have been mixed (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001).

Nye and Witt (1993) did not replicate Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) three factor structure of organizational politics. Instead, the twelve (12) item measure of POPS loaded onto a single factor. In addition, Nye and Witt (1993) found that a three-factor structure did not increase the model fit when performing a confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modeling. While not performing a factor analysis on the SPOS and POPS, the authors concluded that "organizational support and political behavior may be mirror-images of employees' views of aspects of the organization's climate" (Nye & Witt, 1993, p. 828). It should be noted that this conclusion was based on the fact that POS and organizational politics were highly correlated (r= -.85, p<.001). Nye and Witt (1993) also concluded that organizational politics and organizational support are best viewed as opposite ends of the same continuum.

Randall et al. (1999) performed a confirmatory factor analysis of SPOS and POPS utilizing structural equation modeling techniques. They compared a single factor model with a two factor model and found that the two-factor model fit the data more accurately, but other results were ambiguous. Randall et al. (1999) concurred with Nye and Witt's (1993) conclusion that organizational politics and organizational support can be viewed as opposite ends of single continuum, but an argument could be made for keeping the constructs distinct. To combine the

constructs, a researcher would need to rectify conceptual differences between the constructs (Randall et al., 1999).

Andrews and Kacmar (2001) performed an additional validation study utilizing structural equation modeling. They concluded that a four factor model (organizational politics, perceived organizational support, procedural justice and distributive justice) more accurately fit the data than other models. Andrews and Kacmar (2001) also analyzed the items and found that 14 of the 43 items cross-loaded on constructs. They concluded additional research is needed at the item level, with possible revisions to cross-loading items. Further analysis suggested that the constructs were predicted by a different subset of common antecedents. Overall, these findings suggest that the constructs should be viewed as distinct.

4.4 ANALYSIS

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were the primary data analysis techniques. These techniques were discussed in detail in the Chapter 3.

4.5 RESULTS

4.5.1 Construct-level

Reverse-coded items were recoded as described in Chapter 3 and a separate index measure was created for the five constructs. An index was created for each of the five constructs by averaging responses on the applicable items. Table 11 contains the means, reliabilities and correlations of the constructs. All reliabilities exceed the .7 criterion suggested by Nunnally (1978). Additionally, respondents utilized the full response format for all items indicating that the items do not suffer from range restriction. All bivariate correlations were significant at the .001, suggesting possible single-source bias or a lack of discriminant validity. Using the bivariate correlation criterion of .8 for construct redundancy (Morrow, 1983), the correlations

between the constructs do not suggest that these concepts are redundant. Being non-redundant

suggests that these concepts are distinct.

Table 11: Means, reliability, correlations

	Mean	Reliability	1	2	3	4	5
1. Psychological Contract Breach	3.38	.907	**.887**				
2. POS	4.49	.939	-.724[a]	**.858**			
3. Politics	3.96	.852	.583[a]	-.727[a]	**.770**		
4. Frustration	4.08	.833	.539[a]	-.552[a]	.439[a]	**.798**	
5. COO	3.29	.905	.596[a]	-.691[a]	.532[a]	.594[a]	**.741**

Note: [a] Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level. Square root of the average variance
extracted is presented on the diagonal.

In order to evaluate the distinctiveness of the constructs, various models were compared

utilizing SEM. All SEM models employed the covariance matrix as input. The chi-square

difference model tests, as outlined in Chapter 3, were followed. All model changes were

significant (p<.05).   The results of the chi-square difference tests (see Table 12) suggest that: (a)

the data do not suffer from a single source bias and (b) the constructs are distinct.

Table 12: Chi-square difference tests.

Model	χ^2(df)	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI
One factor	2905.09(230)	-	-	.197	.54	.65
Two factor	2203.42(229)	701.67	1	.170	.61	.70
Three factor	1914.06(227)	289.36	2	.158	.64	.73
Four factor	1009.62(224)	904.44	3	.108	.77	.86
Five factor	833.25(220)	176.37	4	.097	.80	.88

Notes: All models are significant at p<.05. One factor = All items to one construct, Two factor=
COO and all other items to one construct, Three factor = COO, frustration and all other items to
one construct, Four factor= COO, frustration, psychological contract and all other items to one
construct, Five factor = COO, frustration, psychological contract, POS and Politics

Further analysis was performed to determine the discriminant validity of the constructs.

The average variance extracted (AVE) was calculated for each construct based upon the Fornell

and Larcker's (1981) rho. This measure captures the amount variance explained by the construct in proportion to measurement error. The square root of the AVE is presented on the diagonal in Table 11. When the square root of the AVE is greater than the bivariate correlations, in magnitude, there is evidence of discriminant validity (Gefen & Straub, 2005). The results presented in Table 11 suggest that the constructs are highly correlated, but distinct.

4.5.2 Item-level

As noted by Andrews and Kacmar (2001) analysis at the construct-level may provide evidence of convergent and discriminant validity, but individual items may still cross-load on other constructs. In accordance with this observation, additional analyses were performed at the item-level.

Before combining the items, factor analyses were performed on individual constructs. All items loaded onto a single factor in each of the analyses at .4 or above (see Table 13). Only one item failed to load on its related construct at the .71 level. The individual factor analyses were performed to rule out a possible explanation that multiple-factor structures for individual constructs existed prior to combining the items from these constructs.

Table 13: Factor analyses for individual constructs

	Psychological Contract	POS	Politics	Frustration	COO
Variance Explained	80.6%	77.6%	69.3%	75.0%	68.0%
Item 1	.960	.898	.856	.877	.822
Item 2	.968	.941	.892	.884	.798
Item 3	.968	.928	.856	.836	.882
Item 4	.654	.935	.715		.711
Item 5		.739			.843
Item 6		.825			.881

An exploratory factor analysis was performed utilizing an extraction method of principal components with eigenvalues greater than 1 and varimax rotation. Varimax rotation is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. The rotated solution is presented in Table 14.

Strikingly, only four factors were extracted. One factor can clearly be identified as frustration. The three frustration items loaded onto a single factor with no items from other constructs (Factor 4). However, a single frustration item cross-loaded onto what is best conceptualized as obstruction (Factor 2). Five of the six obstruction items loaded onto this factor. The single reverse-coded COO item did not load onto this factor. However, the single reverse-coded POS item did load onto this factor. The final two factors are more ambiguous.

All psychological contract items loaded onto Factor 3. Factor 3 may be conceptualized as psychological contract breach since the highest loading items all come from the psychological contract breach scale. Interestingly, five of the six POS items also cross-loaded onto this factor,

albeit negatively. While these five items cross-loaded on psychological contract breach, the five-items were more strongly associated with Factor 1.

Table 14: Exploratory factor analysis

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
PSYCH1 (r)	.380	.190	**.826**	.177
PSYCH2 (r)	.369	.176	**.841**	.179
PSYCH3 (r)	**.402**	.182	**.818**	.200
PSYCH4	.028	.380	**.571**	.180
POS1	**-.666**	-.248	**-.486**	-.065
POS2	**-.667**	-.336	**-.491**	-.115
POS3	**-.653**	-.315	**-.499**	-.038
POS4	**-.708**	-.299	**-.425**	-.127
POS5 (r)	-.343	**-.653**	-.268	-.111
POS6	**-.616**	-.245	**-.445**	-.166
POL1(r)	**.786**	.124	.088	.086
POL2(r)	**.790**	.280	.209	.122
POL3(r)	**.770**	.210	.196	.186
POL4(r)	**.656**	-.031	.079	.168
FRUST1	.164	**.455**	.246	**.681**
FRUST2	.114	.308	.131	**.828**
FRUST3 (r)	.395	.105	.242	**.736**
COO1	.071	**.819**	.137	.143
COO2	.070	**.799**	.092	.165
COO3	.280	**.774**	.247	.219
COO4 (r)	**.654**	.395	.347	.190
COO5	.309	**.755**	.184	.100
COO6	.257	**.789**	.196	.185

Note: Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation with Eigenvalues greater than 1. Bolded items meet or exceed the .4 criterion suggested by Churchill (1979).

Factor 1 is the most ambiguous factor. Factor 1 contained an item from the psychological contract breach scale, five of the six POS items and all four items measuring politics. Thus, suggesting that POS items and politics items are tapping the same domain.

Since the majority of these constructs have been previously validated elsewhere, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed utilizing an extraction method of principal components with forced extraction of five factors and varimax rotation (see Table 15). The perceived frustration and cognitive organizational obstruction items exhibited similar psychometric characteristics to the exploratory factor analysis, i.e. one frustration item cross-loaded on what is best described as COO. The reverse-coded COO item did not load on the COO factor. However, during this stage of analysis the reverse coded COO item cross-loaded on the POS and politics factors. In addition, the reverse-coded POS item again factored to COO.

The most prominent differences between the confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses are related to perceived organizational support, organizational politics and psychological contract breach. First, the politics items loaded onto a separate factor during this analysis, but two items did cross-load onto POS factor. Second, the POS items no longer cross-loaded with psychological contract breach. Finally, two additional psychological contract breach items, three items in total, cross-loaded onto the POS factor.

Additional analysis was performed at the item-level using the results of the five construct SEM model previously described. The path loadings of this model are presented in Table 16. Notably, only a single-item COO item cross-loaded on a different construct, POS. This item also did not load on the appropriate construct during the exploratory factor analysis and the principal components confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 15: Confirmatory factor analysis

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
PSYCH1 (r)	**.432**	.177	**.781**	.236	.168
PSYCH2 (r)	**.417**	.166	**.802**	.236	.167
PSYCH3 (r)	**.422**	.173	**.783**	.272	.187
PSYCH4	.066	.399	**.619**	.063	.142
POS1	**-.770**	-.181	-.291	-.281	-.128
POS2	**-.786**	-.267	-.291	-.271	-.181
POS3	**-.827**	-.237	-.274	-.219	-.114
POS4	**-.810**	-.225	-.213	-.293	-.200
POS5 (r)	**-.543**	**-.596**	-.109	-.037	-.170
POS6	**-.589**	-.208	-.331	-.363	-.195
POL1(r)	.299	.150	.133	**.788**	.048
POL2(r)	**.485**	.274	.171	**.653**	.119
POL3(r)	**.487**	.198	.146	**.618**	.190
POL4(r)	.126	.013	.178	**.757**	.109
FRUST1	.232	**.432**	.194	.043	**.702**
FRUST2	.094	.300	.121	.071	**.835**
FRUST3 (r)	.278	.091	.208	.292	**.746**
COO1	.101	**.822**	.144	.049	.134
COO2	.097	**.801**	.094	.043	.159
COO3	.280	**.764**	.217	.180	.220
COO4 (r)	**.564**	.364	.251	**.425**	.213
COO5	.289	**.746**	.150	.205	.102
COO6	.223	**.788**	.186	.193	.178

Note: Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation forced 5 factor. Bolded items meet or exceed the .4 criterion suggested by Churchill (1979).

Table 16: Completely standardized path loading

	Psychological Contract	POS	Politics	Frustration	COO
PSYCH1 (r)	.96				
RPSYCH2 (r)	.98				
PSYCH3 (r)	.97				
PSYCH4	.57				
POS1		.88			
POS2		.93			
POS3		.93			
POS4		.91			
POS5 (r)		.67			
POS6		.80			
POL1(r)			.78		
POL2(r)			.91		
POL3(r)			.81		
POL4(r)			.53		
FRUST1				.85	
FRUST2				.80	
FRUST3 (r)				.74	
COO1					.69
COO2					.67
COO3					.87
COO4 (r)		-.50			.47
COO5					.82
COO6					.85

Interestingly, the problematic item is the reverse-coded item for the COO scale. Further analysis of the loadings suggests that the reverse coded items for each scale evidenced low path loadings. POS5, COO4 and FRUST3 are all singular reverse coded items contained in the applicable scale. The PSYCH4 item was the lowest loading item in the psychological contract breach scale, but was not directly reverse coded. However, the other three psychological contract breach items were reverse coded. Therefore, the PSYCH4 item was reverse coded in relation to these items initially. These results are consistent with prior research which indicates that negatively or reverse-coded items are consistently problematic (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4.6 DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses suggest that COO scale is internally consistent, valid and distinct, but the single reverse-coded item contained in the COO scale should either be reworded or removed from future studies if the cross-loading and low loading problems experienced in this and the proceeding chapter persists. Similar conclusions can also be reached regarding the perceived frustration scale. However, the relationship between perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach and organizational politics seems to be some more complex than COO's relationship with these constructs.

The results of this study suggest that perceived organizational support is highly related to psychological contracts and organizational politics, but distinct. The correlation between POS and psychological contract breach and the correlation between POS and organizational politics both exceed .7. However, neither correlation was so high as to suggest redundancy between these construct. Additionally, at the construct level of analysis, the items met Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria for discriminant validity.

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The POS-politics relationship found in this study are consistent with those reported by Andrews and Kacmar (2001). Politics and POS are distinct constructs, but individual items cross-load. In addition, the extent to which the items cross-load appears to be dependent on the extraction method. During the exploratory factor analysis, POS and politics were best described as a singular construct. In contrast, principal components confirmatory factor analysis that the constructs are distinct, but two politics items loaded onto the POS factor. Confirmatory factor analysis using SEM, suggests that the POS and politics items do not suffer from cross-loading or correlated error terms.

At the construct level, the POS-psychological contract breach relationship reported in this study is also consistent with prior research (Tekleab et al., 2005). However, at the item-level that relationship is similar to the POS-politics relationship. POS and psychological contract breach items cross-load on one-another and the degree of cross-loading is a function of the extraction method. When utilizing principal components in either an exploratory or confirmatory method, POS and psychological contract items cross-load, but do not exhibit these same psychometric properties during SEM confirmatory factor analysis.

The politics-psychological contract breach relationship is more straightforward than either construct's relationship with POS. One could argue that the organization has an obligation to provide an environment which is politics free and any political activity in the organization is a breach of an employee's psychological contract (Ladebo, 2006). From this perspective, organizational politics is a form of psychological contract breach and, thus, would not be a distinct construct. The results of this study suggest that, at the construct-level, the concepts appear to be different. At the item-level, no politics or psychological contract breach items cross-loaded during any of the exploratory or confirmatory factor analyses. These results

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suggest that the use of organizational politics scale as a proxy for psychological contract breach may be inappropriate since the scales are tapping different domains.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The main conclusion drawn from this analysis is that cognitive organizational obstruction scale is internally consistent, valid and unidimensional. In addition, cognitive organizational obstruction is distinct from perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach, organizational politics and frustration.

Another contribution of this dissertation is to provide additional evidence of divergent validity of these related constructs. While individual studies have distinguished between combinations of these constructs (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Nye & Witt, 1993), this is the first study which distinguishes between all of these related constructs simultaneously.

A reliable and valid measure of cognitive organizational obstruction allows researchers to examine the antecedents and consequences of COO. In addition to showing that a new construct, and its associated scale, are distinct from existing constructs, and their associated scales, a new construct should explain additional variance over and above existing constructs (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). This chapter suggests that organizational obstruction is distinct from perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach, organizational politics and organizational frustration. The next chapter describes analysis which assesses the COO scale's ability to explain additional variance beyond the existing constructs.

5. CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In Chapter 2, cognitive organizational obstruction (COO) was argued to be theoretically distinct from psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support (POS), perceived organizational politics (POP) and organizational frustration. The results of a validation studies presented in Chapter 4 suggest that COO can be empirically distinguished from these related concepts. Brackett and Mayer (2003) accurately point out that the value in a new construct is its ability to explain addition variance beyond existing constructs.

This chapter of my dissertation describes a study which evaluates whether COO explains additional variance beyond perceived organizational support (POS), psychological contract breach, organizational politics and frustration. The overarching hypothesis of this chapter is: COO explains additional variance in the exit, voice, loyalty and neglect outcome framework beyond the existing constructs of psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration. Results suggest that COO explains additional variance for exit, voice and neglect, but not loyalty.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

People enter into social exchange relationships, which are characterized by the exchange of mutual support, with other people and organizations (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Emerson, 1976). The norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) is fundamental in understanding social exchange relationships (Deckop, Cirke, & Andersson, 2003), but, according to Gouldner (1960), individuals can exchange help or harm. In light of Gouldner's observation, it has recently been noted that social exchange theory considers both positive and negative experiences

and most social exchange relationships contain both positive and negative aspects (Eby et al., 2004). Eby, Butts, Lockwood and Simon (2004) note, "negative relational experiences should not be conceptualized simply as a 'deviation from the positive, but (rather) a phenomenon that also composes the totality of relational experience (Duck, 1994, p. 5)'" (Eby et al., 2004, p. 415).

A frequently used concept for investigating employees' social exchange relationships with the organization is Eisenberger and colleagues' (1986) idea of perceived organizational support (POS) (Settoon et al., 1996). POS describes a social exchange relationship between the employee and employer (Brandes et al., 2004) regarding an "employee's perception of the organization's commitment to them" (Hutchison, 1997, p. 1026). By definition, POS captures an employee's belief regarding the extent to which the organization values his or her contributions and cares about his or her well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS represents a positive social exchange experience with the organization, but, there are negative aspects in social exchange relationships.

As Gouldner notes, the negative norm of reciprocity is the exchange of harm for harm. Various researchers have identified behaviors, such as organizational retaliatory behaviors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), workplace deviance (Ambrose et al., 2002) and misbehavior in organizations (Vardi & Weitz, 2004), which could be considered harmful from the organization's perspective. When viewing these activities from a negative norm or reciprocity lens, the general argument is that employees engage in these behaviors to return harm and negative treatment from the organization to the organization. Yet, no existing concept captures an employees' perception that the organization is a source of harm and negative treatment.

The concept of cognitive organizational obstruction is offered to capture employees' perception of harm and negative treatment received from the organization. Cognitive

organizational obstruction (COO) is defined as an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with the accomplishment of his or her goals and objectives and is a detriment to his or her well-being. Using Gouldner's categorization scheme, COO would fall into the negative reciprocity category or the return of harm for harm. In an employer-employee context, employees would receive some treatment from the organization. Based upon the received treatment, employees develop a global belief that the organization obstructs their goal attainment and is a source of detriment to their well-being. The employee then decides to retaliate against the organization for treating them in this manner. Employees can then choose to seek revenge through various employee behaviors such sabotage or job neglect (Spector, 1978). Thus, COO can be viewed as a negative social exchange experience between employees and the organization.

In previous chapters of this dissertation, cognitive organizational obstruction is argued to be theoretically distinct from related constructs and empirical evidence suggests that respondents distinguish between these concepts. However, new constructs need to explain additional variance beyond existing concepts (Brackett & Mayer, 2003). Thus, one objective of this chapter is to ascertain the extent to which COO explains additional variance after controlling for POS, psychological contract breach, organizational politics and organizational frustration. Another objective is to analyze the consequences of COO.

When an employee believes that the organization is a detriment to his or her well-being, the employee is likely to be dissatisfied with job experiences. In response to dissatisfying working conditions, employees have a number of options such as leaving the situation (exit), attempting to change the dissatisfying conditions by vocalizing their dissatisfaction (voice), suffering in silence (loyalty) or overlooking their job tasks (neglect) (Withey & Cooper, 1989).

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The exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN) framework has been useful in systematically thinking about employee responses to dissatisfying work conditions (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Since COO is also thought to lead to job dissatisfaction, the EVLN framework provides a systematic methodology for understanding the responses to COO. Furthermore, the EVLN framework has been utilized in understanding the responses to psychological contract breach (Turnley & Feldman, 1999) and organizational politics (Vigoda, 2001). Beyond providing a useful structure for categorization of employee responses to COO, the EVLN framework also facilitates the comparison across constructs such as psychological contract breach and organizational politics due to the framework's use in prior studies (Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Vigoda, 2001).

Since employees have different options in responding to job dissatisfaction, situational factors influence employees' responses to job dissatisfaction (Farrell, 1983; Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Exit behaviors were more likely when employees had alternative employment opportunities, felt that things would not improve and perceived that voice behaviors were costly. Alternatively, employees engage in voice behaviors when they believe that things can improve, there are low costs associated with voice behaviors and they do not have alternative job options. Loyal employees present a picture as an entrapped employee and less like a supportive employee. Loyalists seem to have an external locus of control suggesting that they do not believe they have control over the situation and just accept inconveniencies at work. Finally, employees seem to neglect their jobs when they believe that they have made a personal investment in the job.

In order to provide evidence of the COO's ability to explain additional variance, a study was designed and the results are presented. Overall, the results suggest COO explains additional

variance beyond the related constructs of perceived organizational support, psychological

contract breach, organizational politics and organizational frustration. The remainder of this

chapter will unfold as follows. First, hypotheses will be developed. Next, the site and methods

will be described. The results of the study will be presented followed by a discussion of these

results. Finally, I draw conclusions based upon the results of the study.

5.3 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The exit, voice and loyalty framework was developed by Hirschman (1970). Hirschman

(1970) reasoned that instead of ceasing to purchase a product (exit) or complaining to

management about the product (voice), a consumer could continue to purchase the product with

the expectation that the organization will make the necessary changes to the product (loyalty).

In the relationships literature, the exit, voice, and loyalty framework was later expanded

to include neglect (Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982) to create the EVLN framework. The

EVLN framework has been applied to the employer-employee relationship (Freeman, 1976;

Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Voluntary separations such as turnover

and transfers (Farrell, 1983) or intending to turnover (Rusbult et al., 1988) are examples of exit

in an organizational context. Instead of exiting, individuals can engage in voice behaviors,

which are attempts to change the situation (Hirschman, 1970). In addition to expressing a desire

for union representation (Freeman, 1976), voice behaviors can also be expressed by engaging

supervisors and co-workers in discussions about the problems in the organization, suggesting

solutions to these problems or actively attempting to solve the problems (Rusbult et al., 1988).

Loyalty behaviors include suffering in silence and waiting patiently for things to improve

(Farrell, 1983). Neglect, in an organizational context, is "passively allowing conditions to

deteriorate through reduced interest or effort, chronic lateness and absences, using company time for personal business, or increased error rate" (Rusbult et al., 1988, p. 601)

5.3.1 Exit

According to social exchange theory, individuals assess the value of their social exchange relationships and when the costs exceed the benefits of being in the relationship, individuals will end the relationship (Emerson, 1976). According to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), individuals place a value on obtaining goals. When an exchange partner obstructs the attainment of goals, the costs of being that relationship are increased. These increased costs may outweigh the benefits of remaining in the relationship and cause individuals to terminate the relationship. Therefore, when employees believe that the organization is detrimental to their well-being and hinders the attainment of goals, a negative perception, they are more likely to leave the organization. This suggests a positive relationship between COO and exit behaviors. Therefore I hypothesize that:

> Hypothesis 1: Cognitive organizational obstruction is positively
> related to exit behaviors.

5.3.2 Voice

Rusbult et al. (1988) discussed voice activities such as engaging supervisors and co-workers in discussions about the problems, suggesting solutions to problems or actively attempting to solve the problems. Complaining, a voice behavior, is actively articulating displeasure with the work environment. In discussing problems with coworkers and supervisors, employees may be seeking advice on ways to overcome these obstacles (Gibbons, 2004; Zhou & George, 2001).

COO will most likely be viewed as problematic by employees and discussed with coworkers and supervisors. In organizations, advice and friendship relationships are the most frequently occurring types of relationships (Gibbons, 2004; Krackhardt, 1990). Employees share information and knowledge related to the completion of their work through advice ties (Ibarra, 1993). In addition to providing a friendly, sympathetic ear, coworkers may provide suggestions on ways to overcome a dissatisfying environment (Zhou & George, 2001). Employees may look to coworkers for advice on methods to overcome the perceived roadblocks that the organization places in their way (Gibbons, 2004). Therefore, employees will engage in more voice behaviors, such discussing problems with coworkers and supervisors, in response to COO.

> Hypothesis 2: Cognitive organizational obstruction is positively related to voice behaviors.

5.3.3 *Loyalty*

In an organizational context, loyalty can be exhibited in behaviors such as defending the organization to outsiders (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Rusbult et al. (1988) suggest that loyalty is behaviorally manifested in the organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) performance. From the organization's perspective, OCB, a behavioral manifestation of loyalty, would be viewed positively since OCBs are thought to increase organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988).

According to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), employees attempt to resolve inconsistencies between beliefs and behaviors by adjusting their cognitions or changing their behaviors. Defending an organization which is perceived as providing negative treatment should increase cognitive dissonance. Thus, employees can either cease defending the organization or reassess their perception of organizational obstruction. When employees perceive organizational obstruction, they will be less likely to defend the organization to outsiders and patiently wait until problems are corrected. As such, COO should be negatively related to loyalty behaviors.

Hypothesis 3: Cognitive organizational obstruction is negatively
related to loyalty behaviors.

5.3.4 *Neglect*

Neglect may be evidenced by reduced effort and using company time to perform personal

business instead of working on company business (Rusbult et al., 1988). These behaviors have

also been described as retaliatory behaviors directed at the organization (Bennett & Robinson,

2000; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Vardi & Weitz, 2004).

According to Gouldner's conceptualization of the negative norm of reciprocity,

employees return harmful treatment to the source of that harm. Thus, when the organization is

perceived to be a source of obstruction and harm, employees will seek to return this treatment by

putting little effort into their in-role performance or not performing job tasks at all to the extent

that employees believe it will harm the organization. These behaviors may be seen as a way of

"getting back" at the organization (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Vardi

& Weitz, 2004). Therefore, employees will engage in more neglect behaviors in response to

COO. Thus, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: Cognitive organizational obstruction is positively
related to neglect behaviors.

5.4 Additional Variance

According to psychological contract theory, employees develop perceptions of what the

organization is obligated to provide in exchange for employees' labor, which defines a social

exchange relationship between the employee and the organization (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003;

Tekleab et al., 2005; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2004; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

As mentioned, POS is a social exchange relationship which focuses on commitment Both

psychological contract theory and POS share a common foundation in social exchange and are an

important mechanism in the development of the employer-employee exchange relationship since

both concepts are the exchange of valued socioemotional resources (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Tekleab et al., 2005). Social exchange theory proposes that employees seek to maintain relationships that are fair and balanced (Turnley et al., 2004; Turnley & Feldman, 1999) and contain both positive and negative aspects (Eby et al., 2004).

In order to understand the totality of social exchange relationships, both positive and negative aspects need analyzed. When examining the consequences of social exchange relationships, inclusion of both positive and negative aspects should have greater predictive ability, i.e. explain increasing amounts of variance in the consequences of social exchange relationships. Thus, cognitive organizational obstruction, a negative social exchange relationship, should explain additional variance beyond the social exchange concepts of psychological contract and perceived organizational support. Psychological contract breach can be unbalanced in favor of the employee (over-fulfilled) or against the employee (breached) (Conway & Briner, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). In order to provide a stricter test of COO's ability to explain additional variance, psychological contract breach against the employee will be utilized in this study.

In conceptualizing organizational frustration, Spector (1978) argued that sources of frustration within the organization could include coworkers, customers and supervisors. It has been suggest that frustration within the organization is dissatisfying (Fox & Spector, 1999). As such, it should be related to exit, voice, loyalty and neglect. While the EVLN framework has not been utilized in the study of the outcomes of organizational frustration, organizational frustration has been shown to be related to concepts similar to exit, voice, loyalty and neglect. Organizational frustration has been shown to be related to turnover intentions (Chen & Spector, 1992), complaining (Spector, 1975), counterproductive work behaviors (Fox & Spector, 1999)

and sabotage (Storms & Spector, 1987). Even though COO and organizational frustration are

distinct, cognitive organizational obstruction suggests that the organization can be a source of

frustration. The inclusion of additional sources of frustration should explain additional variance

beyond organizational frustration when studying common consequences.

Organizational politics should be related to the EVLN framework because organizational

politics is indicative of negative organizational processes in that individuals act in a self-

interested manner with damaging effects on organizational efficiency and productivity (Vigoda,

2001). In a comparative study, Vigoda found a consistent main effect for organizational politics'

relationship with exit and neglect.

Political activity is more likely in the absence of organizational rules and regulations to

guide behavior (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). In addition, Levinson (1965) argued that employees

may attribute the behavior of organizational agents to the organization since organizational

policies and procedures guide organizational agents' behavior. Since organizational politics is

indicative of negative organizational processes, these negative processes can be attributed to the

actions of the organization and not to organizational agents. As such, the organization is

perceived to be responsible for the negative treatment. COO captures this perception.

Therefore, COO should explain additional variance beyond organizational politics because

employees may perceive that the organization is responsible for the negative processes and

treatment instead of the organizational agents. Overall, I hypothesize that:

> Hypothesis 5: Cognitive organizational obstruction accounts for
> *additional* levels of explained variation in exit behaviors, beyond
> that accounted for by psychological contract breach, perceived
> organizational support, organizational politics and organizational
> frustration.
>
> Hypothesis 6: Cognitive organizational obstruction accounts for
> *additional* levels of explained variation in voice behaviors, beyond

that accounted for by psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration.

Hypothesis 7: Cognitive organizational obstruction accounts for *additional* levels of explained variation in loyalty behaviors, beyond that accounted for by psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration.

Hypothesis 8: Cognitive organizational obstruction accounts for *additional* levels of explained variation in neglect behaviors, beyond that accounted for by psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration.

5.5 METHODOLOGY

5.5.1 Sample and procedure

As noted in Chapter 4, a factor-analysis sub-sample was utilized in the validation study and the remainder of the sample (n=439) was used to test hypotheses in this chapter. According to Churchill (1979), the same sample should not be utilized to validate a scale and to test hypotheses. The regression sub-sample was 53.2% female, 66.1% Caucasian, 44.8% held a bachelors or masters degree and 33.3 % of respondents managed or supervised employees. Respondents' age ranged between 19 and 65 with a mean of 39.59. Mean organization tenure was 7.31 years.

A sample size of 439 meets the sample size requirements based upon a power analysis. Statistical power is defined as "the probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis" (Mazen, Graf, Kellogg, & Hemmasi, 1987, p. 369). When testing hypotheses, the possibility of reaching the wrong conclusion or creating an error is possible. Traditionally, two types of errors are discussed in regards to hypothesis testing. A Type I error is rejecting the null hypothesis when it

is true. The probability of committing this error is denoted by alpha (α) and is traditionally set at 5% (Mazen et al., 1987).

A Type II error is the acceptance of false null hypothesis.   Cohen (1988) suggests the ratio of Type I error to Type II should be at a minimum 1:4. Traditionally, the probability of committing a Type II error is set to 20% and is denoted by beta (β), but can be adjusted depending on the study. Power is the complement of the probability of committing a Type II error and is therefore calculated as 1- β. In being the complement of committing a Type II error, it is the probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis. Since the β is traditionally set at .2, traditional power would be .8 or 80%.

According to Cohen, the three interrelated determinants of power are: alpha, sample size and effect size. Effect size is a representation of the phenomenon in the population (Mazen et al., 1987) and is also considered a measure of practical significance (Huck, 2004). Cohen (1988) categorized effect sizes as small, medium and large.   An effect size of .02 is considered small, .15 is medium and .35 is large. If any three of the four variables (alpha, sample size, effect size and power) are known, then the last variable can be determined. For example, given alpha, power and effect size, the sample size can be calculated.

Using a small effect size and the traditional guidelines for alpha and power, the sample size required was calculated to meet these guidelines. Hierarchical multiple linear regression (HMLR) was used to test the stated hypotheses. HMLR is a linear regression procedure where blocks of variables are entered into the regression equation at different stages called steps. A variable block can include a single or multiple predictor variables. For example, in step 1 of the current study, psychological contract breach, POS, POP and organizational frustration were

entered into the regression equation whereas the block entered in step 2 included a single predictor of COO.

An a priori power analysis was performed for the second step of HMLR and suggested that the required sample size for a hierarchical regression with a Type 1 error alpha of .05, a small effect size of .02, power of .8, four items in the first step and one item in the second is 389. Thus, the sample size of 439 respondents is sufficiently large enough to meet power requirements. Actual power using the observed effect sizes size was calculated and is presented in Table 19.

5.5.2 Measures

The response format for all scales consists of a 7-point Likert scale with endpoints of "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7) with a midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree" (4). The cognitive organizational obstruction and organizational frustration scales were described in Chapter 3. The perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach and organizational politics scales were described in Chapter 4. The exit, voice, loyalty and neglect scales are described below.

5.5.2.1 *Exit*

Exit behaviors include movements within, e.g. transferring between jobs, and across organizational boundaries, e.g. termination of employment, and cognitive activities preceding these movements, e.g. thinking of transferring (Farrell, 1983). Three items were selected to capture these forms of exit from Rusbult et al.'s scales (1988) and were modified slightly to be less context-specific. The three items were "I often think about quitting", "I have recently spent time looking for a new job", and "I have seriously considering transferring from my job". For

the three studies described in Rusbult et al. (1988), the reported reliabilities of the exit scale

ranged between .76 and .97. In the current study, the reported reliability for this scale was .884.

5.5.2.2 *Voice*

Voice behaviors are attempting to change the situation instead of leaving the situation

(Hirschman, 1970) and include activities such as engaging supervisors and co-workers in

discussions about the problems (Rusbult et al., 1982). Three items were selected from the voice

scales reported in Rusbult et al. (1988) and were modified to be less context-specific. The three

items were "I want to change the way in which things are done here", "I have made several

attempts to change the working conditions here", and "I want to talk things over with my co-

workers to get their help in changing the working conditions". For the three studies described in

Rusbult et al. (1988), the reported reliabilities of the voice scale ranged between .45 and .77.

The reported scale reliability for the current study was .825.

5.5.2.3 Loyalty

Farrell (1983) and Hirschman (1970) view loyalty as suffering in silence whereas Vigoda

(2001) defines loyalty as trusting the organization to do the right thing and supporting the

organization. In addition, Turnley and Feldman (1999) argued defending the organization

against criticism is a behavioral manifestation of loyalty. Three items were chosen from Rusbult

et al. (1988) which capture these dimensions. The three items were "I say good things about the

organization even when other people criticize it", "I will wait patiently for the organization to

improve", and "The people in charge of this company generally know what they're doing". For

the three studies described in Rusbult et al. (1988), the reported reliabilities of the loyalty scale

ranged between .56 and .75. In Vigoda's (2001) comparative analysis, the reported reliabilities

of the loyalty scale were .68 (Israeli sample) and .74 (British sample). In the current study, the

reported scale reliability was .644 which is similar to the reported reliabilities reported in prior studies.

5.5.2.4 Neglect

Vigoda (2001) argued that reduced effort and interest in work comprise the neglect category. In order to capture this reduced effort and interest, three items were selected from Rusbult et al. (1988). The three items were "Now and then there are workdays where I just don't put much effort into my work", "I have quit caring about my job and will allow conditions to get worse and worse", and "I feel like putting less effort into my work". For the three studies described in Rusbult et al. (1988), the reported reliabilities of the neglect scale ranged between .69 and .82. In the current study, the reported reliability for the neglect scale was .791.

5.6 ANALYSIS

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses described in Chapter 3 were also employed in this analysis. As noted, the hypotheses were tested using hierarchical multiple linear regression. During the first step of the regression analysis, the control variables of psychological contract breach, POS, perceived organizational politics, and organizational frustration were entered into the regression equation. During the second step, COO was entered into the equation. These steps were followed for the four dependent variables (exit, voice, loyalty and neglect). The effect size was calculated using Cohen's (1988) effect size equation of $R^2_s\backslash(1-R^2_m)$, where R^2_s is the additional variance explained by the construct(s) and $(1- R^2_m)$ is the amount of unexplained variance in the model.

5.7 RESULTS

Reverse-coded items were recoded as described in Chapter 3 and a separate index measure was created for the constructs by averaging responses on the applicable items. Table 17

contains the means, reliabilities and correlations. All reliabilities exceeded Nunnally's (1978) .7 criterion, except for the loyalty scale (.644). Due to the low reliability, regression results for loyalty should be viewed with caution.

Psychological contract breach, organizational politics, and COO means are below the midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree", i.e. fall in the disagree portion of the response format (responses of 1, 2 or 3), but the organization politics (p>.05, t = 1.046) mean was not significantly different than the midpoint. Overall, this suggests that most respondents do not believe the organization fails to fulfill its obligations (i.e. the organization fulfills its obligations), and that the organization does not obstruct the realization of goals and is a detriment to their well-being. In contrast, the mean for POS is slightly above the midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree", which suggests that to some extent, respondents believe their organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions. In contrast, the organizational frustration mean (p>.05, t = .1.572) is not significantly different from the midpoint of "Neither Agree\Disagree. Since the organizational frustration scale referent is the job, more specifically, respondents neither agree nor disagree that their job is frustrating. Additionally, respondents utilized the full range of Likert response for all items. Thus, items do not suffer from range restriction and the scales are reliable, with the possible exception of the loyalty scale.

All bivariate correlations were significant at the .001 level. Highly correlated scales suggest a possible a lack of discriminant validity or a single-source bias. Using the criterion of .8, the correlations between the constructs do not suggest that these concepts are redundant since the strongest correlations were -.735 (POS-organizational politics) and .707 (psychological contract breach -POS correlation) were below the criterion. Therefore, the constructs in this

study are non-redundant, i.e. all correlations are below .8, which suggests that these concepts are

distinct.

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Reliability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Psych. Contract Breach	3.45	.858	.846								
2. POS	4.49	.927	-.707	.851							
3. Org. Politics	3.92	.847	.572	-.735	.758						
4. Organizational Frustration	4.12	.825	.471	-.535	.450	.800					
5. COO	3.40	.895	.570	-.679	.506	.535	.754				
6. Exit	3.71	.884	.521	-.606	.477	.509	.610	.844			
7. Voice	4.12	.825	.431	-.446	.410	.453	.499	.567	.791		
8. Loyal	4.35	.644	-.482	.638	-.563	-.333	-.480	-.462	-.248	.627	
9. Neglect	3.40	.791	.395	-.461	.373	.438	.577	.603	.374	-.333	.792

Notes: Square Root of Average Variance Extracted presented on the diagonal. All correlations
are significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

In order to further evaluate the distinctiveness of the constructs, chi-square difference

tests were performed as described in Chapter 3. The results of the chi-square difference tests

(see Table 18) suggest that: (a) the data do not suffer from a single source bias and (b) the

constructs are distinct.

Table 18: Chi-square difference tests

Model	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df	RMSEA	GFI	NFI	PNFI
One factor	8063.13	-	-	.17	.49	.59	.56
Two factor	6817.25	1245.88	1	.16	.53	.63	.59
Three factor	5753.53	1063.72	2	.15	.57	.66	.61
Four factor	3879.04	1874.49	3	.12	.66	.75	.77
Five factor	3659.80	219.24	4	.11	.68	.77	.79
Six Factor	3032.04	627.76	5	.10	.72	.80	.73
Seven Factor	2938.80	93.24	6	.10	.72	.81	.62
Eight Factor	2507.62	431.18	7	.09	.75	.84	.75
Nine Factor	1842.83	664.79	8	.08	.81	.87	.67

Notes: All models are significant at p<.05. One factor = All items to one construct, Two factor= POS and all other
items to one construct, Three factor = POS, politics and all other items to one construct, Four factor = POS, politics,
psychological contract breach and all other items to one construct, Five factor = POS, politics, psychological
contract breach, organizational frustration and all other items to one construct, Six factor = POS, politics,
psychological contract breach, organizational frustration, COO and all other items to one construct, Seven factor =

POS, politics, psychological contract breach, organizational frustration, COO, exit and all other items to one construct, Eight factor = POS, politics, psychological contract breach, organizational frustration, COO, exit, neglect and all other items to one construct, Nine factor = POS, politics, psychological contract breach, organizational frustration, COO, exit, neglect, loyalty and voice

The results of the regression are contained in Table 19. Overall, the results support the hypotheses, but the loyalty hypotheses were not supported. While COO was negatively related to loyalty, the relationship did not reach the .05 level of significance. In relation to loyalty, COO did not explain additional variance beyond the existing constructs of psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration. Based upon the reported effect size, all models, except for the loyalty model, met or exceeded the standard power of .8 suggested by Cohen (1988).

Table 19: Results of Regression Analysis

Predictors	Dependent Variable							
	Exit		**Voice**		**Loyalty**		**Neglect**	
Step 1:	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Control Variables:								
Psychological Contract Breach	**.138**[b]	.096	**.169**[b]	**.130**[a]	-.047	-.034	.088	.026
POS	**-.362**[c]	**-.220**[c]	-.091	.039	**.474**[c]	**.427**[c]	**-.239**[c]	-.031
Organizational Politics	.025	.033	**.126**[a]	**.133**[a]	**-.203**[c]	**-.206**[c]	.033	.045
Organizational Frustration	**.239**[c]	**.172**[c]	**.268**[c]	**.207**[c]	.034	.056	**.254**[c]	**.156**[c]
Adjusted R2	.419[c]		.280[c]		.423[c]		.262[c]	
F Value	80.069[c]		43.586[c]		81.245[c]		39.835[c]	
Step 2:								
COO		**.297**[c]		**.273**[c]		-.097		**.434**[c]
R2 Change		.043[c]		.036[c]		.005		.092[c]
F Value (model)		76.080[c]		41.308[c]		66.064[c]		48.802[c]
Effect Size		.0808		.0532		.0088		.1422
Power		.98[d]		.82[d]		.51 [e]		1.00[d]

Note: [a]p<.05, [b]p<.01,[c]p<.001. Entries represent standardized beta coefficients. [d] α=.0001, set A predictors = 4, set B predictors=1, [e] α=.05, set A predictors = 4, set B predictors=1.

5.7.1 Exit

In step 1, psychological contract breach (β = .138, p<.01) and organizational frustration (β = .239, p<.001) were positive predictors of exit intentions, whereas POS (β = -.362, p<.001) negatively predicted exit. Interestingly, organizational politics was not a significant predictor (β = .025, p>.05) of exit. In support of the first hypothesis, COO positively predicted exit behaviors (β = .297, p<.001). The addition of COO in step 2 explained additional variance (Δr^2 =.043, p<.001) in support of hypothesis 5. The effect size for the addition of COO on exit is .0808. Psychological contract breach did not significantly predict exit in the presence of COO.

5.7.2 Voice

Psychological contract breach (β = .130, p<.01), organizational politics (β = .126, p<.05), and organizational frustration (β = .268, p<.001) were positive predictors of voice, whereas POS (β = -.091, p>.05) did not predict voice in step 1. Hypothesis 2 found support since COO positively predicted voice behaviors (β = .273, p<.001). In step 2, an additional 3.6% (p<.001) of the variance was explained with the addition of COO which lends support to hypothesis 6. A 3.6% increase in the explained variance translated to an effect size of .0532 in this model. The strength of the relationship between psychological contract breach and voice decreased, but remained significant (β = .130, p<.05), in the presence of COO.

5.7.3 Loyalty

In step 1, POS (β =.474, p<.001) positively predicted and organizational politics (β = -.203, p<.001) was a negative predictor of loyalty, whereas organizational frustration (β =.034, p>.05) and psychological contract breach (β = -.047, p>.05) were not significant predictors at the traditional significance level. The relationship strengths were unchanged in step 2 which

included the addition of COO to the regression equation. COO did not significantly increase the explained variance ($\Delta r^2 = .005$, $p > .05$) was not a significant predictor of loyalty ($\beta = -.097$, $p > .05$). Therefore, hypotheses 3 and 7 were not supported. The very small effect size of .0088 greatly reduced the power of this model (power = .51).

5.7.4 Neglect

Neglect was significantly predicted by POS ($\beta = -.239$, $p < .001$) and organizational frustration ($\beta = .254$, $p < .001$) in step 1. Of the four dependent variables, COO was most strongly related to neglect behaviors ($\beta = .434$, $p < .001$) which is supportive of the fourth hypothesis. In support of hypothesis 8, the addition of COO to the regression equation explained an additional 9.2% ($p < .001$) of variance which translated to the largest effect size for COO of .1422. POS which was a highly significant predictor ($\beta = -.239$, $p < .001$) of neglect in the first step was no longer significant after the addition of COO to the regression equation ($\beta = -.031$, $p > .05$). Organizational frustration ($\beta = .156$, $p < .001$) and cognitive organizational obstruction ($\beta = .434$, $p < .001$) were the only significant predictors of neglect in the second step.

5.8 DISCUSSION

One overall goal of this study was to determine if COO added additional explanatory power beyond the existing concepts of psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organizational frustration in the EVLN framework. Support was found for three of the four hypotheses regarding the COO scale's ability to explain additional variance beyond existing constructs. The inclusion of COO, as a negative aspect of the employer-employee relationship, provided a more complete picture of the employer-employee relationship by explaining additional variance in the EVLN framework.

By analyzing the pattern of results, this study suggest that cognitive organizational obstruction is different from psychological contract breach and perceived organizational support, which have been described as measures of employees' social exchange relationships with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rousseau, 1995). For example, perceived organizational support was a significant predictor of loyalty, but neither psychological contract breach nor cognitive organizational obstruction was related to loyalty. In contrast, cognitive organizational obstruction was related to neglect, but neither psychological contract breach nor perceived organizational support were related when all three aspects of the employer-employee relationship were included in the analysis. Psychological contract breach and COO were related to voice, but perceived organizational support was not. In comparison, while psychological contract breach was not related to exit behaviors, both POS and COO were. These patterns suggest that employees attend to different aspects of the employer-employee relationship and act accordingly. Therefore, organizations need to pay attention to the degree which they fulfill their obligations, care about their employees' well-being and not be a detriment to it, value employee contributions to the organization and do not hinder employees' goal attainment.

A second objective of this study was to analyze the consequences of obstruction. Cognitive organizational obstruction was most strongly associated with employees neglecting their job tasks. The job tasks that employees perform can be viewed as coordinated activities to help the organization obtain its goals (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2004). In response to an employee's perception that the organization obstructs his or her goals, the employee may respond to failing to help the organization obtains its goals. One method for failing to help the organization obtain its goals is to not perform assigned tasks. Vardi and Weitz (2004) argued

that employees will retaliate against the organization for perceived harms by the organization. The results of this study lend support to this argument.

The results of this study suggest that organizations may create some of their own problems. The most consistent results were found for organizational frustration and cognitive organizational obstruction. Organizational frustration was most strongly related to voice, but the organizational frustration scale referent is the job. While COO is distinct from organizational frustration, it is likely that hindrance by the organization will be frustrating. The results suggest that employees attend to the source of the frustration and respond accordingly. When the job is a source of frustration, employees most strongly respond by looking to change the situation possibly by speaking with coworkers and supervisors, but when the organization is a source of frustration, employees are more inclined to neglect their job tasks.

Based upon the results of a study of the predictors of the EVLN framework, Withey and Cooper (1989) argued that the EVLN framework can be conceptualized as sequential responses over time. In one temporal sequence identified, employees waited for the organization to make changes to dissatisfying situation. If waiting did not work, employees voiced their dissatisfaction with the situation. When the situation was not rectified following the voicing of their displeasure, employees either left the situation or silently put up with it.

Viewing the results of the current study utilizing this temporal framework suggests employees give the organization the benefit of the doubt when the organization is supportive and the situation is dissatisfying. When the job is a source of dissatisfaction, employees will discuss the matter with coworkers and supervisors. If the voice behaviors are unsuccessful and the organization is considered a source of frustration, employees either neglect their job tasks or

leave the company. Future research should assess these temporal relationships with respect to cognitive organizational obstruction.

5.9 LIMITATIONS

Caution should be taken when interpreting the results due to the low reliability of the loyalty scale and the use of the "Going Along to Get Ahead" portion of the organizational politics scale. Regarding the low reliability of the loyalty scale, a scale with low reliability limits the interpretation of results because the replication of response patterns is limited (Nunnally, 1978). While prior studies using the EVLN framework have found significant relationships between organizational politics (Vigoda, 2001) and psychological contract breach (Turnley & Feldman, 1999), the current study only replicated the findings for organizational politics and loyalty. However, Vigoda (2001) used items developed by Rusbult et al. (1988) to measure loyalty, whereas Turnley and Feldman (1999) measured loyalty with the loyalty subscale from Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch's (1994) organizational citizenship behavior scale.

The "Going Along to Get Ahead" subscale of the perceived organizational politics subscale was utilized to measure organizational politics which may limit the generalizability of this study. Kacmar and Ferris (1991) reported a three-factor structure for the POP scale, but Nye and Witt (1993) did not replicate this three-factor structure in an exploratory factor analysis and concluded that the POP scale should be considered one-dimensional.

In addition, the results of the current study partially replicate the findings of Vigoda (2001) in that a significant relationship was found for the POP-voice and POP-loyalty relationship. However, the POP-exit relationship was not replicated, but the results of Vigoda's study suggest that this may be caused by cultural differences between the studies. The results of

the comparative analysis suggest that culture moderates the relationship between POP and the outcomes of exit, voice, loyalty and neglect.

5.10 CONCLUSION

The main conclusion reached in this chapter is that COO is distinct from psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support, organizational politics and organization frustration and explains additional variance over these constructs for exit, voice and neglect behaviors. This study focused on the consequences of COO; therefore, additional research should explore the antecedents of COO. One possible antecedent of COO suggested by this study is psychological contract breach. The results of this study suggest that COO mediates the psychological contract breach-exit relationship and partially mediates the psychological contract breach-voice relationship.

Another possible antecedent of COO is an employee's compensation level. Employees need money to live. An employee's compensation level, in part, determines what material goods and service can be obtained. For example, an employee may have a goal of vacationing in the Swiss Alps. However, the employee's level of compensation may not afford such a vacation. Thus, the employee may believe that the organization obstructs this goal due to the employee's level of compensation.

6. CHAPTER SIX

6.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter describes a content analysis of the open-ended surveys described in Chapter 3 and subsequent qualitative study with executives.

6.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SURVEYS

As described in Chapter 3, an open-ended questionnaire was provided to 70 MBA students at a large university in the eastern United States. One of the items asked respondents to describe situations where the organization had obstructed you. This initial survey provided support for the existence of employees' perceptions that the organization is a source of harm and interferes with goal attainment. However, this perception is not universal. While 92% (n=64) of the respondents could identify such a situation at sometime during their work history, 8% (n=6) of the respondents could not describe a situation where this happened.

As a next step, each description was reviewed in an attempt to determine a typology for classification of these responses. Respondents described situations where they passed over for promotions or openings were filled with outside hires. As one respondent noted, "they brought in an outside manager instead of letting me run the shift" (R14). While not going as far as thinking she should be given the position, hiring and promotions did create another problem. One respondent felt she should have been given the opportunity to at least interview, "[my organization] created a new 'director' position within my department and did not allow opportunities to interview for all qualified candidates"(R23). In addition, some of the promotions were actually promised during the recruitment process, "the manager promised me

that I would move up"(R13). This respondent noted that she was not promoted. On the surface, these situations suggest that obstruction may be perceived based upon promotional opportunities.

However, they may be indicative of the organization breaking it promises to employees. One respondent went on to describe his relationship with the university as being obstructive. He had quit work to attend college and lamented "I thought I made the right decision by attending school. But at this point, I haven't gotten much out of college"(R7). This suggests that organizations other than employers may be held responsible for not fulfilling their obligations and be considered to be acting in an obstructionist manner. Therefore, institutions such as universities can be considered obstructionist by students or non-employer organizations such as labor unions may also be considered as obstructions.

While closely related to obtaining promotions, many respondents strove for opportunities to gain recognition by showing their abilities or be recognized for their performance. "For example, one project in which I performed all of the analysis was forwarded with no changes other than the director signed their name to the work. Therefore, they got all of the credit for my work" (R42). This respondent went on to note "[my manager] hid my talents and abilities from upper-management". While some management took credit for employees performance, others were absent from the work situation. For example, one respondent noted "my manager did not make himself accessible to the lower level of employees" (R43), whereas another noted "supervisors have not involved themselves with the manner in which staff treat each other" (R40). These responses also suggest that the manager behaviors can influence perceptions of organizational obstruction.

Other respondents often lamented their ability to take time off, " I would request days off months in advance…it would come time for my day off and my bosses would call me in because

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people would not show up without requesting off" (R10). While many respondents made reference to taking days off for personal reasons, an underlying reason may be the procedural injustice involved. An unstated reason for the employees' discomfort may be that one employee followed the policies and procedures of the organization, however other employees did not. In addition, when other employees did not provide advanced notice, the respondent suffered. Leventhal (1980) suggested that procedural injustice is a lack of consistency of the application of rules across time, persons or situations. This suggests that procedural injustice, in addition to psychological contract breach, may foster perceptions of organizational obstruction.

One response suggests that managers may experience more obstruction than nonmangerial employees. While experiencing the obstruction as an employee, one manager noted "The decision of who to hire differed from my recommendation, even though the employee reported to me directly. It has been difficult since then" (R35). Even though not expressly articulated, this respondent suggests that limiting job autonomy may be very important to managers. In support of the view that lack of autonomy can create perceptions of obstruction, others noted tendencies of management to micromanage employees.

A frequently cited category of obstructionist behavior by the organization revolved around compensation and benefits. Within this category, respondents described situations where reduced hours, limited pay, fairness of pay procedures between employees, strong competition for bonuses, and inconsistencies between hours worked and paid hours. While acknowledging the possible context of the situation may influence this category, respondents frequently noted tuition reimbursement plans.

When providing descriptions of harmful and detrimental treatment, respondents offered various examples which included being placed in work situations which made them ill,

overworked to the point of exhaustion or treated in a manner which was detrimental to their psychological well-being. For example, " I felt as if the organization acted detrimentally. They had a racist management who targeted minorities when dealing with loss prevention. As a minority, I felt this was wrong and disrespectful" (R32).

6.3 INTERVIEWS

During a regularly scheduled class meeting of the executive master of business administration seminar, students agreed to participate in a working lunch session to discuss the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction. In return of participation in the session, attendees were provided lunch. The session began with the attendees being provided COO's definition and the findings from Chapters Three and Five. The session was then opened to group discussion. Participants discussed organizational factors that might influence the development of perceptions of obstruction, other factors related to COO and examples of COO in their current organizations, and explanations for initial findings. The session lasted for 45 minutes.

6.3.1 Organizational Factors

One category of comments regarding the creation of COO was the amount of bureaucracy existing within the organization. Attendees felt that the more rules, regulations and policies that exist within a company, the more likely employees will believe that the organization is a hindrance to performance and goal attainment. An attendee who owns his own company believed that as the organization grew, more rules would need to be institutionalized to help newcomers to the organization. These rules would limit the flexibility of the organization and its members. He believed that the new rules would create perceptions that the organization was inhibiting performance and goal attainment.

Others felt that the size and structure of the organization would also influence employee perceptions of cognitive organizational obstruction. Some felt as organizations get larger, more policies and procedures are needed. These policies and procedures limit what can and cannot be done which could, in turn, create perceptions of obstruction. In addition, increased size leads to less knowledge of who is the root cause of the treatment, so received treatment is attributed to the organization. Attendees also felt that organizational structures may influence levels of perception. As one attendee believed, "if I work for a subsidiary, I may see headquarters as creating the problems".

While increased size of the organization may lessen the knowledge of who has initiated the behavior and created bureaucracy, the type of industry in which the organization operates may be related to perceptions of organizational obstruction. For example, multiple students suggested that travel requirements often interfered with personal goals and work-life balance. For example, one attendee lamented: "My wife gets pissed with all the travel because I can't be home for a lot of things that take place during the week. I fly on Monday and Thursday." The organization was held responsible for not placing employees on more local assignments. Thus, the organization interfered with personal goals and work-life balances.

According to the attendees, other institutional aspects that could create organizational obstruction perceptions for managers are the level of decentralization regarding budget determination and narrowness of job descriptions. One manager recounted a situation where budget determination was centralized. Since the business environment was dynamic, contextual factors used to determine the budget often changed during the course of the budget period. However, the centralized budgeting office did not take these situational changes into account at

year end when determining if the manager met budget requirements. Staying within budget was a criterion of the manager's review and affected compensation levels.

Another attendee suggested that the narrowness of job descriptions set in the home office limited employees' autonomy to perform their jobs. He felt that the narrowness of the job description could be viewed as an obstruction by the organization. In addition, managers who needed flexibility in assigning employees were limited by narrowness of job descriptions and occasion heard, "that's not in my job description".

6.3.2 Other factors and examples

While attendees acknowledged that obstruction by organization was different from obstruction from managers and supervisors, participants believed that the behaviors of managers are a direct cause of COO. One attendee described a situation where his manager placed the blame on the organization. In the described situation, the manager stated that "he wanted to do it, but the company wouldn't let me do it". Another stated, "my manager wasn't a Kool-Aid drinker. He'd blame things on the company". Managers may create the perception that the organization is an obstruction is by passing the blame for certain actions to organizational requirements. This may be a post-hoc explanation by a manager to maintain a good working relationship with the employee and still not wanting to engage in an action. In addition, the manager could also be an obstruction and is seen as the organization.

One manager suggested that perceptions of COO may be a post-hoc rationalization for poor job performance. The manager felt that some employees who are poor performers or naturally want to "slack off" may justify their behavior through perceptions of organizational obstruction. In a related comment, it was pointed out that when true organizational obstructions exist, good employees will find workarounds. This comment suggests that the positive

organizational behavior of hope (Luthans, 2002) may moderate the relationship between cognitive organizational obstruction and performance. Hope, loosely defined, as the waypower to accomplish goals or the ability to find a ways to overcome problems in achieving goals (Luthans, 2002).

Interestingly, many stated the justice perceptions may play a role in creating perceptions of organizational obstruction. Specifically, employees felt that procedural justice perceptions may influence perceptions of obstruction. One attendee noted, "when the rules aren't applied consistently, people will believe that it is the organization's fault". Interestingly, another attendee later described a situation where the application of policy and rules without consideration of the situation would create perceptions of obstruction. The informant works in an industry where non-compete and outside work clauses are common such as the technology industry. A coworker decided to open a lawn care company in his spare time. However, the organization vehemently fought the employee on the opening of the lawn care company. While the company's opposition was argued to be based on the non-compete clause, the informant hypothesized that the organization's response was based more on the view that organization wanted the flexibility to assign employees wherever and whenever it wanted with any limitations on its flexibility.

Organizations were also held responsible for not clearing out the hindrance network or terminating incompetent managers. As one attendee stated, "A lot of coworkers cause problems for other people and keep them from doing their jobs. The company has a responsibility to get rid of them." A hindrance network is a network of employee relationships that hinder task performance (Sparrowe et al., 2001). Since research suggests that managers are able to identify social networks in organizations (Krackhardt, 1990), they should know who comprises a

hindrance network. When these employees are not involuntarily terminated, the organization is held responsible. In a similar situation, one attendee described a work situation where the Peter Principle (promotion to the level of incompetence) was clearly in play. A manager had been promoted and was not able to effectively perform the job functions. However, upper management did not reassign or terminate the poorly performing manager. Thus, the organization was deemed responsible for the manager's behavior.

Tenure, organizational and occupational, was thought to be a possible determinant of perceptions of organizational obstruction. During the discussion, it was noted that as employees become more familiar with occupational norms, they may learn that certain procedures are accepted as the rule of thumb for the occupation and just not a capricious organizational policy. Over time, employees may also learn the historical reasons for existing policies and procedures and understand the reasons behind these policies.

An executive suggested that incentive compensation plans may also create COO. His organization has a profit sharing plan which a minimum threshold before the plan is activated. In his view, the minimum threshold was set at such a level that it would never be realized – the company had reached that profit level in over a decade. He perceived this as the company obstructing compensation and bonus goals. Another participant recanted a story regarding the development of a bonus program which also had unreasonable goals. To maximize the bonus, employees had to bill 60 hours per week for the quarter. While many employees dismissed the goal as unreasonable, a few of the consultants worked enormous amounts of hours to attain the goal. After having to pay some employees exorbitant bonuses and having to deal with customer complaints, the company quickly reformulated the payout structure the following quarter. The participant hypothesized that many of the employees who reached the highest level of the bonus

structure were likely to perceive that the organization was now obstructing goals. This anecdote also suggests that organizational changes which adversely impact employees could be perceived as an organizational obstruction.

6.3.3 Explanation for initial protect class results

It is likely that protected class employees may perceive that the organization is a source of obstruction and harm. Initial regression results suggest that of the three protected class variables (gender, ethnicity and age, only under age 40 was significant (see Table 20). Federal regulation is designed to prevent discriminatory practices against women, non-white employees and employees over the age of 40. Since these laws were initially passed to stop existing discrimination against these classes of employees, these groups may perceive more COO because the organization is, in a real sense, an obstruction and detrimental.

Table 20: Demographic Antecedent Regression

Demographic Predictors	Cognitive Organizational Obstruction		
	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		30.479	.000
Gender	.025	.673	.501
Ethnic minority status	-.055	-1.479	.140
Over 40	-.112	-3.046	.002

The attendees suggest two reasons why the over 40 variable was significant, but in the opposite direction. As one attendee stated, "if I keep banging my head against a wall, it feels good when I stop. Many older employees may realize that the organization is not going to change. They have to either live with it or leave." Another attendee suggested that younger employees are more technologically savvy and may believe that the organization can operate more efficiently.

Younger employees may see places where technology can be used to work quicker and remotely. These employees may present ideas and ask questions regarding organizational operations. The new ideas may meet with resistance. When questioning the reasons behind certain policies, the responses often leave much to be desired. Many employees may not know the reason why procedures are in place, but have just been handed down in a sort of organizational learning. As one attendee lamented, "I hate when I get told because that's the way we've always done it." However, reminiscent of the telephone game, the original message may have changed through retellings between employees. Another attendee followed-up in describing a situation where he decided to follow that up the chain of command to find the real reason behind a policy other than the common response of "that's the way we've always done it". Upon finally reaching the upper-level executive who was reported to have issued the decree, the executive stated that is not what was his initial words and procedure.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

The open-ended surveys and interviews suggest that procedural justice perceptions may influence COO. Another common theme is that managers' behaviors are related to perceptions of organizational obstruction. Managers are not immune from COO, but these perceptions may be related to different obstructions such as setting budgets and autonomy in hiring decisions. In both sets of data, compensation and promotions were frequently cited. While the current COO scale measures global perceptions, opportunities for developing a scale which focuses on specific obstructionist and harmful behavior by the organization may exist. Job autonomy and job descriptions were touched upon by both groups. Employees seem to believe that narrow job descriptions and limited job autonomy limit their ability to function within organizations and to achieve their goals. Other possible areas of future research were also identified. For example, a

longitudinal study regarding whether COO is a post-hoc rationalization for poor performance

could also include the positive organizational scholarship behavior of hope as a moderator.

7. CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter of my dissertation presents the major conclusions drawn from the results across the different chapters. Additional areas for future research are also presented.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the results presented in this dissertation suggest that employees believe that the organization obstructs the attainment of personal and professional goals and is detrimental to their well-being. In response to cognitive organizational obstruction, employees thought about leaving the organization and began looking for alternative employment, voiced their displeasure and attempted to enlist coworkers and supervisors to help in changing the situation, or neglected their jobs. The relationship between COO and neglect was the strongest. Perceptions of organizational obstruction were related to behaviors such as putting less effort into job tasks and letting work conditions deteriorate. These results suggest that the organization may, in part, be the cause of counterproductive work behaviors (Fox & Spector, 1999).

Recently, researchers have suggested that to understand the totality of relationships, both positive and negative aspects need to be addressed (Eby et al., 2004). This dissertation addresses a specific relationship, the employer-employee relationship. Overall, the results contained within this dissertation support the assertion that positive and negative relational aspects need to be considered to have a complete picture of the relationship. The addition of a negative aspect of the employer-employee relationship explained additional variance beyond other measures of the employer-employee relationship and provided a more complete picture the employer-employee relationship.

While researchers have suggested that organizations should be attentive to and foster support perceptions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), the results suggest that organizations are better served by reducing perceptions of obstruction. Since COO was a strong predictor of exit, voice and neglect behaviors and these behaviors are seen as costly for the organization (Withey & Cooper, 1989). Employers who reduce obstruction perceptions are more likely to be more profitable.

From an industrial relations perspective, union organizers may be best served by talking to employees and fostering the perception that the organization is an obstruction and detriment. Since the desire for union representation is seen as a voice behavior (Freeman, 1976) and COO is strongly related to voice behaviors, union organizers that point out where the organization has hindered the attainment of goals may be more successful in their organizing attempts. On the other hand, organizations that want to avoid unionization need to foster the perception that they are not detrimental to employees and a hindrance to goal attainment. If these organizations can show that they support their employees, there is even a greater chance that they can avoid unionization.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

While the introduction of COO fills a theoretical gap in the literature, it is also of practical importance to business leaders. COO was shown to be significantly related to exit, voice and neglect behaviors within organizations in this dissertation. Organizational leaders are aware of the costs these behaviors impose on them. For example, organizations are now looking for ways to reduce turnover (Herman, 1997), stifle or substitute for union representation (Potter, 2001), and implementing policies regarding email and Internet usage at work (N. L. Flynn, 2001).

When employees leave, most organizations attempt to replace them and incur costs such as placing ads, travel expenses incurred by applicants, recruiters' time, selection tests, relocation costs, etc. associated with replacing separated employees. These costs vary by position, organization and industry. For example, it has been estimated that replacing a United States Navy pilot costs about $1,000,000 (Cascio, 1991). In contrast, replacement costs in the fast-food industry in the United States vary between $500 and $3,500 per employee (White, 1995). In addition, to incurring direct costs, turnover also reduces efficiency which in turn reduces profitability (Kacmar, Andrews, Van Rooy, Steilberg, & Cerrone, 2006). Therefore, understanding a belief that accounts for approximately 8% of the variance in the population can greatly influence an organization's profitability. To more fully understand COO, additional research should empirically investigate the antecedents of COO. Additional research into the causes of COO will provide organizational leaders with clearer guidance into reducing these perceptions. Possible antecedents are further described in the Research Agenda section of this chapter. However, the results presented within earlier chapters suggest that COO may mediate the relationship between psychological contract breaches and turnover.

From a practical standpoint, hiring managers and recruiters need to closely monitor their language during contact with applicants. Applicants frequently develop perceptions of what the organization is obligated to provide during recruiting processes (Rousseau, 1995). During tight employment markets, companies make promises to attract talent, but during tight economic markets some of these promises go unfulfilled (Turnley et al., 2004). Therefore, hiring managers and recruiters should be careful in developing perceptions of organizational obligations that can still be met during tight economic times.

COO was also significantly related to voice behaviors. Freeman (1976) suggested that voice behaviors include a desire for collective bargaining. Recently, Hirsch (2004) reviewed the data on union effects on the economic performance of organizations. He concluded that the productivity effect of unionization was near zero and did not offset the wage premiums garnered by union members. This suggests that unionization adversely affects the economic performance of organizations. This may explain organizations desire to suppress union activity or substitute HR policies for union representation (Potter, 2001). Assuming that organizational leaders do, in fact, attempt to avoid unionization, they should therefore attend to perceptions of organizational obstruction. In reducing these perceptions, organizations may be able to stave off collective bargaining agreements. One possible way to do this is to consistently and uniformly apply organizational policies (Leventhal, 1980).

From the unions' perspective, union organizers may be best served by talking to employees and fostering the perception that the organization is an obstruction and detrimental. Union organizers that point out where the organization has hindered the attainment of goals may be more successful in their organizing attempts. The recent split of the AFL-CIO was due to differing agreements on how to stem the tide of declining union density in the United States (Masters, Gibney, & Zagenczyk, 2006). One possible way for union organizers to have greater success in organizing campaigns to identify and\or foster the perception that the employing organization is a source of obstruction.

Finally, COO was most strongly related to job neglect. Withey and Cooper (1989) describe job neglect as working on personal tasks instead of on assigned job tasks. One possible way that employees may "waste time" is through surfing the Internet. Organizations have begun to implement policies to combat the costs associated with surfing (N. L. Flynn, 2001). These

costs are estimated at $500 million in lost productivity to U.S. businesses annually. While emphasizing that the organization is not obstructive and detrimental will reduce these activities, executives and managers should emphasize ways in which the organization is supportive since individuals return help for help (Gouldner, 1960). Some ways of doing this may be the offering reduced costs gym memberships, smoking cessation programs or "mental health days". With all of these programs, the organization needs to communicate that these plans are being offered to provide a positive impact on employees' well-being. By engaging employees' positive reciprocity norm, they will go beyond normal job duties and further help the organization reach its goals.

COO may also be of interest to organizations because of its theoretical link to organizational retaliatory behavior (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), misbehavior in organizations (Vardi & Weitz, 2004), and workplace deviance (Ambrose et al., 2002). For example, workplace deviance, which includes theft and lack of regard for cost and quality control, costs American businesses $20 billion annually (Litzky, Eddleston, & Kidder, 2006). Since employee deviance is a way in which employees retaliate against the organization for treating them in a harmful manner, having a better understanding of this perception may reduce these costs within organizations.

Future research should investigate the antecedents of cognitive organizational obstruction to provide additional insights into ways that COO is created which will allow organizations ways in which to manage this perception. A research agenda which outlines additional antecedents and consequences is presented next.

7.4 RESEARCH AGENDA

In addition to establishing a need for a new construct and its theoretical and empirical distinctiveness from related constructs, it is also necessary to understand the potential antecedents and consequences of that construct. Some behavioral consequences were discussed in Chapter 5. Next, a proposed research agenda for cognitive organizational obstruction is presented (see Figure 1).
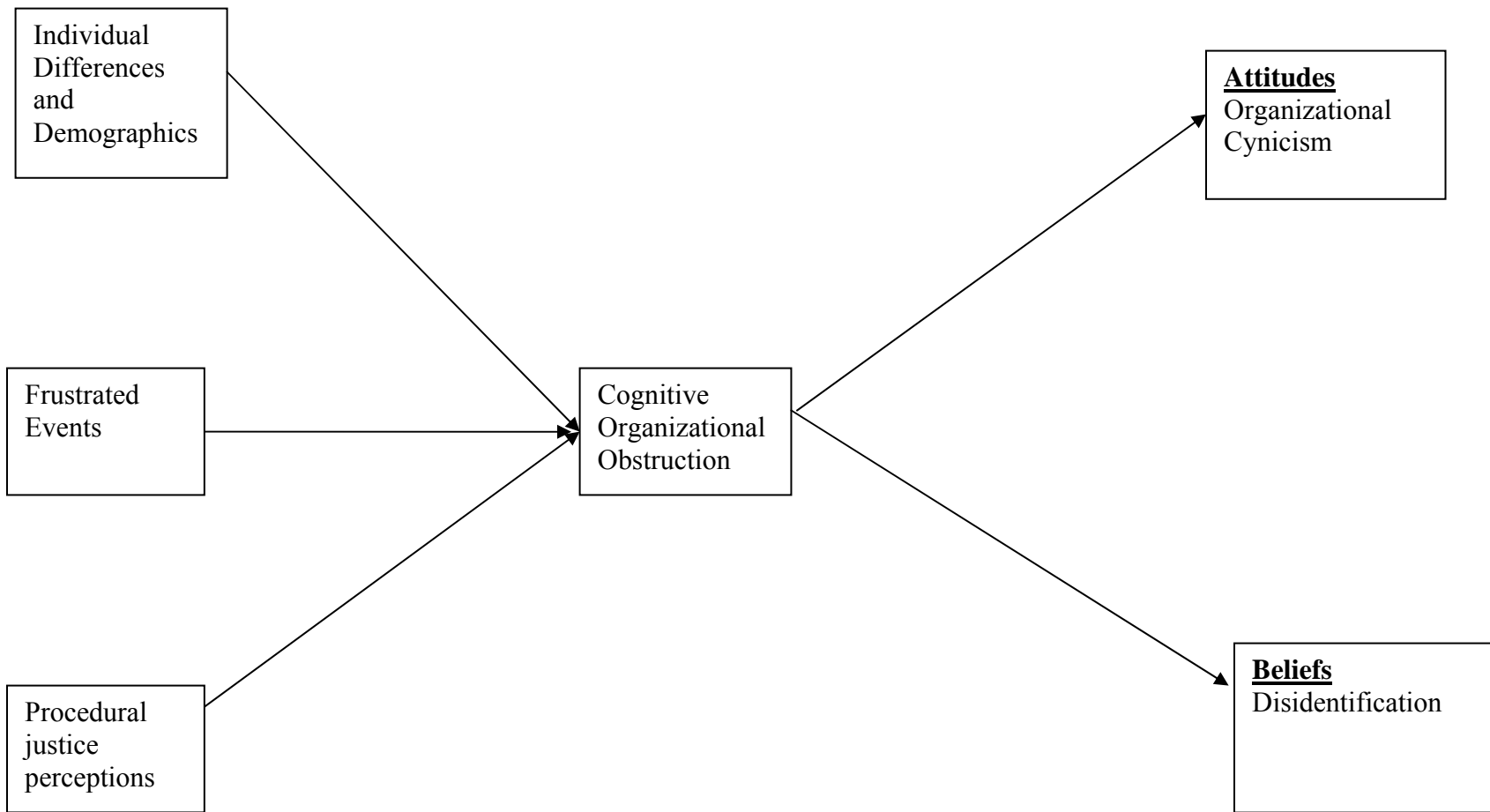
Figure 1: Research Agenda for Cognitive Organizational Obstruction

7.4.1 Antecedents

7.5.1 Individual Differences and Demographics

7.5.1.1 Locus of Control

Employees who hold an enduring belief that events are controllable are classified as having an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966). On the other hand, when a person believes that life events are controlled by luck or powerful others, the person is categorized as having an external locus of control. Within an organizational setting, locus of control has been studied extensively (Spector, 1988). Internals have been shown to be more satisfied with their jobs (Spector, 1988), report less violations of procedural justice (Sweeney, McFarlin, & Cotton, 1991), performed better in selection interviews and were more likely to take responsibility for negative outcomes when retelling past experiences during the interviews (Silvester, Mohamed, Anderson-Gough, & Anderson, 2002), and more likely to blame themselves for failure on task performance, but are equally likely to take credit for success as externals (W. L. Davis & Davis, 1972). Research also suggests that internals set higher performance goals for themselves due to their increased self-efficacy beliefs (Phillips & Gully, 1997). In an exploratory study, Fox and Spector (1999) found that locus of control predicted reported levels of situational constraints, or frustrated events.

Since internals report lower levels of frustration within organizations, internals are less likely to see the organization as being a hindrance. In support of Rotter, research indicates that internals assume more responsibility for the attainment of outcomes (W. L. Davis & Davis, 1972; Silvester et al., 2002). It is reasonable to assume that an internal will accept more responsibility for the process by which outcomes are attained. Sweeney et al.'s (1991) finding that internals report higher levels of procedural justice lends some support to this assumption. At

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a minimum, the results suggest that internals have a different perception of the process by which outcome distribution decisions are made. The assumption of responsibility for the process may reduce the perception that others are interfering with the process. Thus, instead of believing that the organization is interfering with goal attainment, internals will see the obstructions as a result of their own behavior. Therefore, internals are less likely to perceive the organization as being an obstruction.

7.5.1.2 Minority Status

Another individual difference that may influence perceptions of obstruction is minority status. Women and ethnic minorities have traditionally been disadvantaged in organizations (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, Zhou, & Gilmore, 1996). Institutional racism - informal barriers within organizations that keep minorities from attaining higher levels in the organization - can be seen as a characteristic of the organization (Jeanquart-Barone & Sekaran, 1996). Consequently, organizations can be seen as being racist. When the organization acts in a discriminatory or racist manner, minorities may actually experience more obstructionist behavior by the organization.

Another institutional barrier to women and minorities is the glass ceiling effect (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The glass ceiling effect is defined as an "invisible, artificial barriers blocking women and minorities from advancing up the corporate ladder to management and executive level positions" (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p. iii). When women and minorities encounter these invisible barriers, they may believe that the organization is obstructing their goal of professional advancement. Therefore, one reason for women and minority status to be related to perceptions of organizational obstruction is that the organization hinders the attainment of personal and professional goals of minority status employees in a real sense.

Beyond the simple fact that minority status employees may experience more obstruction, It has been argued that African-Americans make different attributions for organizational phenomenon than Whites (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, & Tucker 1980). According to Alderfer et al., African-Americans are more likely to attribute events to the actions of the organization, whereas Whites tend to make individual attributions. COO is an employee's attribution of experienced treatment to the organization and not to the organizational agent. Based upon Alderfer et al.'s (1980) reasoning, Whites would be more likely to attribute hindrance behaviors to the agent and not to the organization, whereas African-Americans would attribute the hindrance behaviors of the agent to the organization. As a consequence, African-Americans are more likely to report higher levels of organizational obstruction.

7.5.2 Frustrated Events

Fox and Spector (1999) defined frustrated events "as situational constraints in the immediate work situation that block individuals from achieving valued work goals or attaining effective performance" (p. 917). From a probability standpoint, employees who experience frustrating events or situational constraints more frequently are more likely to attribute some of the frustrating events to the organization itself. Therefore, experiencing more frustrated events should be associated with higher levels of organizational obstruction.

7.5.3 Procedural Justice Perceptions

Procedural justice is defined as the fairness of the procedure by which outcomes are determined (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Procedural justice perceptions represent the manner in which the organization distributes outcomes and have been shown to be related to cognitive, affective and behavioral reactions directed at the organization (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2002). For example, procedural justice perceptions have been shown to be related to employees' beliefs about support from the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When responding to

perceptions of procedural injustice, employees first identify the responsible party and then direct their response to the party who the employee has deemed accountable (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). An accountable party is one that "has the power to engage in discretionary conduct" (Masterson et al., 2000, p. 739). In addition, the organization can be thought of creating the procedures while organizational agents carrying out the procedures (Masterson et al., 2000). Organizational agents could have limited discretionary power in administering the policies and procedures of the organization. This suggests that procedural injustice perceptions are more likely to be attributed to the organization than to its agents.

A consistent finding is that social exchange relationships mediate the relationship between procedural justice perceptions and outcomes (Masterson et al., 2000; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Another consistent finding is that injustice perceptions are related to workplace aggression (Ambrose et al., 2002; Beugre, 2005). As noted by Ambrose and colleagues (2002), an employee who perceives that he or she has been treated unfairly will attempt to even the score with the organization through aggressive behaviors such as sabotage. Taken together, these findings suggest that a social exchange perspective should mediate the relationship between perceptions of injustice and aggressive behaviors directed at the organization. As such, I propose that COO mediates the relationship between procedural justice perceptions and aggressive behaviors directed at the organization.

7.4.2 Consequences

Feelings of cognitive dissonance may drive the responses to COO. Cognitive dissonance theory holds that when an individual has two or more contradictory attitudes or beliefs, or when inconsistency exists between behavior and attitudes and beliefs, feelings of cognitive dissonance occur (Festinger, 1957). Therefore, employees with high levels of cognitive organizational

obstruction would feel dissonance working for and identifying with an organization that treats them in a detrimental manner and hinders the attainment of goals. One way to alleviate this cognitive dissonance is to hold a negative perception of the organization and disidentify with the organization. Thus, the employee will have negative, but non-contradictory, beliefs about the organization.

While COO is defined as an employee's cognition, I expect that it will result in negative attitudes about and beliefs toward the organization and undesirable behaviors from the organization's perspective. The negative reciprocity norm, which is expressed in the "an eye for an eye" cliché, suggests that an employee will reciprocate negative treatment with negative treatment (Gouldner, 1960). However, in-kind reciprocation is not necessary according the reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960), meaning that employees can reciprocate obstructionist treatment through means other than harming the organization and obstructing the organization's attainment of its goals. For example, employees may believe that the organization lacks integrity or cannot be trusted and exhibit organizationally cynical behavior (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998) instead of obstructing the organization's attainment of goals. Cynical behaviors directed at the organization may include "badmouthing" the organization to others.

7.5.2.1 Attitudes

While it is important to understand the behavioral consequences of cognitive organizational obstruction, it is also necessary to understand the attitudes that drive those behaviors. According to the theory of planned behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), attitudes and beliefs drive employee behaviors. However, the relationship between attitudes and beliefs and behaviors are mediated by the intention to behave in a certain manner. The strength of the relationship between behavioral intentions and behaviors weakens through the passage of time (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behavior has been supported in a variety of contexts (see

Ajzen, 1991). By understanding the attitudes which have the potential to drive behaviors, organizations may be able to avoid negative behaviors by attending to the attitudes which are associated with the intention to act in a certain manner.

There is a long-standing interest in work attitudes in organizational research (O'Reilly III, 1991). Work attitudes have been consistently shown to be related to employer-employee concepts such as perceived organizational and psychological contracts (Bunderson, 2001; Conway & Briner, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). Recently, researchers have begun investigating organizational cynicism's relationship with an employee's perception of the employer-employee relationship (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Pate, Martin, & McGoldrick, 2003) because cynicism may be endemic to the United States (W. D. Davis & Gardner, 2004) and rampant within that culture (Mirvis & Kanter, 1991). Cynicism has been described as a negative employee attitude (Pate et al., 2003) and likely to be driven by negative actions of the organization, such as breaches of psychological contracts (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Pate et al., 2003) and perceptions of obstruction.

7.5.2.1.1 Organizational Cynicism

With so much change and instability in the business environment, many organizations have a difficult time meeting employee expectations (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). As a result, an increasing number of employees feel betrayed (Bardwick, 1991; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson, 1996). Subsequently, employees believe that their employer lacks integrity and become disillusioned, hopeless and frustrated. In short, employees have become cynical of their organizations (Andersson, 1996; Dean et al., 1998; Kanter & Mirvis, 1989; Mirvis & Kanter, 1991). In describing the general state of employees, Mirvis and Kanter (1991) claimed, "It has now reached the point where cynicism is chic and loyalty to the company is for saps and suckers (p. 2)."

Dean et al. (1998) proposed that to better understand the negative attitudes of employees, researchers should explore cynicism directed at employees' organizations. These authors offered a comprehensive definition of organizational cynicism: "a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, comprising three dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) negative affect toward the organization; and (3) tendencies toward disparaging and critical behaviors toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect" (p. 345).

An important feature of the definition offered by Dean et al. (1998) is that it breaks out organizational cynicism into three dimensions; each dimension is expected to be related to different employee reactions. When employees are cognitively (belief) cynical, they are expected to believe that the organization lacks honesty, fairness and sincerity and thus think that organizational decisions have hidden, ulterior motives. Affective cynicism describes how an employee "feels". Therefore, it is expected to be associated with contempt, anger, and disgust for the organization. While the cognitive and affective dimensions of cynicism are internal, the behavioral dimension of cynicism is the physical manifestation of cynicism. Behavioral expressions of organizational cynicism include making statements concerning the organization's lack of integrity, making fun of the organization, making pessimistic predictions about the future of the organization, and non-verbal expressions such as "knowing looks", "rolling eyes", "smirks", and "sneers" (Dean et al., 1998, p. 346).

Such beliefs, affect and behavior among employees are a problem for organizations. Empirical research reveals that employees who are cynical of their employing organizations have lower job satisfaction (Abraham, 2000; Brandes, Dharwadkar, & Dean, 1999; Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003), organizational commitment (Abraham, 2000; Brandes et

al., 1999; Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003), in-role performance and participation in employee involvement programs (Brandes et al., 1999), and higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). The organizational cynicism literature has identified antecedents of organizational cynicism as well. These include supervisor behavior (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2004) and the extent to which the organization fulfills its promises to employees (Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003).

The conceptualization of cognitive organizational obstruction suggests that organizational cynicism is a consequence of COO. The organizational cynicism literature suggests two reasons why COO is an antecedent of organizational cynicism. First, when an organization makes it more difficult for an employee to accomplish his or her personal and professional goals, the employee will feel frustrated, angry and disgusted with the organization. Secondly, employees who feel that the organization treats them in a way that is detrimental to their well-being will likely believe that the organization lacks integrity. Therefore, I propose that perceptions of obstruction will lead to increased levels of organizational cynicism.

7.5.2.2 Beliefs

In addition to engaging in different behaviors based upon COO, employees may develop other beliefs about the organization. Ajzen (1991) suggested that the ultimate driver of behaviors may be an employee's belief structure. By definition, COO is an employee's belief about the organization's interference with goal attainment and being a detriment to his or her well-being. Cognitive organizational obstruction can also be conceptualized as a belief regarding the employer-employee relationship – albeit a negative aspect- since employees form a belief regarding their relationship with the organization.

Some have argued that perceptions of the employer-employee relationship and social identity should be integrated (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, & Relyea, 2003). Fuller et al. (2003) found that perceived organizational support, a measure of the employer-employee relationship, predicted organizational based self-esteem, a social identity concept. Theorists have argued that employees identify with organizations that maintain or enhance self-esteem (Haunschild, Moreland, & Murrell, 1994) or disidentify with organizations that threaten self-esteem (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Another line of reasoning suggests that employees identify or disidentify with organizations based upon their beliefs regarding the overlap between their values and organization's values (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

7.5.2.2.1 Disidentification

Social identify theory suggests that a person will identify with a group or organization when substantial overlap exists between the person's social identity and the organization's identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The central, enduring and distinctive characteristics of the organization form an employee's perception of the organization's identity. Identification has been defined as "the degree to which a person defines him or herself as having the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization" (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994, p. 239). In contrast, disidentification is "a self-perception based on (1) a cognitive separation between a person's identity and his or her perception of an organization, and (2) a negative relational categorization of the self and the organization" (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001, p. 28).

Instead of being anchors of single continuum, theorists have speculated that disidentification and identification may be distinct constructs (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Research has found that the constructs had different antecedents and consequences. Antecedents of disidentification

included: (1) a perception that their values and the values of the organization are incongruent; (2) a perception that one's social identity is affected by the organization's reputation; (3) stereotyping of organizational members and (4) organizational perceptions are based on limited personal experience with organizational members. Overall, identification and disidentification are both cognitive processes that help a person to define and preserve his or her self-concept. Identification does this through creating a feeling of connection with the organization, while disidentification does so through a feeling of separation. Generally, individuals will disidentify with an organization to either (1) distance themselves from an organization with different values or reputation, or (2) distance themselves from an organization with a threatening identity (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

I believe that employees will distance themselves from an organization that obstructs the attainment of their goals. When an organization treats an employee in a manner that is seen as detrimental to his or her well-being, the employee is likely to believe that his or her values and the values of the organization are different. Findings suggest that behaviors are a manifestation of an individual's values and ethics (Turnipseed, 2002). By perceiving the organization's actions to be hindering or detrimental, the employee may believe that the organization's behaviors are driven by a set of values and ethics that are different than his or her own since the employee is unlikely to believe that his or her actions are a hindrance or detrimental to others. Because of the perceived differences that exist between organizational and employee values is an antecedent to disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001), I expect that COO will be related to organizational disidentification.

Preliminary results of both antecedents and consequences of cognitive organizational obstruction are presented in the Appendix.

7.5 SUMMARY

When applying the negative norm of reciprocity to an employee's social exchange relationship with his or her organization, theorists have not captured an employee's belief that the organization is a source of harm. To fill this gap in the literature, the concept of cognitive organizational obstruction is introduced. Cognitive organizational obstruction is an employee's global belief that the organization obstructs, hinders or interferes with an employee's personal and professional goal attainment and is a detriment to his or her well-being. While COO is related to existing constructs of organizational frustration, perceived organizational support, psychological contract breach and organizational politics, it is theoretically and empirically distinct from these related concepts. COO also explains additional variance beyond these related constructs in exit, voice and neglect behaviors. Finally, COO exhibits a different pattern of relationships with these outcomes than psychological contract breach, perceived organizational support and organizational politics.

A research agenda of prospective antecedents and consequences is offered. Potential consequences include affective and cognitive responses to COO. Antecedents include individual differences, employee's experiences of frustrated events and procedural justice perceptions. In addition to lending empirical support to the proposed model, researchers should expand this model. Eisenberger et al. (2001) argued that the organization's commitment to employees creates a felt obligation on the part of employees to be committed to the organization. Employees felt obligation mediated the relationship between POS and organizational commitment. Does COO decrease an employees' felt obligation to the organization and therefore decrease an employee's commitment to the organization?

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APPENDIX

Table 21: Expanded Model of Identification with residual sample of Internet Study

	Dependent Variable											
Predictors	**Identification**			**Neutral Identification**			**Ambivalent Identification**			**Disidentification**		
	Sample One											
Step 1:	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Gender	.02	-.02	-.02	-.06	-.04	-.04	-.02	-.02	-.03	.03	.05	.04
Age	.07	.09	.09	-.01	-.03	-.03	.13	.13	.13	.08	.07	.07
Manage\Supervise	-.01	-.02	-.02	-.25***	-.24***	-.26***	-.04	-.04	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.09
Education	.13	.08	.08	-.14	-.11	-.13	-.10	-.10	-.12	-.06	-.04	-.08
Psychological Contract Breach	-.01	.12	.12	.03	-.04	-.07	.16*	.15	.11	.18*	.13	.07
Organizational Cynicism	-.58***	-.40***	-.40***	.48***	.39***	.29**	.55***	.54***	.43***	.52***	.45***	.29***
Adjusted R^2	.34***			.30***			.41***			.39***		
Step 2:												
POS		.38***	.38***		-.21*	-.11		-.02	.10		-.15	.00
R^2 Change		.07***			.02*			.00			.01	.
Step 3:												
COO			.01			.32***			.38***			.51***
R^2 Change			.00			.06***			.08***			.15***
F Value		13.79***			12.08***			18.81***			23.82***	

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. Entries represent standardized beta coefficients.

Table 22: Expanded identity using snowball sample

	Dependent Variable											
Predictors	**Identification**			**Neutral Identification**			**Ambivalent Identification**			**Disidentification**		
						Sample Two						
Step 1:	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Gender	.05	.04	.03	.12	.13	.08	.10	.10	.08	.14*	.14*	.10
Age	.00	.00	-.01	-.07	-.07	-.09	-.04	-.04	-.05	-.06	-.06	-.08
Manage\ Supervise	.16*	.14*	.14*	-.14*	-.13	-.15*	.08	.08	.07	.07	.07	.05
Education	.04	.03	.04	-.02	-.01	.01	.01	.01	.02	-.02	-.02	.00
Psychological Contract Breach	-.26**	-.15	-.16	.13	.04	.02	.14*	.17*	.16*	.20**	.18*	.16
Organizational Cynicism	-.41***	-.32***	-.37***	.46***	.37***	.22*	.70***	.72***	.65***	.61***	.59***	.47***
Adjusted R^2	.41***			.33***			.62***			.57***		
Step 2:												
POS		.24*	.27*		-.21	-.14		.06	.10		-.06	.00
R^2 Change		.02*			.02			.00			.00	.
Step 3:												
COO			.11			.36***			.18**			.30***
R^2 Change			.01			.08***			.02**			.05***
F Value			14.95***			13.98***			32.32***			30.50***

Note: *p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001. Entries represent standardized beta coefficients.

Table 23: Antecedents of Cognitive Organizational Obstruction

Predictors	Cognitive Organizational Obstruction	
	Standardized Coefficients	Significance
(Constant)		.000
Psychological Contract Breach	.27	.000
Procedural Justice	-.16	.000
Organizational Frustration	.31	.000
Ethnic minority status	.06	.045
Over 40	-.09	.002
Gender	.02	.599
Model Fit (F-statistic)	77.480	.000
Adjusted R^2	.384	
Power	1.00	