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Sources of Support for Employees in Sport Organizations

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Introduction

What makes an organization successful? One would agree that employees of the organization play a key role in the success of overall organization since employees' positive work attitudes and behaviors are essential to maintaining an organization. This may be particularly true for organizations that provide service. As a matter of fact, service organizations greatly rely their performance on employees because the employees are the ones who have direct contact with the customers and influence shaping the image of the organization in consumers' mind. Since many sport organizations deal with service, keeping positive employees' work attitudes and behaviors is essential for them.

Then, what would influence employees' attitudes and behaviors at work? One factor that is considered to have a great influence on employees' overall work experience is the amount of support available at work place. According to Sundin, Bildt, Lisspers, Hochwalder, and Setterline (2006), support at workplace is important for two reasons. First, support helps employees to create a sense of belonging to the organization on individual and emotional levels. Second , on external and collective levels, support serves as a tool to meet the needs of the environment.

In general, when dealing with support available at work, literatures have focused on three different sources of support in organizational context: coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support. This chapter elaborates different sources of support available at workplace and the measures of each source of support. In addition, previous studies that investigated the antecedents and consequences of these sources of support are discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes with some suggestions on the possible future studies in relation to the sources of support.

Definitions

Coworker Support

Coworker support has been defined in several ways. According to Ellis and Miller (1994), coworker support is defined as the degree to which coworkers provide emotional, instrumental, and informational support to the fellow employees. Ko, Price, and Mueller (1997) defined coworker support as "degree to which employees have close friends in their immediate work unit" (p.963). In addition, Susskind, Kacmar, and Borchgrevink (2007) definition states coworker support as "the extent to which employees believe their coworkers provide them with work-related assistance" (p.372). Among these definitions, Ellis and Miller's definition is the most comprehensive since it includes various aspects of support, whereas Ko et al. and Susskind et al.'s definitions are limited to a single aspect, such as social and work related aspects respectively.

Supervisor Support

Supervisor support has been defined in a various ways. In fact, many researchers have used the same definition of coworker support by substituting the word of coworker to supervisor. For example, Ellis and Miller (1994) and Susskind et al. (2007) defined supervisor support in the same way as coworker support but with a different entity providing support. Ellis and Miller's (1994) definition indicated that supervisor support is emotional, instrumental, and informational support that comes from supervisors. According to Susskind et al. (2007), supervisor support represents "the extent to which employees believe that their supervisors offer them work-related help in performing their jobs as service workers" (p.372). On the other hand, Ko et al. (1997) referred it as the "degree to which superiors are helpful in job-related matters" (p.963). Also, Bhanthumnavin (2003) defined supervisor support as "the positive work interaction between a

supervisor and a subordinate" (p.79). Similar to coworker support, while Ellis and Miller encompassed all the aspects of support, Ko et al. and Susskind et al. focused only on work related support from supervisors. Therefore, Ellis and Miller's definition is more comprehensive.

Organizational Support

Regarding organizational support, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa's (1986) definition has been widely accepted and used by many researchers. According to Eisenberger et al. organizational support refers to employees' perception about the degree to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. In other words, it involves how an employee feels about their work being appreciated by the organization and how much the organization shows concerns and cares about the individual.

Measures of Support

Up to date, coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support have been measured using subjective self-reporting scales. In other words, rather than measuring the actual support provided, researchers have measured the employees' perception about the support received. There are various measures that are used to measure perceived coworker, supervisor, and organizational support. These measures are discussed further in this section.

Various scales have been proposed to measure coworker support. Coworker exchange scales, which measures the quality of exchange between coworkers, have been largely used in investigations of coworker support. Many researchers have used Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1985) leader-member exchange scale after changing the word "supervisor" to "coworker" (e.g. Sherony & Green, 2002; Wikaningrum, 2007). Other researchers (e.g. Lee & Gao, 2005) have used satisfaction with coworker component from Job Descriptive Index, which was developed by Smith, Kemdall, and Hulin (1969). Yet, many researchers have also developed scales that

directly measure coworker support (Durcham and Martin, 2000; Poulin, 1995). These scales all have usually shown high internal consistency in previous usage. As such, researchers have used various scales when measuring coworker support.

Similarly, various measures for perceived supervisor support have been proposed in the literature . Among them, the most popular method is using Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) perceived organizational support scale by substituting the word "organization" to "supervisor". In fact, many researchers have used this scale when measuring employees' level of perceived supervisor support (e.g. Rhoades et al., 2001; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Yoon & Lim, 1999). However, researchers have also suggested that this may be problematic when measuring supervisor support and organizational support together (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These researchers claim that respondents, many times, have hard time distinguishing between support that comes from supervisor and organization. And this distinction becomes more unclear when the supervisors are higher in hierarchical system and when organizational support and supervisor support are measured at the same time (Rhoades & Eisenberg, 2002; Rhoades, Eisenberg, & Armeli, 2001)

Meanwhile, other researchers have measured supervisor support by related measure of leader-member exchange (e.g. Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999; Settoon et al., 1996; Sherony & Green, 2002; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997; Wikaningrum, 2007). Leader-member exchange scales include Scandura and Graen's (1984) 7-item scale, Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) 7-item scale, Liden and Maslyn's (1993) scale with subscales of loyalty, respect, contribution, and affect, and Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly's (2002) 6-item scale. These scales all have been reported to have a good internal consistency (α = .70 - .96) in the previous usages. Among them ,

Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) scale has been the most widely used in recent studies (e.g., Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999; Sherony & Green, 2002; Wikaningrum, 2007).

Different from coworker support and supervisor support, which have counted with various distinct scales to be measured, one common measure has been used to measure perceived organizational support. That is Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) perceived organizational support scale. The original scale consists of 36 items that measures two factors: employees' perception about the degree to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. However, many researchers have used shortened versions of the scale, which included different number of items ranging from three to 17 (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Settoon et al., 1996; Shore & Tetrick, 1991;Yoon & Lim, 1999). These shortened versions of the scale have been frequently used in the studies because the internal consistency of the shortened versions has been shown to be as high as the original 36-item version (e.g., Harris, 1995; Pack, Jordan, Turner, & Haines, 2007 ; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Antecedents of Support

Understanding what influences the level of support is important to find out how support operates. Identifying the factors that predict employees' perception of support is crucial since it could help the organization to develop a strategy that can enhance the ways to provide support. However, despite the importance of identifying predictors for support, few studies have investigated the antecedents of perceived support. In the limited research, researchers have focused on different variables for different sources of support. In this section, the antecedents of different sources of support are discussed separately.

Coworker Support

While some researchers have investigated the antecedents of organizational and supervisor support, few researchers have investigated what predicts the level of coworker support. One exception is Bowling, Beehr, Johnson, Semmer, Hendricks, and Webster (2004), who examined whether physical attractiveness and sense of humour could trigger support from coworkers. They hypothesized that when one is deemed to be attractive, people would like her and offer more support to her. Based on the principle of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), Bowling et al. (2004) hypothesized that physical attractiveness and sense of humor might make coworkers want to be close and to feel positively attached to the person, thus increasing the odds for them to provide social support. However, their result revealed that physical attractiveness and sense of humor were not significant predictors of coworker support.

In general, antecedents of coworker support have been understudied. In particular, to the authors' knowledge, no studies have examined the antecedents of coworker support in sport contexts. More studies are definitely needed in this area in the future.

Supervisor Support

Some researchers have claimed that the amount of support provided by supervisors is determined by coworker support and organizational support provided to an employee (e.g., Yoon & Thye, 2000). In other words, an individual who is already receiving coworker and organizational support is more likely to receive supervisor support as well. The notion is well explained by Dornbusch and Scott's (1975) theory of organizational authority. According to this theory, social support is viewed as the transfer of positive sanctions among employees. Therefore, when one is already receiving support from other parties, it is deemed that the activities and positions of the employees are validated. There are two ways that one's activities and positions could be validated: authorization and endorsement. In authorization, positive sanction comes

from a higher authority. On the other hand, positive sanction comes from someone at the same or lower level in endorsement (Dornbusch & Scott, 1975). In this sense, when one is already receiving support from the organization and peers, his position is validated. Thus, the supervisor is more likely to view the individual in a positive manner and provides more support.

This notion has been empirically tested. Yoon and Thye (2000) examined whether coworker support, organizational support, and positive affectivity predicted the amount of supervisor support provided to hospital employees. The results showed that both variables were significant predictors for supervisor support. However, the amount of supervisor support was the strongest when coworker support, organizational support, and positive affectivity were present at the same time. Meanwhile, there was no significant effect of positive affectivity alone on supervisor support.

Other constructs, such as job demands, job control, and job content, have been considered to influence supervisor support. Based on demand-control-support model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990), researchers have supported that job demand and job control are significant predictors of supervisor support (e.g., Johnson, 1991; Sundin et al., 2006). For example, Sundin et al. (2006) investigated whether organizational variables (i.e., job demands, job control, and job content), individual variables (i.e., self-esteem, mistrust), and socio-demographic variables (i.e., type of employer, occupational position, age, gender, and educational level) were associated with supervisor support. They found that these variables all together explained 22% of variance in supervisor support. However, the majority of the variance was explained by organizational variable indicating that individual and socio-demographic variables did not explain significant amount of variance. In particular, job control explained the largest variance in supervisor support (10%).

Organizational Support

There are two antecedents of organizational support that are frequently discussed in the literature: organizational justice and perceived supervisor support. Researchers have argued that perception of organizational justice is an important antecedent of organizational support (e.g., Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Fasolo, 1995; Masterson et al., 2000; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). The notion is that justice perceptions may be one aspect of an employee's assessment of discretionary action taken by the organization or its agents (Rahim, Magner, & Shapiro, 2000). This discretionary action perception plays an axiomatic role in the degree of support employees perceived from their organization (Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998; Wayne, Boomer, & Tetrick, 2002). In particular, researchers have found that procedural justice and distributive justice positively influence employees' perceived organizational support (e.g., Fasolo, 1995; Moorman et al., 1998; Wayne et al., 2002).

Another antecedent frequently discussed for organizational support is supervisor support. Eisenberger et al. (2002) observed that perceived supervisor support was positively related to temporal change in perceived organizational support, suggesting that supervisor support leads to organizational support. Additionally, they noted that supervisor support-organizational support relationship rose with perceived supervisor status, suggesting that the higher the perceived standing of a supervisor within the organization, the more likely would be that an employee perceived his or her supervisor as the organization representative. Also, Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) found that employees' perceived supervisor support was positively associated to perceived organizational support.

In sport settings, there is little research performed on the antecedents of perceived organizational support. One exception is Kim, Cunningham, and Sagas' (2005) study. They

examined whether job autonomy, job variety, and job feedback could work as antecedents of perceived organizational support among college coaches of various sports. Their results showed that job feedback was significantly related to perceived organizational support whereas job autonomy and job variety were not related to organizational support. Kim et al.'s (2005) findings showed the importance of job feedback in predicting perceived organizational support.

Consequences of Support

Although some studies have investigated the antecedents of support, many times, support has been examined as an independent variable (Sundin et al., 2006). In other words, research on different sources of support has been largely geared towards the outcomes of support. Many researchers have, in fact, investigated how the sources of support impact employees' work attitudes and behaviors, such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The relationships between the outcome variables are explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1967). According to Blau (1967), "an individual who supplies rewarding services to another obligates him. To discharge this obligation, the second must furnish benefits to the first in turn" (p.89). In other words, the key notion of social exchange theory is reciprocity. When one person supports another, the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) foresees the return of such support. For example, if one feels that she is receiving something valuable from her coworkers, she will repay something valuable to them so that she can receive the benefits continuously. This way the relationships of reciprocity become stronger.

However, the reciprocal relationship goes beyond the individual level. Although the norm of reciprocity is commonly found between individuals, it is also developed between individuals and organizations (Shore, Sy, & Strauss, 2006; Rousseau, 1989). Therefore, when one perceives that he is receiving benefits from the organization, he finds a way to repay the organization by

providing something valuable to the organization. Many times, this would be something that enhances the organization's performance. In this sense, social exchange theory well explains the relationships between sources of support and the outcome variables. This section focuses on previous studies that investigated the consequences of three different sources of support at workplace.

Coworker Support

As outcomes of coworker support, organizational commitment (e.g., Chiaburu & Harrison, 2002; Ko et al. 1997; Lee & Gao, 2005; Simons & Jankowsk, 2008), work effort (e.g., Chiaburu & Harrison, 2002), turnover intention (e.g., Chiaburu & Harrison) and job satisfaction (e.g., Simons & Jankowsk, 2008) have been discussed frequently in the literature.

To begin, regarding coworker support, Chiaburu and Harrison (2002) conducted a meta-analysis on how employees' perception about coworker support and coworker antagonism were linked to employees outcomes, such as role perceptions, work attitudes, withdrawal, and effectiveness. The researchers used 161 independent samples, which include 77,954 employees in various business organizations. The results showed that employees' perception of coworker support was significantly related to organizational commitment (r = .34), effort reduction (r = -.23), and intention to quit (r = -.27). In addition, employees' perception about coworker antagonism was closely associated with organizational commitment (r = -.25) and intention to quit (r = .26). Regarding job satisfaction, McCalister, Dolbier, Webster, Mallon, and Steinhardt's (2006) study that included 310 high tech employees and 745 government employees indicated that those with high level of perceived coworker support had high level of job satisfaction.

Although there is much evidence that coworker support is related to organizational behaviors, coworker support has been mostly linked with the physical and psychological well-

being. In fact, many researchers have supported that perceived coworker support elicits the benefits for physical health (e.g., Dean & Ensel, 1982; Holahan & Moos, 1981; Rosenfeld & Richman, 1997), mental health (e.g., Luszczynska & Cieslak, 2005), stress (e.g., Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; McCalister et al., 2006; Woodman & Hardy, 2001), and burnout (e.g., Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000). For example, Luszczynska and Cieslak found that coworker support was significantly associated with employees' stress reduction and well-being. Similarly, Beehr et al. discovered that coworker support was significantly related to psychological strains, but weakly related to job performance among door-to-door book dealers.

In sport context, Rosenfeld and Richman (1997) investigated whether student athletes' sources of social support were related to their physical and emotional well-being. The sources of support included in the study were support from coaches and teammates. It was revealed that both sources of support were significant predictors of the athletes' physical and emotional well-being. Rosenfeld and Richman also claimed that one's perception about support results in team building intervention. According to the researchers, individual benefits, such as mental health and reduced stress, can have a positive impact on the quality of relationships among athletes, therefore increasing their ability to work together. In other words, through support, members (i.e., athletes) learn about each other and come to the realization of how to work with each other.

However, Rook (1992) points out that there are certain situations where perception of support would not provide any benefits at neither individual nor team level. These includes (a) when a member does not need support; (b) when the support provided to a member is too much or too little; or (c) when the support gives a false sense of self-efficacy.

Supervisor Support

Similar to coworker support, supervisor support is discussed much as a predictor of various work related outcomes. In fact, Pastore, Goldfine, and Riemer (1996) stated, "by being supportive, athletic administrators may encourage coaches to stay" (p.374). This statement points out the link between supervisor support and employees' intention to stay. Yet, there are many other behavioral outcomes that result from supervisor support. The outcomes frequently discussed regarding supervisor support include organizational commitment (e.g., Kidd & Smewing, 2001; Ko et al., 1997; Lee & Gao, 2005; Shore, Sy, & Strauss, 2006; Simons & Jankowsk, 2008), job satisfaction (e.g., Simons & Jankowsk, 2008), organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Shore et al., 2006), turnover intention (e.g., Shore et al., 2006), and job performance (e.g., Shore et al., 2006).

In business settings, Kidd and Smewing (2001) investigated whether supervisor support was a predictor of employees' commitment to the organization. The data were collected from employees in a various organizations. The measure for supervisor support was developed specifically for the study and it included support about career promotion, interpersonal skills and commitment, feedback and goal setting, and trust and respect. It was found that only trust and respect and feedback and goal setting were significant predictors of organizational commitment. Considering overall supervisor support, the results were different based on gender. For females, as perceived supervisor support increased their commitment to the organization increased as well. However, for male participants, there was a certain point in the middle where organizational commitment decreased as perceived support increased. A possible explanation for this finding would be that employees have perceived moderate level of support as "routinized"; therefore, consider it as not sincere.

Shore et al. (2006) examined the influence of perceived supervisor support on work attitudes and behaviors of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intention, and job performance among managers and subordinates. They additionally examined the moderating role of employees' equity sensitivity in the relationships. It was discovered that leader responsiveness to employee request explained 25% of the variance in affective commitment. Also, it explained significant amount of variance in job satisfaction (15%), organizational citizenship behavior (9%), turnover intention (8%), and job performance (9%). Employees' equity sensitivity only moderated the relationship between perceived supervisor support and job satisfaction.

Ko et al. (1997) conducted two studies to examine the influence of perceived support on organizational commitment among Korean hospital employees. In this study, the researchers included three forms of organizational commitment suggested by Meyer and Allen (1991) as outcomes of coworker and supervisor support. These included affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The results of the study were slightly different for sample 1 and sample 2 For sample 1, which was composed of 278 employees of the research institute, supervisor support and coworker support were significantly and positively related to affective commitment, while only supervisor support was significantly correlated with continuance commitment and normative commitment. For sample 2, which was composed of 589 employees of the head office of the airline company, supervisor support was highly associated with affective commitment and normative commitment, whereas coworker support was significantly correlated with continuance commitment.

Simons and Jankowski (2008) developed a model of quitting intention. Modifying from Price's (2000) model, these researchers proposed that positive affect, negative affect, job involvement, stress, autonomy, distributive justice, promotional chances, routinization, coworker support, and supervisor support to be the antecedents of job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction influences organizational commitment, which in turn has an impact on job searching behavior and quitting intent. The model was well supported, and in the model, it was shown that coworker support and supervisor support had a significant impact on job searching behavior and quitting intention through job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Job performance has also been supported as an important outcome of supervisor support. In the study of health center employees in Thailand, Bhanthumnavin (2003) compared the employees' perception of supervisor support with their objective job performance ratings that comes from the supervisors. The study results confirmed that emotional, information, and material support that comes from supervisor leads to higher supervisor ratings of job performance. This finding seems to indicate that when the employees perceived they were receiving support from the supervisors, they acted in favor of performing better in their jobs.

Studies have also supported that supervisor support is closely associated with the employees' psychological well-being. For example, McCalister et al.'s (2006) research showed that supervisor support was negatively related to stress. In addition, Fletcher and Hanton (2003), Woodman and Hardy (2001), and Rosenfeld and Richman (1997) confirmed supervisor support as a factor that decreased stress and frustration and increase psychological and emotional well-being among athletes.

Although the majority of studies that examine the consequences of supervisor support have been conducted in business settings, a few studies have been performed in sport

organization context. For example, Sagas and Cunningham (2004) hypothesized that supervisor support would increase intent to seek an athletic director position among senior women administrators in Division I and II universities. The researchers also speculated that perceived supervisor support would be significantly associated with decreased occupational turnover intent. The results revealed that supervisor support was significantly and negatively related to senior women administrators' occupational turnover intent. However, supervisor support was not significantly associated with their intent to seek an athletic director position.

Organizational Support

Organizational support has been investigated in conjunction with organizational commitment (e.g., Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rohoades, 2001; Harris, 1995; Setton, Bennett, & Liden; Shore & Tetrick, 1991), job satisfaction (e.g., Pack et al., 2007; Shore & Tetrick, 1991), in-role behavior (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2001; Setton et al., 1996), turnover intention (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2001; Harris, Harris, & Harvey, 2007), extra role performance (e.g., Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, & Aselage, 2009), organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Moorman, Niehoff, & Organ, 1993; Shore & Wayne, 1993), and performance (e.g., Tasi & Lau, 2004). The notion is that when employees perceive that the organization cares about their welfare and provides support, they are likely to return favors to the organization by exhibiting positive feelings, job attitudes, and behavioral intentions (Harris et al., 2007).

Many studies regarding the consequences of different sources of support has been conducted in business settings. For example, regarding organizational support, Eisenberger et al. (2001) examined reciprocity nature of employees' perceived organizational support and affective commitment and job performance among postal employees. They proposed that perceived

organizational support will increase positive mood and felt obligation, and these will have significant impact on affective commitment, organizational spontaneity, in-role performance, and withdrawal behavior. The results showed that the hypotheses were confirmed. In particular, perceived organizational support explained 16% of the variance in affective commitment and the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment was partially mediated by felt obligation and positive mood.

Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996), in their study, proposed that perceived organizational support would be a predictor for organizational commitment and in-role behavior while the quality of leader-member exchange would be a predictor for in-role behavior and citizenship behavior. As an alternative model, the researchers hypothesized that perceived organizational support would influence citizenship behavior and the quality of leader-member exchange would influence organizational commitment. The researchers tested these hypotheses with nonsupervisory hospital employees. All the hypotheses were confirmed except the influence of perceived organizational support on in-role behavior. It was revealed that perceived organizational support explained 49% of the variance in organizational commitment, which was measured by Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. They also found that the quality of leader-member exchange predicted organizational commitment, but the researchers noticed that when they are examined at the same time, perceived organizational support dominates leader-member exchange in explaining variance in organizational commitment.

Choi (2006) investigated group-level predictors and individual-level predictors that had an impact on Korean employees' interpersonal helping behavior. The participants were recruited from a large electronics company in Korea. At the group level, trust among members was included as a factor influencing interpersonal helping behavior. On the other hand, at the

individual level, perceived organizational support and perceived fairness were used as the predictors influencing interpersonal helping behavior. Yet, it was assumed that the links between perceived organizational support and perceived fairness and interpersonal helping behavior will be mediated by affective commitment to the organization. The results showed that perceived organizational support and perceived fairness significantly predicted interpersonal helping behavior. In addition, it was found that affective commitment partially mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and interpersonal helping behavior while it fully mediated the relationship between perceived fairness and interpersonal helping behavior. This study well supports the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment.

In sport settings, Pack et al.'s (2007) examined the effects of perceived organizational support on affective commitment, normative commitment, and job satisfaction. The subjects of the study were student employees who worked at a large university recreation center. It was found that employees' perceived organizational support explained 46.2% of the variance in affective commitment while it explained 39% of the variance in normative commitment. Further, perceived organizational support explained 53.3% of the variance in student employees' job satisfaction. The results showed that there was no group difference based on gender, tenure, and type of supervision.

Dixon and Sagas (2007) found that organizational support has a positive direct impact on job satisfaction among female college head coaches. In this study, the strength of the relationship between organizational support and job satisfaction ($r = .63$) was similar to those reported in meta-analysis results ($r = .59$; Rhoades & Eisenberber, 2002) and in other coaching

investigations (r = .60; Kim & Cunningham, 2005). Taken together, these results add up to show the importance of organizational support also in athletic contexts.

Organizational support also has been suggested as a predictor of athletic performance. For example, Tasi and Lau (2004) investigated the factors related to the success of the Hong Kong wheelchair fencing team in the 2000 Sydney paralympics. The results indicated that the athletes' perceived positive outcomes, organizational support, and family support were the biggest contributors for the performance of the athletes.

In addition to the attitudes and behavioral outcomes discussed as consequences of organizational support, researchers have also found that organizational support has psychological benefits. For instance, Fletcher and Hanton (2003) and Woodman and Hardy (2001), in their qualitative studies, found that support given to elite athletes from the organization was significantly related to reduced level of frustration and stress.

Practical implications of studying support

As previous studies have showed, employees' perception of support is both a desirable outcome and a valuable antecedent in organizational models. Assuming perceptions of support as a desirable outcome, the more managers know about its antecedents, the better they can promote it. For example, organizational justice has been largely accepted as an important antecedent of perceived organizational support (Fasolo, 1995; Moorman et al., 1998; Pack, 2005; Wayne et al., 2002). Considering justice as a discretionary action taken by the organization or its agents (supervisors or coworkers), it plays an axiomatic role in the degree of support employees perceived from their organization, supervisors and coworkers (Moorman et al., 1998; Wayne et al., 2002). Thus, a fitness center administrator who desires to improve her instructors' perceptions of support could start showing justice in her policies.

Supervisor support has also been accepted as an important antecedent of organizational support. Eisenberger et al. (2002) observed that supervisor support was positively related to temporal change in organizational support , suggesting that the former leads to the latter. Additionally, they noted that this relationship rose with supervisor status, suggesting that the higher the perceived standing of a supervisor within the organization, the more likely would be that an employee perceived his or her supervisor as the organization representative. In this sense, athletic coaches' perceptions of organizational support are directly related to their perceptions of support from the athletic director.

Considering support as a valuable antecedent of other organizational outcomes, previous studies have shown that support could predict job satisfaction, affective commitment, intention to leave, and work effort (Kim et al. 2005; Pack, 2005; Woo, 2009). Kim et al. (2005) emphasized the importance of perceived organizational support in contributing to the job satisfaction of head coaches. From a practical point of view, the authors proposed that athletic directors should provide feedback to their coaches, in order to show that the organization considers the head coaches' well-being, and to demonstrate that the organization supports their contributions. Coaches who feel the support of their organizations tend to be more satisfied with their jobs.

In a similar vein, Pack (2005) and Dixon and Sagas (2007) found positive relationships between organizational support and job satisfaction. Pack (2005) added that organizational support is also a good predictor of affective commitment. Finally, Woo and Chelladurai (in review) showed that different sources of support (coworker, supervisor, and organization) were significant predictors of intention to leave and work effort.

Taken together, these results have serious practical implications. Job satisfaction, affective commitment, intention to leave, and work effort are all very important organizational

outcomes for sport organizations (Kim & Cunningham, 2005; Pack, 2005; Turner and Chelladurai, 2001). Therefore, managers of recreational sport centers who need to increase job satisfaction or affective commitment of their instructors should give personal support and establish environments where coworkers' support could be felt. Managers of large sport events could retain a great number of volunteers if they understand that supported workers tend to show less intention to quit (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). Fitness center employees tend to put forward a greater work effort when they feel support by coworkers, supervisors, and the organization (Woo, 2009). To sum up, in different sport contexts, perceptions of support have shown a great potential to promote diverse organizational outcomes.

Future Studies

Although many studies have been performed in the area of coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support, there are many needs of studies in this topic. First of all, as discussed in this chapter, many studies have been conducted in relation to three different sources of support. However, not many studies have been conducted in the context of sport organizations. In fact, many studies have been conducted in business settings. The outcomes of these studies may be replicated in sport settings because many sports organizations are also considered as business (Jones, 2000). Yet, the sport management area is in dire need of empirical studies to test relationships between support and other organizational variables.

Secondly, future studies should compare the applicability of the relationships between antecedents and support and the relationships between support and outcome variables among different occupations, such as fitness employees, coaches, and administrators. Though no direct evidence exists, indirect evidence indicates that the relationships between constructs could be different based on occupation. For example, previous studies have shown that the relationships

between antecedents and organizational commitment and the relationships between organizational commitment and consequences of it differ based on occupations (e.g., Chelte & Tausky, 1986; Cole & Bruch, 2006).

Thirdly, the relationships among coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support should be investigated. As discussed earlier, previous studies indicated that supervisor support and organizational support are highly correlated (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2002; Woo & Chelladurai, in review). In addition, coworker support was also found to be related to supervisor support (e.g., Yoon & Thye, 2000; Woo & Chelladurai, in review).

Fourthly, the relationships between support and its antecedent and consequence variables should be examined in a cross-cultural context. According to Hofstede (2001), culture shapes an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in a certain way through collective learning. Therefore, it is possible that the relationships between the variables may be moderated based on the cultural values held by an individual. The moderating effect of culture should be investigated both at national and individual levels. In fact, studies have found that both national culture (e.g., Yao & Wang, 2006) and individual culture (e.g., Ramamoorthy, Kulkarni, Gupta, & Flood, 2007) have a significant impact on work attitudes and behaviors of an individual.

Lastly, more research is needed on the antecedents of perceived support in sport organizations. Although many studies have been performed about the consequences of support in sport organization context, there have been few studies on the antecedents of support in sport settings. In particular, regarding the antecedents of coworker support, to the authors' knowledge, no studies have been conducted in sport organizational settings. Since coworker support is also a crucial source of support that has an impact on employees' organizational behaviors, studies that identifies the factors influencing coworker support is greatly needed.

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