A FACTOR ANALYTIC STUDY TO EVALUATE THE

STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY OF PERCEIVED

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In most work environments there are multiple exchange relationships between

employees and the organization. Gergen, Greenberg and Willis (1980) allude to the

general acceptance that organizational participants typically engage in multiple exchange

relationships and derive different benefits from each exchange. Social exchange theory

provides a theoretical framework suggesting that relationships are characterized by

reciprocity such that those who receive something of value feel obligated to repay the

provider. According to Blau (1964) this engenders commitment, trust, positive affect and

gratitude. Several studies provide evidence that employees may remain committed and

productive members of an organization as long as they believe that the organization helps

them achieve positive career experiences, or intrinsic career success (Erdogan, Kraimer,

& Liden, 2004; Gaertner & Nollen, 1989; Igbaria, 1991; Lee & Maurer, 1997). Settoon,

Bennett, and Liden (1996) extend social exchange theory with evidence suggesting that

each exchange relationship may differentially affect behaviors and attitudes. Given that

organizational participants engage in multiple exchange relationships, and that each

exchange relationship may affect behaviors and attitudes differently, a plausible

extension for further study is to consider how the exchange relationships might vary

across levels in the organization. As employers look for creative ways to engage and

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retain workers, the potential differences in work attitudes among individuals or across groups at different levels in the organization become increasingly important.

The survey of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) was created as one attempt to better understand the organizational commitment process within the framework of exchange theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Eisenberger et al. (1986) used a social exchange view to explain the relationship between POS, absenteeism and turnover. Eisenberger and his colleagues suggested that POS is an antecedent of organizational commitment. Eisenberger et al. (1986) administered the survey of POS to employees across nine different organizations in the original study. Subsequent studies of organizational commitment and social exchange have used the instrument in a variety of organizational settings (see Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002, for a meta-analysis of studies that have used the survey of POS). All of the studies have interpreted observed (mean score) differences or similarities between employment populations as real. In other words, the studies assume that employees at different levels in the organization conceptualize POS in the same way and use the same response styles in completing the surveys. If these untested assumptions are not true, then comparison of scores across these employee groups is inappropriate. Moreover, conclusions and actions based on these comparisons may be misguided.

Theoretical Rationale and Need for the Study

The theoretical framework for the rationale and design of this study consists of two components. First, Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that perceived organizational support consists of two facets. One aspect of organizational support suggests that

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employees develop global beliefs about the extent to which the organization values individual contributions based on the exchange relationship between the employee and organization. That is, the perception of organizational support will increase as employees perceive that performance and productivity are reciprocated with rewards from the organization in the form of benefits, promotions, and pay. Consequently, the increase in perceived support was hypothesized to reduce absenteeism and turnover. Although different individual employees may identify with different aspects of the organizational environment at the same time such as the employer, organization, work unit or team, occupational or professional group (Ellemers, de Gilder, & van den Heuvel, 1998; Rousseau, 1998; van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2005; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000), this study examines only the perceived organizational support at the level of the organization and does not intend to consider perceived support from other work-related entities.

In addition to support in terms of tangible rewards, a second aspect or component of organizational support was developed around the perception by employees that the organization is concerned and cares about the employees' well being. This component of support is reflected in employee's perceived treatment by the organization, and interpretation of organizational motives underlying that treatment. This component would include the organization's reaction to mistakes, or the employee's future illnesses. This aspect of perceived support might also be influenced by the frequency of statements of recognition, praise, and approval. According the Eisenberger et al. (1986), the development of these global beliefs through the multiple exchange relationships helps the

employee determine the organizations readiness to reward increased work effort and to meet socioemotional needs.

In combination with the two aspects of POS, a second component to the rationale and design of this study centers on the nature of identification with the organization by employees. Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggests that organizational support is encouraged by employees' tendency to personify the organization with humanlike characteristics. The tacit assumption is that all employees at all levels of the organization conceptualize the organization in a consistent way. A reasonable alternative view is that employees who hold higher rank or status within the organization have a vested interest in supporting the policies, procedures, and practices of the organization. Moreover, higher ranked employees, such as administrators or executives, may take challenges or criticism of those organizational actions as personal.

An ideal assessment of exchange relationships in a hierarchical organizational context therefore requires reconciliation of at least two competing demands: specific idiosyncratic information meaningful to the individual versus standardized assessments that generalize to other persons and settings (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). The subjectivity of perceived organizational support means that an individual can have a unique experience regarding his or her exchange relationship with an employer. This subjective experience is the focus of the study as it pertains to the underlying structure of perceived organizational support. The individual is the distinct source of information regarding POS because it is the *perception* of organizational support, not actual organizational support that constitutes the exchange relationship. One implication of unique individual experiences and perceptions with an employer is that any measure of

those perceived experiences needs to be stable and equivalent across the organization. The long history of research on perceptions of organizations and employee-employer relations indicates that many features can be generalized across employees (e.g., rewards, career opportunity, leader-member exchanges). Emphasis, therefore, on idiosyncratic or generalizable, or both, aspects of perceived exchanges is a function of at least three features: (1) the focus of the research question, (2) the stability of the context in which the exchange occurs, and (3) the stability and equivalence of the measurement construct across the organizational context. It is this last feature that is the focus of the current study.

The theoretical framework for this study, therefore, is based on the notion that individual employees identify with the organization and develop beliefs about organizational support as a function of the multiple exchange relationships in which they are engaged (coworker relations, supervisor-subordinate relations, perhaps even relationships with colleagues at external agencies, etc.). These beliefs, randomly distributed across a particular organizational sample of individual employees, would be unique to the individual and vary independently of work group membership or organizational status (i.e., level in the organization). However, it may not be likely that individual beliefs are randomly distributed. It is more plausible, based on social exchange theory and the theory of organizational support, that individuals form groups as a function of homogeneous beliefs and values. Therefore, it may be more likely to expect the conceptualization of 'organization' that develops out of the multiple exchange relationships to vary between organizational levels. That is, 'organization' might be conceptualized as something entirely different (a distinct construct) for line staff and

supervisors compared to how 'organization' is operationalized by administrators or executives who likely identify with different aspects of the 'organization,' or in different ways.

Denise Rousseau (1998) defines organizational identification as a psychological state where individuals perceive themselves to be part of a larger organization. She makes a conceptual argument that this type of identification with an organization can create a larger whole that can be a driving force behind the organization's performance, worker well-being and the resilience of both the organization and individuals in times of change.

Presumably, identification with one's organization is shaped by the exchange relationship between the employee and the supervisor or manager. From an agency perspective managers or supervisors are thought of as the organizational agents responsible for directing and evaluating subordinates' performance, thus employees would view their supervisor's orientation toward them (favorable or unfavorable) as indicative of the organization's support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Levinson, 1965). If agents (managers / supervisors) are acting on behalf of the organization, it is plausible that workers might be indifferent with respect to whom the agent might be. However, since individual managers may create their own idiosyncratic relationships with workers (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997), there can be confusion regarding whether the manager is the organization's agent or a principal of his or her own contractual arrangements with subordinates (Rousseau, 1998).

In assessing employee perceptions of *organizational* support one issue that has received little attention is who the *organization* is construed to be. As described in detail earlier, *organizational* support is distinct from perceived supervisory support (Hutchison,

1997; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988), perceived team support (Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000), work-group support (Self, Holt, & Schaninger, 2005), and leader-member exchange (Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Therefore, the conceptualization of *organization* is clearly distinct from these other entities. Yet, from the exchange theory perspective, and based on the reciprocity norm, when employees are asked to characterize their obligations with their employer they might ask, 'Do you mean my boss, the people who hired me or the company as a whole?'

Social exchange theory and organizational support theory have both been used to explain why subordinates become obligated, loyal, and committed to their supervisors and perform in ways beyond what is required of them in the formal employment contract (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Research on leader-member exchange (LMX), for example, has shown that there is variance among subordinates in the frequency with which they engage in activities that extend beyond the employment contract (Liden & Graen, 1980; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne & Green, 1993). However, employment contracts vary in terms of the nature and amount to be exchanged. Members who benefit greatly from their formal contracts, even those with low leader-member exchange relationships, may feel obligated and willing to contribute to the organization. The conceptualization of 'organizational support' as a global measure of the exchange relationship between employees and employer is also likely to vary across the organization as reflected in differing perspectives of equity in compensation, benefits, and general care and concern for employee well being.

Considering the notion that employees identify with the organization and develop beliefs about organizational support as a function of their multiple exchange

relationships, Eisenberger et al. (1986) developed a 36-item instrument to measure

perceived organizational support. Item responses from nine organizations were subjected

to a principal components analysis and a single-factor solution was retained. Subsequent

studies that examined the factor structure of the POS survey have included a reduced

number of items based on the assumption that the original construct was unidimensional.

The current study, therefore, aims to evaluate several psychometric properties of the POS

instrument in view of the theoretical framework upon which the instrument was

developed. In this regard, the current study is not a test of theory, but a psychometric

evaluation.

Problem Statement

Most studies that have used items from the POS survey include only about one-

half of the original items and many studies have used an even shorter 8-item version. At

least three studies have used only three of the original items to represent the original 36-

item measure (Eisenberger, Singlhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002;

Witt, 1992; Yoon & Lim, 1999). Furthermore, only one study has used principal axis

factor analysis with nonorthogonal rotation. The paucity of empirical evidence to support

the assumption that the 36-item measure is indeed unidimensional is surprising given the

frequency with which the measure is used in reduced form. Moreover, the prevailing

assumption that the 36-item measure is unidimensional seems counter to the theoretical

assertion that POS consists of two distinct "facets" (Eisenberger et al.,1986; Rhoades &

Eisenberger, 2002). Finally, a comparison of the internal consistency of responses across

the multiple forms of the instrument is non-existent. All of these issues have implications

for how the survey of perceived organizational support is used, and for how the various forms compare in terms of the relationship between POS and other relevant variables or constructs in the organizational literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the underlying structure of the original 36-item POS survey. The goal of the study is to determine the number of structural dimensions of the POS survey by using Principal Axis Factor (PAF) analysis with oblique rotation. Reliability analyses for multiple forms of the POS survey will be conducted as a means to compare the internal consistency across forms. Finally, factor scores will be regressed on three constructs that are frequently used in studies that also use the POS survey as a means to assess the validity of the various POS forms. Specifically, each version of the POS will be regressed on a measure of affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation.

Research Questions

1) What is the underlying structure of the 36-item survey of POS?

2) Are there differences in the internal consistency reliability across multiple versions of the survey of perceived organizational support (e.g., 36-items, 16-items, 8-items, and 3-items)?

3) How do different versions of the survey of POS relate to other measures included in studies that also use the survey of POS (e.g., affective commitment, organizational communication, organizational participation)?

<u>Definition of Terms</u>

<u>Exchange Ideology</u> refers to the relationship between what the individual receives and gives in an exchange relationship. Eisenberger et al. (1986) described exchange ideology as a continuum. At one end of the continuum, individuals will perform in ways consistent with organizational reinforcements such that when perceived treatment by the organization is favorable, employees respond with high performance; if perceived treatment is unfavorable, performance is low. At the other end of the continuum, individuals will perform without regard to what they receive from the organization. Individuals at this end of the continuum will put forth effort even if they perceive themselves as being treated poorly. Thus, exchange ideology within an organizational context reflects the individual's expectation for the person-organization exchange. Eisenberger et. al (1986, 501) suggested that an individual's increase in work effort and positive job attitudes that comes from a greater effort-outcome expectancy "depends on an exchange ideology favoring the trade of work effort for material and symbolic benefits."

<u>Organizational Support Theory</u> (OST) holds that the formation of perceived organizational support is encouraged by employees' tendency to assign the organization humanlike characteristics (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Based on their personification of the organization, employees would view favorable or unfavorable treatment received from the organizations an indication of the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. That is, POS would be valued by employees for meeting socioemotional needs, providing an indication of the

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organization's readiness to reward increased work effort, and indicating the organization's inclination to provide aid when needed to carry out one's job effectively (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Significance of the Study

The issues of factor structure and dimensionality have relevance for nearly any use of test scores or measurement scale scores from a survey in multiple populations. If employees conceptualize the workplace differently (i.e., what or who is the focal agent that *is* the 'organization?'), this will have practical implications for the use of the measure and for organizational management practices based on measurements from this instrument within the organization. There is evidence to suggest that employees distinguish between the same actions taken by management, supervisors, and the organization as a whole (Hutchison, 1997). Furthermore, Shore and Barksdale (1998) provide evidence suggesting that imbalance in exchange relationships at work may be a function of beliefs about exchange in the form of exchange ideology. The study of multiple social exchange relationships may, therefore, be critical in the study of organizational behavior, particularly in hierarchically structured work environments.

Presumably, these social exchange relationships between employee and the organization exist within a given level of the organizational structure, but also transcend hierarchical boundaries. It is therefore necessary to assess the psychometric properties in general, and the factor structure in particular, of any measure included in such a study to ensure the accuracy and stability of the measurement tools used within the organizational structure.

Shore and Wayne (1993) indicate the importance of POS as a determinant of employee behavior (especially commitment and citizenship behaviors), and suggest exploring the individual and situational factors that may influence employee perceptions of organizational support. Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that various aspects of an employee's treatment by the organization influence perceived support. Examples of employee treatment by the organization might include reactions to performance, suggestions for change, and illnesses.

Likewise, Eisenberger et al. (2002) reported evidence to suggest that employees have higher levels of POS when they believe their supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being. The increase in POS was related to decreased turnover. Their sample included hourly paid salespeople (44%), hourly paid sales-support (29%), salaried sales-support (20%), and salaried sales people (7%). POS scores were collapsed across employee levels in the same organization as if potential differences were irrelevant. One might argue from the viewpoint of organizational support theory that the individual employees' perception of organizational support, whether accurately reflecting the beliefs of others in the organization or not, is based on personal observation of upper management's treatment of supervisors and coworkers as well as the communicated views of upper management, supervisors, and fellow employees.

There are a variety of sources that may account for differences in POS scores among employees in any organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewé, & Johnson, 2003). Given these demonstrated relationships in the literature between POS and organizational commitment, employee turnover, and absenteeism, there is potential value in being able to directly

compare or pool scores across groups of employees within an organization. Valid comparisons require that the measurement scale reflect the same construct in each population and that the relationship between scale scores and scores on the construct be invariant or equivalent across populations.

<u>Outline of Work</u>

The literature review consists of an overview of social exchange theory and reciprocity as it pertains to the organizational setting, and relevant literature on perceived organizational support. A brief statement on the development and construct validation of the perceived organizational support survey is provided. The discussion highlights several potential limitations in the evaluation of the underlying factor structure. Despite those limitations, the POS survey is frequently used in a variety of abbreviated forms. Based on those applications of the shortened POS survey, results from several studies have suggested different antecedents and consequences of perceived support. Therefore, a discussion will be included to address the relationships identified between the POS and other constructs in the organizational literature.

The methodology chapter will follow the literature review, and will provide the framework for presenting the results and discussion chapters.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>Introduction</u>

The following sections highlight the theoretical framework upon which the

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) survey was developed. Social exchange theory

provides a theoretical framework for measuring perceived organizational support by

suggesting that relationships are characterized by reciprocity such that when something

of value is received individuals feel obligated to repay the provider. Therefore, a review

of social exchange theory and reciprocity will be reviewed first. Second, an overview of

POS will include a description of the two facets of POS, along with the factor structure

and known psychometric properties of the POS survey. This section will include a

discussion of construct validation studies using the POS and the uses of the survey in

organizational literature and theory development. Also included in this section is a

presentation of the antecedents and consequences of POS that have been reported in the

current organizational support literature as a way to operationalize the POS construct.

The final section summarizes the development and use of POS survey in organizational

literature and highlights the need and purpose for the current study.

<u>Social Exchange Theory</u>

Individuals who join an organization possess certain needs, desires, and skills along with work-related attitudes and behaviors. One of the most commonly used frameworks for understanding individual attitudes and behaviors is social exchange theory. Social exchange theory, developed to explain the initiation, strengthening, and continued maintenance of interpersonal relationships, provides a possible conceptual basis for understanding relationships between individuals and their work organization. The theory highlights the importance of understanding employees' motivation and its relation to the achievement of organizational goals. Moreover, the theory suggests that rational self-interest drives people's social interactions. Such approaches to organizational behavior incorporate employees' motives to carry out specific activities within the mutual obligations between employees and employers. Thus, the theory has been extended to people's relationships with organizations such that employee-employer relationships may be viewed as the trade of employee effort and loyalty for socioemotional benefits (e.g., esteem and approval) and tangible resources (e.g., pay and benefits; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Levinson, 1965; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

In support of this idea, Eisenberger et al. (1986) described exchange ideology as a continuum. At one end of the continuum, individuals will perform in ways consistent with organizational reinforcements such that when perceived treatment by the organization is favorable, employees respond with high performance; if perceived treatment is unfavorable, performance is low. At the other end of the continuum, individuals will perform without regard to what they receive from the organization.

Individuals at this end of the continuum will put forth effort even if they perceive themselves as being treated poorly. Thus, exchange ideology within an organizational context reflects the individual's expectation for the person-organization exchange.

In suggesting that increases in employee work effort and positive job attitudes are contingent upon an exchange ideology favoring the trade of work effort for compensation and benefits from the employer, Eisenberger et. al (1986) found that the relationship between perceived organizational support and absenteeism was greater for a sample of American teachers with a "strong" exchange ideology than those with a "weak" ideology. Among individuals whose ideology was to perform in ways consistent with organizational reinforcement (strong exchange ideology), perceptions of organizational support may have been more salient in the decision to be absent from work than for those whose ideology was to perform independent of reinforcement (weak exchange ideology). Witt (1991) found a similar result for the association between perceived organizational support and manufacturing employees' performance in roles outside of their expected job duties (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors).

The notion of a balanced exchange in the employee-employer relationship is consistent with the general notion of reciprocity.

Reciprocity. Central to social exchange theory is the norm of reciprocity, which obligates people to respond positively to favorable treatment received from others (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). The norm of reciprocity requires employees to respond positively to favorable treatment from the employer. Consistent with this view, Rousseau (1990) found that many employees believed that they and their work organization had reciprocal

obligations that exceeded formal responsibilities by both parties. Rousseau characterized this *psychological contract* as an implicit understanding by employees that they and their employer will consider each other's needs and desires when taking actions that affect the other. Social exchange theory, therefore, provides a theoretical framework suggesting that relationships are characterized by reciprocity such that those who receive something of value feel obligated to repay the provider.

Within the general framework of social exchange theory, the mechanism of reciprocation offers an explanation for why positive experiences within the organization lead to commitment. This reaction is activated as part of the psychological contract that the individual forms with the organization (Rousseau, 1990). The extent to which the individual has positive experiences with an organization creates a willingness of the individual to reciprocate with commitment.

According to organizational commitment literature, employees are loyal (e.g., commit) to an organization to the extent that their needs are being met and to the extent that the employee experiences the employee-employer relationship as rewarding (Meyer & Allen, 1988; Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998; Mowaday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). In addition to commitment, exchange processes have been used to explain the effect of organizational characteristics such as fairness, supervisor support, and rewards on individuals (Aselage & Eisenerger, 2003; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Furthermore, Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that employees' perceptions of the organization's commitment to them, referred to as POS, are based on employees' global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Using a social exchange framework,

Eisenberger and his colleagues argued that employees who perceive a high level of organizational support are more likely to feel an obligation to "repay" the organization in terms of affective commitment (Eisenberger, et al., 1986), and work-related behavior (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1986). However, Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) suggest that it is not often clear when or in what form the beneficial action will be reciprocated.

Perceived Organizational Support

Organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) supposes that to meet socioemotional needs and to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased work effort, employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Perceived Organizational Support - POS). Consistent with the view that employees form a general belief regarding the organization's commitment to them, employees across organizational levels have shown a consistent pattern of agreement with various statements concerning the extent to which the organization appreciated their contributions and would treat them favorable or unfavorably in different circumstances (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993). Employees evidently believe that the organization has a general positive or negative orientation toward them that encompasses both recognition of their contributions and concern for their welfare.

Based on the reciprocity norm, such perceived organizational support (POS) would elicit employees' felt obligation to care about the organization's welfare and to help the organization reach its objectives. Employees could satisfy this indebtedness through greater affective commitment to the organization and greater efforts to help the organization. In addition to creating felt obligation, commitment, and enhancing positive mood, the fulfillment of esteem and affiliation needs via POS may increase employees' incorporation of organizational membership and role status into their social identity (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998).

Social identification has been considered an important part of organizational identification (Rousseau, 1998) and affective commitment (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1986) or a closely related construct (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mael & Tetrick, 1992). To the extent that organizational identity is a collective identity or at least influenced by others with whom one works, it is plausible that the agent representing the conceptualization of 'organization' may vary across levels of the organization. However, POS is individual level construct that is often aggregated and reported at the group level.

Just as employees form global perceptions concerning their valuation by the organization, they develop general views concerning the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being (perceived supervisor support, or PSS; Kottke & Sharafinske, 1988). Because supervisors act as agents of the organization, who have responsibility for directing and evaluating subordinates' performance, the employee's receipt of favorable treatment from a supervisor should contribute to POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Levinson, 1965). The strength of this relationship depends on the degree to which employees identify the supervisor with the organization, as opposed

to viewing the supervisor's actions as idiosyncratic (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharki, & Rhoades, 2002). Furthermore, employees understand that supervisor's evaluations of subordinates are often conveyed to upper management and influence upper management's views, further contributing to employees' association of supervisor support with POS.

Being viewed favorably by a supervisor who plays an important role in the organization may enhance fulfillment of socioemotional needs and increase expectations of future favorable treatment from the organization. Support from a supervisor who is perceived to strongly embody the organizational ethos is more likely to be taken as organizational support than is support from a supervisor whom, the employee believes, less well represents the organization. Likewise, employees who believe that their supervisor values their contributions may be motivated to view the supervisor as having an important organizational role. However, Eisenberger et al. (2002) noted that the relationship between perceived supervisor support and perceived supervisor status was moderate, indicating that some employees were reporting high supervisor support even when supervisors were not perceived to have high status. Perceived supervisor status, whatever its sources, enhanced the relationship between perceived supervisor support and POS. To the extent that small organizations have fewer levels of hierarchy than large organizations, employees in small organizations might generally identify their supervisors more with the organization's basic character than those in large organizations, resulting in stronger PSS-POS relationships.

Two Facets of Perceived Organizational Support. Perceived organizational support is encouraged by employees' tendency to assign the organization humanlike

characteristics (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Perceived organizational support reflects the general belief held by an employee that the organization is committed to them, values their continued membership, and is generally concerned about their well being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001) based on the employees' personification of the organization. This operationalization of POS denotes that there are two theoretically distinct components of POS.

First, organizational support is a global belief that the organization recognizes and values the employees' contribution as reflected in tangible resources such as pay, rank, job enrichment, rewards, or other forms of compensation and benefits (Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Levinson, 1965; Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). From the social exchange-reciprocity perspective, this notion of organizational support suggests that perceived support would raise an employee's expectancy that the organization would reward greater effort toward meeting organizational goals. To the extent that the perceived support also met needs for praise and approval, the employee would incorporate organizational membership into self-identity and subsequently develop a positive affective attachment to the organization.

The second component of organizational support is the perception that the organization is concerned and cares for the socioemotional well-being of employees. This aspect of organizational support includes, for example, the employee's perception of the organization's likely expected reaction to future illnesses. Measurement items that reflect this component of the POS construct tap into employees' beliefs and perceptions with regards to organizational policies and practices pertaining to time away from work for

personal circumstances, or family care. Similarly, POS is valued as an agreement that

assistance will be available from the organization when needed by employees to

effectively perform work tasks and deal with stressful situations (George, Reed, Ballard,

Colin, & Fielding, 1993).

       <u>Factor Structure of the POS Survey (Eisenberger, et al., 1986).</u> In the scale

development study of POS conducted by Eisenberger et al. (1986), a Principal

Components Analysis (PCA) of individual responses to the original 36 items combined

across nine organizations (n=361) indicated a single factor for POS accounting for 48.3%

of the total variance, with an interitem reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.97. Results

from subsequent studies using shorter versions of the POS survey have also provided

support for the unidimensionality of the POS survey as a measure of perceived

organizational support (Eisenberger, et al., 1997; Hutchison, 1997; Kottke & Sharafinski,

1988; Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The POS survey is empirically distinct, as well as

conceptually distinct from affective and continuance commitment (Eisenberger, Faslo, &

Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001;

Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993).

Moreover, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses using shorter versions of POS

indicate that POS can be empirically distinguished from effort-reward expectancies

(Eisenberger et al., 1990), perceived supervisory support (Hutchison, 1997; Kottke &

Sharafinski, 1988), perceived team support (Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000), work-

group support (Self, Holt, & Schaninger, 2005), and leader-member exchange (Settoon et

al., 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

There are a number of shortcomings in the studies that have examined the psychometric properties, specifically factor structure, of the POS. Probably the most crucial is that only one study has used all 36 items. Eisenberger et al. (1986) subjected the items to a PCA to determine the number and strength of the 'factors' or components that were present. Eisenberger used the resulting 43% of total variance explained as evidence to support his conclusion that the POS construct is unidimensional. Eisenberger noted that there was a possible second factor accounting for 4.4% of the total variance, but no details were provided in the study to indicate that the possibility of a second factor was further examined. Detailed below are the implications associated with the rotation method and the conclusion for unidimensionality.

Eisenberger's conclusion that the POS construct is unidimensional raises two questions. First, and perhaps the more obvious question is, what accounts for the other 52% of the total variance? It is not surprising that the variance accounted for by the first component was relatively large (relative to the subsequent components). PCA is a factor extraction method used to form uncorrelated linear combinations of the observed variables (i.e., items). The first component has maximum variance. Successive components explain progressively smaller portions of the variance and are all uncorrelated with each other. The interpretation of Eisenberger's conclusion for dimensionality is further complicated because the criterion used to determine the number of components to retain was not reported. Conventional practices for determining the number of components to retain generally include reporting the use of eigenvalues greater than 1.0, and scree plot analysis. Because these details were not provided it is difficult to determine the potential or plausibility for exploring a possible second component.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) did subject the items to a second factor analysis with varimax rotation, using Kaiser normalization with a two-factor solution, and reported that all 36 items loaded higher on the first single factor than on the possible second factor. Moreover, the smallest loading on this single factor was larger than the largest loading on the possible second factor.

The second question that arises has to do with the theory behind how POS was developed. Eisenberger et al. (1986) developed the theoretical framework for the POS construct by suggesting that there were two component of employee beliefs about organizational support. One aspect of perceived support focuses on the pay and benefits or compensation that the employee anticipates based on their performance and productivity. The second component has to do with employee beliefs about the extent to which the organization is concerned with the employees' well-being and socioemotional needs. Eisenberger's conclusion of unidimensionality appears biased against his intent to develop POS as a construct with two theoretically distinct components.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) included a second study using only 17 of the original 36 POS items along with items from another measurement scale. The reduced number of POS items was subjected to factor analysis separate from the other measure used in the study. Again, the criterion used to determine the number of factors was not reported. The dominant factor for the POS items accounted for 50% of the total variance. When the POS items were combined with items from the other measure in the study a two-factor solution was obtained. Although an oblique rotation method was used to interpret the factors, the criteria for determining the number of factors to retain was not mentioned.

The low correlation between the two factors was reported (-0.10). Thus, each set of items loaded on separate factors with negligible loadings on the unexpected factor.

Almost two decades after the development of the perceived organizational support survey, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002, 699) recommend that researchers who use a reduced number of POS items be sure that "both facets of the definition of POS (valuation of employees' contribution and care about employees' well-being) be represented in short versions of the questionnaire." Although Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) have not given up on his two-facet theory, as evidenced by the published statement, his commitment to unidimensional structure based on only 48.3% of the total variance explained is perplexing.

<u>Construct Validation and Use of the POS Survey.</u> Several studies subsequent to Eisenberger et al. (1986) have examined the dimensionality and construct validity of the POS survey. Some of the studies have followed the approach by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and used PCA to determine the number and strength of the components (Armeli, et al., 1998; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1998; Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Only one of the studies that subjected items to a PCA reported the rotation method. Wayne et al. (1997) reported using an oblique rotation method to evaluate the factor structure of 9 out of the 36 original POS items. In that study an affective commitment item loaded on the POS component and was deleted. The remaining items were submitted to another PCA and six components emerged to account for 66.7% of the total variance and reflect the six constructs used in the study. All of the eigenvalues for the six components in Wayne et al. (1997) were greater than 1.0, and all

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of the loadings were greater than 4.0. A summary table of the studies that conducted a

PCA on the POS items is presented in Appendix A.

Several studies have used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with maximum

likelihood estimation to compare nested covariance models for the total variance

explained and overall model fit (Eisenberger, et al., 1997; Eisenberger, Armeli,

Rexwinkel, Lynch, Rhoades, 2001; Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli,

2001; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Shore & Tetrick, 1990). All of the studies that

performed a CFA to confirm the underlying structure of the POS survey used a reduced

number of the POS items, presumably based on the acceptance that the original set of 36

POS items formed a unidimensional scale. Out of all the studies that performed a CFA,

Shore and Tetrick (1990) was the only study that included the 17 items that Eisenberger

et al. (1986) recommended for use as a short version of the POS measure. That

recommendation was simply that the items with the highest loadings be used. All of the

studies other than Shore and Tetrick (1990) used fewer than 17 of the original POS items.

Although the majority of the studies did not indicate exactly which of the original items

were used to develop the various shorter forms (ranging from 3 items in one study to the

17 used by Shore and Tetrick), the presumption is that items with the highest loadings

were selected from Eisenberger et al. (1986). Results from each of the studies

consistently indicate a unidimensional POS construct. The limitation is that none of the

studies used all of the POS items, and the items that were used were selected from the

result of the original PCA that fit a two theoretically distinct components of the construct

on a single component that accounted for only 44.3% of the total variance. Perhaps the

only consolation is that if the items that were included in the studies that used PCA were

not from a unidimensional construct, it would not have been likely to achieve adequate model fit. A summary of the studies that conducted a CFA on the POS items is provided in Appendix A.

In two decades since the development of the POS survey, Self, Holt, and Schanginger (2005) is the only study to report the use of Principal Axis Factor (PAF) analysis using oblique rotation to evaluate the factor structure of the POS items. Self et al. (2005) included 16 of the original 36 POS items in their study In addition to the POS items, Self et al. (2005) developed 'work-group support' items by substituting the word "organization" with "work-group" in each item. After subjecting the combined group of items from both measures to the PAF analysis using oblique rotation, they retained factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, which was consistent with their interpretation of the observed scree plot. Moreover, none of the cross-loadings were greater than 0.25 on the unintended factor. Self et al. (2005) also conducted a follow up CFA to evaluate the underlying structure of the two 16-item measures using simultaneous estimation procedures for the variance-covariance matrixes. Specifically, they compared the overall fit of a single-factor versus two-factor latent model to the responses (i.e., data) generated from the 32 items. Several reported fit indexes met the conventional criterion for adequate model fit (RMSEA=.07; CFI=.93, GFI=.92; RMSR=.05) for the two-factor model. Furthermore, a nonsignificant chi-square difference test indicated that the fit of the model to data was significantly improved with the two-factor model.

Antecedents and Consequences of POS. The POS survey has been used to better understand the organizational commitment process within the framework of exchange theory (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). Thus far, research has primarily targeted organizational

behavior outcomes such as commitment, global job satisfaction, and performance (Eisenberger, et al., 1997; Lynch, Eisenberger & Armeli, 1999; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Results from a meta-analysis on POS also suggests three major work experience antecedents of POS; namely, organizational rewards and favorable working conditions, supervisory support, and procedural justice (i.e., fairness) (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Aslage and Eisenberger (2003) also provide a comprehensive review of the work experience antecedents and consequences of perceived organizational support.

Regarding the development of POS, research has shown that several types of antecedents are related to POS, including (1) perceptions of procedural or distributive justice, and organizational politics (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997; Moorman, Blakely & Niehoff, 1998), (2) job conditions such as autonomy and pay (Eisenberger, Rhoades & Cameron, 1999), (3) supervisor support (Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996, 1996; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997), and (4) human resource (HR) practices such as fairness of rewards, decision-making and growth opportunities (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997).

<u>Summary</u>

The development of the perceived organizational support survey began as an attempt to better understand organizational commitment processes and various aspects of commitment such as absenteeism and turnover. Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggested that organizational support is communicated to employees by employers in the form of pay, benefits, and general concern for employee well being. Eisenberger et al. (1986)

proposed that POS is an antecedent of organizational commitment. Based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, they developed a survey of perceived organizational support as a way to measure and test the notion that employees form global beliefs about the organizations commitment to employees, and the extent to which perceived organizational support reduces absenteeism.

Although results from the initial principal components analysis indicated that the 36-item measure is reflective of a unidimensional POS construct, there were several shortcomings in the original study that might have contributed to a limited conceptualization of organizational support and misguided use of the POS survey. Several subsequent studies have examined the factor structure of the POS items. However, not one study has attempted to examine the underlying factor structure of the complete POS survey (including all 36 original items) using principal axis factor analysis with oblique rotation. This approach would allow the linear combinations of items and resulting factors to be correlated, thus providing a greater likelihood that the two theoretically distinct components of POS hypothesized by Eisenberger et al. (1986) would be revealed. The implication of identifying a two-factor solution for the POS construct does not necessarily undermine previous research using the shorter version of the survey, but creates an opportunity to reexamine multiple exchange relationships with a multi-dimensional construct.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The topics presented in this chapter include a description of the participants, the instruments and their psychometric properties, an outline of the procedures, and the data analytic strategy used in this study. The data used for the analysis in this study were obtained as de-identified data that were collected as part of a larger organizational study. Therefore, although sample characteristics are presented, the primary investigator of the current study does not have access to any information that would allow the identification of the individual participants to be known.

Participants

The participants in this study were full-time employees from a large, metropolitan, community college located in the Midwestern United States. A complete list of prospective participants (i.e., all full-time college employees) was obtained from the human resources office. Position, denoting an individual's hierarchical level within the institution, age, and tenure were available as grouping variables. The full-time employee population consisted of 868 individuals, and was therefore large enough to provide variability in age, tenure, and position in the institution. Prospective participants

were predominately white (82%), whose average age was 46, and average length of employment was 12 years. Approximately 58% (n=503) of prospective participants were nonacademic staff, while 32% (n=278) were full-time faculty members, and 10% (n=87) were administrators (executive, administrative, or managerial as defined by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System - IPEDS). Approximately 13% were classified staff (technical and paraprofessional employees – IPEDS), and the remainder were professional staff, faculty, or administrative employees.

A simple random sample of all full-time employees was used to generate a sample of 450 full-time employees. The sample included faculty, staff, and administrators who were invited to participate during the fall of 2005. Two follow-up email messages were sent to encourage completion of the survey by nonrespondents. A total of 283 surveys were returned, but 17 records were identified as having substantial portions of the data missing. Therefore, a total of 266 completed surveys were returned resulting in a response rate of 59.1%.

The average age of the respondents was 48 years old. The average length of employment was 12 years. The employment positions represented within the respondent sample was similar to the total employee population with 43% nonacademic staff, 36% full-time faculty members, 12% were administrators, and 9% did not report their position.

Design

To assess the structure of the POS measure, Eisenberger, Huntington, Huchison, and Sowa (1986) performed a principal components analysis with the individual item responses as variables. Although the use of principal components is debatable, there is

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some evidence that a second POS factor might exist (Eisenberger et al., 1986). That is, although Eisenberger et al. (1986) ultimately interpreted the POS scale as unidimensional, Eisenberger et al. reported that the first component accounted for 48.4% of the total variance, and noted the possibility of a second factor.

The current study design includes subjecting all 36 of the individual POS item responses to a principal axis factor analysis followed by oblique rotation. This approach allows for an improvement in the interpretation of the factor structure, thus addressing the first research question in this study. To use orthogonal rotation as in the original study by Eisenberger et al. (1986) assumes that components or factors are uncorrelated. Many researchers would prefer either to test this assumption or allow some minor correlations among factors. Because the conceptual development of POS considers two facets, a reasonable analytic strategy would allow for some correlation. Therefore, an oblique rotation method will be used for interpreting the structure underlying the POS survey.

The study design also includes an evaluation of the internal consistency reliability for four versions of the POS measure. The original version of the measure included 36-items, most of which are rarely used in practice. Most published studies that have included a measure of POS have used a shortened form that includes only about one-half of the original items. An even shorter version includes only eight items, and at least one study has reported a 3-item measure of POS. Reliability analyses will be conducted for each of these versions of POS.

Finally, to explore the substantive meaning or validity of the four versions of POS, the factor scores or total scores will be regressed on other measures that are

frequently used in the organizational literature; namely, affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation.

Measures

In addition to the measure of perceived organizational support, the analysis will also include three known correlates of POS as a means to assess the validity of each of the different POS versions (36-items, 16-items, 8-items, and 3-items). The known correlates are variables commonly used in organizational research studies that also include a measure of POS. All of the items for all of the measures used in this study are presented in Appendix B.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) was measured using the 36 items included in the original POS survey (Eisenberger et al., 1986). A reliability and item analysis of the scores obtained in the original study indicated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.97, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.42 to 0.83. The mean and median item-total correlations were 0.67 and 0.66, respectively. In the original study by Eisenberger et al. (1986) used principal components analysis and reported that every one of the 36 items showed a strong loading on a single component accounting for 48.3% of the total variance, and a possible second component accounting for 4.4% of the total variance.

In addition to the original 36-item instrument, a 16-item version of the POS survey was also introduced in Eisenberger et al. (1986) by selecting high loading items from the 36-item set. Later, an 8-item version of the scale was also introduced by

selecting high loading items from the original survey of perceived organizational support. The 8-item scale follows the recommendation of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002, p. 699) that "Because the original scale is unidimensional and has high internal reliability, the use of shorter versions does not appear problematic." Although Eisenberger et al. (1986) does not refer to an 8-item version of the instrument, information about assessing perceived organizational support available on Eisenberger's web site requests that the 1986 article be referenced if the 8-item version is used (retrieved online February 18, 2006 at: http://www.psych.udel.edu/~eisenberger/perceived_organizational_support.html).

A 3-item version of the POS measure has also been adapted from the original 36-items (Eisenberger, et al., 2002). The internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha) for the 3-item measure was reported as $\alpha = 0.75$ (Eisenberger, et al., 2002).

Affective Commitment refers to the emotional link between the individual and organization. Affective commitment was measured using the 8-item scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). The reliability (coefficient alpha) for the affective commitment scores reported in Allen and Meyer (1990) was 0.87. Sample items for the affective commitment measure include statements such as, "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization," and "I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it."

Responses to each of the measures was obtained by using a Likert-type response format with response options ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree."

Organizational Participation is a measure that refers to the level of desired and perceived levels of participation in decision making. Employees are asked how often

their supervisor *asks* for their involvement and how often the employee *wants* to be asked by the supervisor for their involvement. This particular measure of organizational participation includes 27-items developed by Kahnweiler and Thompson (2000). The internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha) for responses to the 27-item measure in the current study was $\alpha = 0.90$.

Organizational Communication was measured using a six-item scale that examines the degree to which communication flows freely between coworkers, and between supervisors and subordinates (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1983, p.101). High scores indicate a favorable perception of open communication.

Procedure

Data for the current study were obtained as a de-identified data file. Data were collected by another researcher as part of a separate study. The other researcher administered an online survey to a sample of full-time employees during their regular workday at the college. Prior to the survey, prospective participants were contacted through the college e-mail system to explain the rationale for the study and to invite participation. A link to the survey instrument was included as part of the content of the e-mail message. The e-mail message also included a statement assuring participants that they did not have to participate and that the individual responses of all participants would be kept confidential. Responses were collected electronically from participants using ZIPsurvey Software.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter includes a presentation of several of the psychometric properties of

the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS). Subjecting the individual POS

item responses to a principal axis factor analysis and determining the number of factors to

retain addressed the first research question concerning the underlying structure of the 36-

item version of the SPOS. Following the analysis of the factor structure of the original

36-item SPOS, the second research question was addressed by making comparisons

between the original version and the shorter versions of the instrument in terms of

internal consistency reliability across the four versions (i.e, 36, 16, 8 and 3-items).

Finally, to evaluate the validity of the total scores for the different versions of SPOS, the

total scores from each of the three versions were regressed on other variables that are

commonly included in studies that also use the SPOS: affective commitment,

organizational participation, and organizational communication.

Factor Analysis

The individual POS item responses were subjected to a principal axis factor

(PAF) analysis followed by oblique rotation (direct oblimin, delta=0). Considerations that

precede the PAF include factorability and establishing criteria for determining the

number of factors to retain. One assumption in conducting a principal axis factor analysis is that meaningful and significant correlations exist among the items of interest. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provides a chi-square test of the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. From the set of items. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicates that the PAF analysis may be appropriate given the level of relationship among the POS items [X^2 (630)= 5694.003, p=.000]. Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.952. KMO is a ratio of the sum of squared correlations to the sum of squared correlations plus the sum of squared partial correlations. If the partial correlations are small, the KMO approaches 1.0. A KMO value of 0.60 and higher is generally considered as an acceptable indicator for factorability, thus, supporting the factor analysis of these items. A KMO value of 0.952 is very high as one expects when factoring items with high average inter-item correlations.

Several criteria were used for determining the number of factors to retain; namely, Kaiser's rule of retaining factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, examination of the Cattell scree plot test, Horn's parallel analysis methodology for selecting the correct number of factors to retain, examination of factor correlations, and a theoretical analysis of the individual items. Initially, six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted by performing the PAF analysis on the correlations of the 36 items. The eigenvalues and variance accounted for by the initial factors is summarized in Table 1. The first factor extracted accounted for 44.14% of the variance, whereas the second factor accounted for only 5.05% of the variance. This evidence supports a decision to retain a single factor. Furthermore, visual inspection of the scree plot presented in Figure 1 also suggested that one factor best represented the structure of the SPOS.

Table 1. Variance Associated with the Initial Factors (N=253)

Measure	Factor	Eigenvalues	% Variance	Cumulative %
SPOS	1	15.89	44.14	44.14
	2	1.82	5.05	49.19
	3	1.45	4.03	53.22
	4	1.31	3.63	56.85
	5	1.07	2.97	59.82
	6	1.01	2.81	62.63

Figure 1. Scree Plot of Eigenvalues
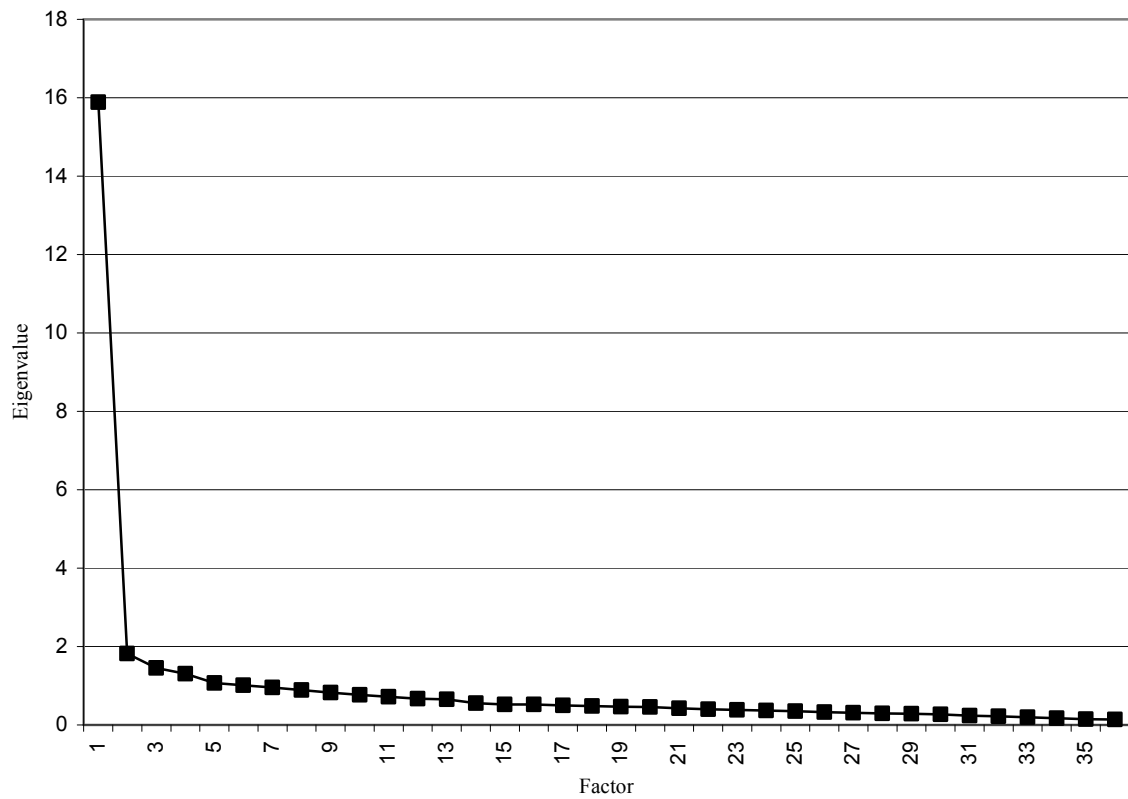
Figure 2. Parallel analysis comparing random data eigenvalues with raw data
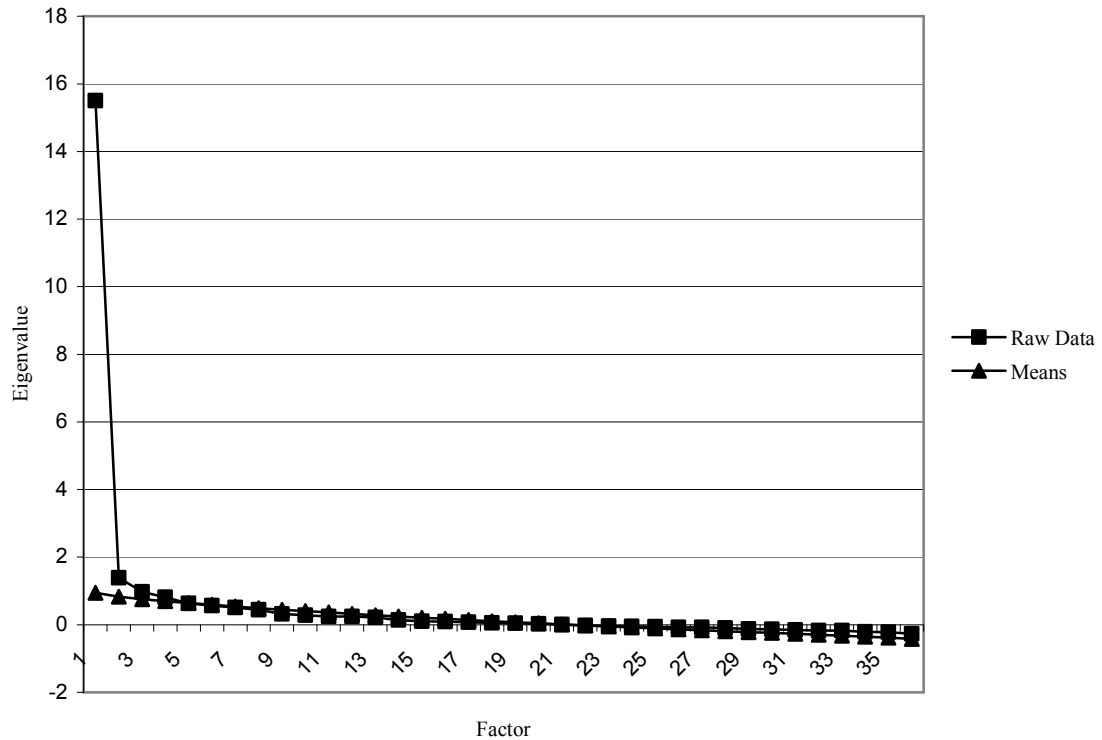
A parallel analysis of the raw data was conducted using a program named "rawpar" that is available online at no cost (retrieved online February 16, 2006 at: http://flash.lakeheadu.ca/~boconno2/nfactors.html). The "rawpar" program conducts parallel analyses after first reading the raw data matrix where the rows of the data matrix are individual cases and the columns are variables. The parallel analysis used here is based on permutations of the original raw data set. Figure 2 presents the results generated from the parallel analysis comparing random data eigenvalues with the raw data.

The fact that the plot of random means if Figure 2 does not intersect the raw data eigenvalues above the second factor might suggest retaining more than a single factor. However, there are several pieces of relevant information to consider before making that decision. Results from the parallel analysis should be considered in conjunction with the

other criterion measures already presented (e.g., eigenvalues greater than one, and scree plot). In addition, the factor correlation matrix presented in Table 2 indicates a strong correlation between the first two factors. This suggests redundancy among the two factors and further supports the decision to retain a single factor solution.

The examination of the initial eigenvalues, scree plot, and parallel analysis suggested a single-factor solution and thus supports the original claim by Eisenberger, Huntington, Huchison, & Sowa (1986) that the SPOS is unidimensional. Furthermore, a review of factor correlations presented in Table 2, and subsequent examination of the items in factors two through six revealed consistency across item content. Items that loaded higher on the second factor refer to the employee's perception of being replaced if they leave the organization. Those items also had high loadings on the general factor as indicated by the moderate correlation between the first and second factors ($r = .51$).

Table 2. Factor Correlation Matrix.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1.0					
2	.51	1.0				
3	.41	.37	1.0			
4	.56	.54	.35	1.0		
5	.27	.05	.15	.16	1.0	
6	.57	.41	.19	.41	.16	1.0

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 3 presents the communalities (h^2) for the thirty-six POS items, and the structure coefficients for the single-factor solution. The communalities ranged from 0.12 to 0.72, with an average of 0.43. There were 29 communalities greater than 0.30, and 10 communalities with a value greater than 0.50. There were two items (30 and 36) with low factor loadings. Overall, these results reflect the singular dimensionality of the instrument.

Reliability Analysis

Following the principal axis factor analysis and determining that the survey of perceived organizational support appears to be unidimensional, a reliability analysis was conducted to examine the internal-consistency reliability of the 36-item SPOS. The overall reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the 36 items was α=0.96, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.33 to 0.83. The mean and median item-total correlations were 0.63 and 0.65, respectively. A reliability and item analysis of the scores obtained in the original study with the 36-item SPOS reported the internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) at 0.97, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.42 to 0.83. The mean and median item-total correlations in the original study were 0.67 and 0.66, respectively.

In addition to examining the internal consistency of the 36-item SPOS, reliability analyses were conducted for each of the three shorter versions of the SPOS; namely, the 16-item version, the 8-item version and a 3-item version. The overall reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the 16 items was α=0.95, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.50 to 0.86. The mean and median item-total correlations were 0.71 and 0.70, respectively. The overall reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the 8-item

Table 3. Communalities (h^2) and structure coefficients for the thirty-six POS items

POS Item	Factor 1	h^2
1	0.70	0.49
*2	0.58	0.34
*3	0.71	0.51
4	0.68	0.46
5	0.51	0.26
*6	0.72	0.51
*7	0.71	0.50
8	0.67	0.44
9	0.75	0.56
10	0.72	0.52
*11	0.65	0.42
*12	0.59	0.35
13	0.53	0.28
*14	0.56	0.31
*15	0.67	0.45
*16	0.55	0.31
*17	0.82	0.66
18	0.63	0.39
*19	0.53	0.28

Continue
Table 3. Communalities (h^2) and Structure Coefficients for the thirty-six POS items

POS Item	Factor 1	h^2
20	0.65	0.42
21	0.85	0.72
*22	0.66	0.43
*23	0.85	0.72
24	0.64	0.41
25	0.78	0.61
*26	0.50	0.25
27	0.76	0.58
*28	0.68	0.46
29	0.46	0.21
30	0.38	0.14
*31	0.66	0.44
*32	0.70	0.49
33	0.65	0.42
*34	0.68	0.47
35	0.67	0.45
36	0.34	0.12
Initial Eigenvalue	15.89	
Sum of Squared Loading	15.36	
Percent of Variance	44.12	

* Indicates items that are reverse-coded.

version was α=0.93, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.70 to 0.84. The mean

and median item-total correlations were 0.75 and 0.73, respectively. Finally, The overall

reliability coefficient for the 3-item version of POS was α=0.81, with item-total

correlations ranging from 0.64 to 0.67. The mean and median item-total correlations were

0.66 and 0.67, respectively. Results from the reliability analyses of each version of the

POS instrument suggest that the internal consistency reliabilities are all within the

generally acceptable range.

Correlation Between POS Factor Score and Total Scores

There was a strong positive correlation between the POS factor score and the total

scores for each set of the POS items. The correlation matrix of the factor score and total

scores for POS are presented in Table 4. Given these strong positive correlations between

factor score and total scores for POS the decision was made to use the POS total scores in

the analyses comparing versions of POS with the known correlates (i.e., affective

commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation). Also, as

expected, the correlations between the four versions of POS presented in Table 4 were

also strong and in a positive direction.

Multiple Regression

The relationships between the four forms of the survey of POS and the selected

organizational variables were examined by conducting a multiple regression analysis for

each of the three versions of POS. The total score for each version of POS was regressed

separately on affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational

participation to explore the substantive meaning or validity of the three versions of the

Table 4. Correlations between the POS factor score and POS total scores. (N=266).

		1	2	3	4
1.	POS Factor Score	1.0			
2.	POS 36-items	.90	1.0		
3.	POS 16-items	.96	.97	1.0	
4.	POS 8-items	.97	.94	.98	1.0
5.	POS 3-items	.86	.85	.88	.88

All correlations are significant at $p<.001$.

POS survey. Descriptive statistics including total score means and standard deviations, and correlations between the four versions of POS and the three known correlates are presented in Table 5.

The first regression equation was obtained by regressing the 36-item POS total scores on affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation with simultaneous entry. The regression equation with all the variables entered was significant [$F(3,255)= 77.54, p<.001$) accounting for approximately 47.7% of the variance in POS.

The 16-item POS total scores were also regressed on affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation in a separate regression equation with simultaneous entry. This regression equation with all the variables entered was also significant [$F(3,255)= 81.27, p<.001$) accounting for approximately 48.9% of the variance in POS.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Total Scores (N=266).

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. POS 36-items	4.50	1.01	1.0					
2. POS 16-items	4.47	1.16	.97	1.0				
3. POS 8-items	4.56	1.28	.94	.98	1.0			
4. POS 3-items	4.55	1.28	.85	.88	.88	1.0		
5. Affective Commitment	5.07	1.23	.60	.61	.60	.58	1.0	
6. Org. Communication	4.41	1.21	.60	.60	.59	54	.53	1.0
7. Org. Participation	4.69	.82	.32	.32	.33	.29	.33	.29

All correlations are significant at $p<.001$.

Likewise, total scores for the 8-item measure of POS were regressed on affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation. The regression equation with all the variables entered was significant [$F(3,255)= 74.69$, $p<.001$) accounting for approximately 46.8% of the variance in POS.

Finally, the 3-item POS total scores were regressed on affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation in a separate regression equation with simultaneous entry. This regression equation with all the variables entered was also significant [$F(3,255)= 61.79$, $p<.001$) accounting for approximately 42.1% of the variance in POS.

Summary

Results from the principal axis factor analysis indicate that the 36-item measure of POS is unidimensional. Reliability analysis of the three versions POS suggest that all three have equally high internal consistency reliability. Likewise, the correlations among the three versions are strong and in a positive direction, as one would expect.

Total scores from each of the three versions of POS were regressed on three different known correlates to examine the differential validity of the three versions of POS. Results from the three regression equations suggest that two of the three known correlates used in this study perform as well with the 8-item version of POS as they do with the 36-item version. The one exception was the measure of organizational participation, which was a significant predictor only for the 8-item version of POS.

These results suggest that the psychometric properties of the three versions of POS are similar in terms of factor structure and underlying dimensionality. Although these results are consistent with previous studies that have examined the construct validity of the POS measure, the current study is unique in that all 36-items were included in the examination of the underlying factor structure. Moreover, the current study utilized principal axis factoring with oblique rotation to evaluate the dimensionality of POS as a means to overcome the shortcomings in prior studies of the POS measure. Finally, the current study contributes to the organizational literature by examining the validity of the three versions of the POS measure as they relate with three organizational measures that are frequently used in studies that include the survey of perceived organizational support.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

<u>Introduction</u>

The development of the survey of perceived organizational support began as an attempt to better understand organizational commitment processes and various components of commitment such as absenteeism and turnover. Eisenberger, Huntington, Huchison, and Sowa (1986) suggested that organizational support is communicated to employees by employers in the form of pay, benefits, and general concern for employee well being. Based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, a survey of perceived organizational support was developed as a way to measure and test the notion that employees form global beliefs about how the organization values employee contributions, and cares for the well being of employees.

Consistent with the view that employees form a general belief regarding the organization's commitment to them, employees across organizational levels have shown a consistent pattern of agreement with various statements concerning the extent to which the organization appreciated their contributions and would treat them favorable or unfavorably in different circumstances (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Shore &

Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993). One of the shortcomings of these studies, however, is that they have all used a reduced number of items from the original survey of organizational support. The number of POS items used has ranged from as few as three items to as many as seventeen items. Moreover, the 36 original items have never appeared together in a single study aside from the original study in which the instrument was developed. The inconsistencies in how the measure of POS has been used in practice raises a number of questions in terms of the ability of the different versions of POS to reliably assess the two components of perceived organizational support that the instrument was designed to reflect.

The purpose of the current study was to explore the structure of the survey of perceived organizational support. To that end, this study was designed to address the following research questions:

1) What is the underlying structure of the 36-item survey of perceived organizational support?

2) Are there differences in the internal consistency reliability across multiple versions of the survey of perceived organizational support (e.g., 36-items, 16-items, 8-items, and 3-items)?

3) How do different versions of the survey of POS relate to other measures included in studies that also use the survey of POS (e.g., affective commitment, organizational communication, organizational participation)?

The prevailing assumption in the organizational literature that the original 36-item version is unidimensional is surprising given the large number of items in the original set combined with the lack of empirical evidence beyond the original study to support such a claim. Furthermore, the development of instrument included a theoretical rationale that the measure of POS consists of two components. In fact, a review of the individual POS items reveals an equal number of items addressing the perceived value that the organization places on employee contributions, and the extent to which the organization is perceived to care for the well being of employees. The expectation was, therefore, that these two aspects of POS would produce at least two factors.

A second research question addressed in this study focused on the internal consistency reliability of four versions of the POS measure. Despite the common practice of using shortened versions of the POS measure, the organizational literature is void of any systematic attempt to compare the various forms of the instrument. Therefore, a reliability analyses was conducted using the original 36-items, as well as the shortened versions that consist of 16, 8, and 3 items.

These four different versions of POS were also evaluated in terms of the relationship between each version and related organizational constructs; Namely, affective commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation. Each version of POS was regressed on this set of organizational constructs as a means to assess the validity of the measure in its alternate forms. Despite the ubiquitous practice of including a reduced number of POS items to represent the construct, there has been no discussion as to how the various forms of POS might influence the ability to observe relationships between POS and other similar organizational constructs.

Discussion of Results

Research Question 1: What is the structure of the 36-item survey of POS? The current study subjected the 36 original items to a principal axis factor analysis and retained a single-factor solution, thus affirming the original claim. While these were not the anticipated results, the evidence is undeniably clear. However, that these findings affirm an earlier claim that the 36-item measure of POS is unidimensional should not be interpreted as a statement of support for the theory upon which the instrument was developed. Specifically, the use of social exchange and reciprocity as a foundation for developing the notion that there are two theoretically distinct components can be neither affirmed nor denied based on the conclusion of unidimensionality.

Perhaps the two components are theoretically distinct, but are not observed as quantitatively distinct (i.e., they appear to be unidimensional) due to method variance inherent in self-reports of respondents' perceptions of external environmental variables (e.g., climate, organizational processes, organizational support). The problem of method variance arises in self-reports when measures of two or more variables are collected from the same respondents and the attempt is made to interpret any correlations among them.

In the current example, the attempt has been made to interpret the correlation among several items from the measure of POS that were designed to reflect two components. The two components are the perceived level of concern the organization has for employee well being and the extent to which the organization is perceived to value employee contributions. A visual inspection of the items that compose the 36-item, 16-item and 8-item versions of the POS measure indicated that each version had an equal number of items pertaining to the perceived level of organizational concern for employee

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well being and the extent to which the organization values employee contribution. The 3-item version contained two items with a focus on well being and one item related to employee contribution. The responses were, of course, self-reports of perceived support from the sample of employees in reference to their organizational context.

Although there may be a true theoretical distinction between the two components such that they are not related, the observed covariance among all of the items in the set may be an artifact due to the self-report method that results in the items loading on a single factor and thus appearing to form a unidimensional construct. In other words, there may be correlated measurement error variance that results in the overestimation or inflation of the correlation among the items. If true, this overestimation would result in a correlation among items that were intended to reflect theoretically distinct components. However, the overlap or correlations among the items themselves does not ensure that the two components are indistinct in a substantive sense. So, there may be a true theoretical distinction that has not been empirically observed due to common method variance.

Another consideration might be to re-evaluate the viability of social exchange and reciprocity as the theoretical framework for interpreting organizational identity and perceived organizational support altogether. In the context of complex organizational structures, the perspective that multiple exchange relationships are a driving factor for interpreting the dynamics among employee relations is a somewhat limited perspective. The notion that employees develop global beliefs about an organization and their relationship to it based on the exchange relations with other employees does not take into account the multitude of other possible contributing factors that might influence the extent to which an individual identifies with the organization. There are qualitative

differences in how individuals at different levels in the organization view their relationship with the larger organizational structure. The tacit assumption underlying the measure of POS is that all employees at all levels of the organization conceptualize the organization in a consistent way. A reasonable alternative view is that employees who hold higher rank or status within the organization have a vested interest in supporting the policies, procedures, and practices of the organization. Moreover, higher ranked employees, such as administrators or executives, may take challenges or criticism of those organizational actions as personal. A systems theory framework, for example, is one alternative to the social exchange perspective that might better explain the processes involved in the development of organizational identity and/or the ways that individuals develop a relationship, or not, with the organization.

Research Question 2: Are there differences in the internal consistency reliability across four versions of POS? Results suggest that although there were small differences between the four versions of POS evaluated in this study, these observed differences were most likely a function of the number of items. As expected, then, the weakest reliability coefficient was associated with the 3-item measure. However, the scores on the 3-item version of POS produced a reliability coefficient well within the generally accepted range ($\alpha = 0.81$). The difference between the reliability coefficient for the 3-item measure and the coefficient for the 36-item measure ($\alpha = 0.96$) will not likely raise many concerns for research practitioners interested in using a shortened version of the instrument. One question that follows, however, is whether or not there should be reason for concern among research practitioners.

Although the reliability coefficient for the 3-item measure was at a level that is generally acceptable in practice, the 0.15 difference in reliability might have substantive implications depending on the situational context in which the measure is used and the research questions that responses to the POS measure are intended to inform. If the purpose and intended use of the measure is predictive in nature, then perhaps this amount of difference in the reliability coefficients for responses among the four measures is of little or no concern. However, if the measure is used to inform policy decisions or major organizational restructuring, for example, then it is conceivable that a difference in internal consistency as high as 15% might warrant some concern. Likewise, if a measure of POS is used as part of a confirmatory analyses, and even a cursory look at the organizational literature indicates that POS is frequently included in confirmatory studies in one of its reduced forms, then the difference among these reliability coefficients could potentially have a dramatic influence on the interpretation of those findings.

Research Question #3: Are there differences in how the different versions of the survey of perceived organizational support relate to affective commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation? The validity of the four different versions of POS was evaluated by regressing each of the versions separately on three measures commonly used in organizational studies that also include a measure of POS. Surprisingly, the relationship between POS and the other organizational measures was no different for the 3-item measure than was the relationship between the same organizational measures and the 36-item version of POS. Likewise, the performance of the 16-item version and the 8-item version produced similar results. Again, the evidence

from this study suggests that practitioners interested in a shortened version of POS are equally justified in the use of any of these four versions of the instrument. However, it behooves practitioners using a shortened version of POS to at least consider some of the issues already raised regarding common method variance, differences in reliability coefficients and the general theoretical framework. All of these issues raise particular concerns in terms of meaning relative to the POS construct.

Implications

Perhaps the most obvious implication of these results for use of the POS measure is that research practitioners are affirmed in their use of 16-items, 8-items, or 3-items to obtain a measure of perceived organizational support. This study adds to the findings of several studies attesting to the unidimensionality of the POS measure (Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The present study does provide additional supporting evidence by including analyses of the different forms of the measure.

The present study also contributes to the existing literature by considering possible differences among the four versions in terms of internal consistency reliability. The evidence presented here indicates that there are some differences in the reliability coefficients. As discussed earlier, the situational context and intended use of the instrument should be taken into consideration as a part of the researcher's decision making process regarding to which version of the POS to use. In situations where a higher internal consistency reliability is desirable (e.g., plant closings, confirmatory studies) the longer versions of the instrument would be a more viable choice. If, however,

the intended use of the instrument is for predictive purposes the evidence presented here

suggests that the shorter version of the POS appears to be warranted.

These results provide no clear evidence to suggest that one version of the POS

measure is superior to another when used to determine the relationship between POS and

affective commitment, organizational communication and organizational participation.

When these organizational variables were considered together, the amount of variance

accounted for was comparable across the four versions of POS. Although it is certainly

possible that a different combination of items selected from the original set might

produce different results, the items that Robert Eisenberger recommends on his web site

as representing the 16-item and 8-item version of the instrument perform equally well.

Similarly, the three item version produced results equivalent to the three other versions of

POS.

Limitations

There are several limitations to consider in evaluating the generalizability of these

findings. This study included responses from only one organization representing a

homogeneous population. Furthermore, data were collected from full-time employees at a

community college. Although previous studies have used the POS measure in an

educational context only two studies have been conducted in a college or university

setting (Allen, 1992; Hutchison & Garstka, 1996). Although this study was primarily

concerned with several psychometric properties of the POS measure, the unique

population from which these data were obtained could have a limiting effect on the

responses produced. For example, the homogeneity of the sample limits the ability to

examine the potential for differences in the meaning of the construct across diverse segments of the population. It is possible the meaning of the construct changes or means something different for individuals at different stages of their career, or who have different professional career aspirations. The conceptualization of 'organizational support' as a global measure of the exchange relationship between employees and employer is also likely to vary across the organization as reflected in differing perspectives of equity in compensation, benefits, and general care and concern for employee well being. Likewise, the construct may have different meaning for individuals across the span of their career. If so, a theoretical framework that could accommodate interpretation at several times throughout one's career might need to be considered.

In addition to the organizational context, another limitation pertains to the geographical location within which the organization is situated. The community college from which these data were obtained is located in the southwest region of the United States; Specifically, northeastern Oklahoma. Although it is not likely that this characteristic of the population would have a noticeable influence on the results produced herein, it is possible that a more culturally diverse population would produce a different set of responses.

Although participants were randomly selected from the full-time employee population, the limitations inherent to survey research design still pose a threat to the ability to generalize beyond the current population. For example, although prospective participants received two follow-up messages as encouragement to complete the survey, the extent to which the responses received differ from nonrespondents remains unknown. Although there was no incentive to encourage responding, which might have increased

the response rate, it is arguable that providing an incentive for completed surveys might have encouraged inaccurate or unsystematic responses.

Finally, The current study examined only four of the most common abbreviated versions of POS. There are several published studies that use 17 items, or some other combination of 16 items (or less) than were assessed in the current study. Furthermore, the relationship between the four versions included in this study and organizational variables other than affective commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation remains unknown. Although there were no substantive differences among these four versions of POS in terms of the relationship with the other variables considered here, it remains unknown how these versions of POS might relate to a different set of organizational variables.

Opportunities for Future Research

As with any study, the results presented here advance several opportunities for further investigation. One consideration for future study is to advance the meaningfulness of the POS measures across organizations. In other words, do the POS items measure the same construct across different organizations, or does the meaning of the construct change? How the object (i.e, "organization") is conceptualized among employees in different organizational settings continues to generate much discussion (Rousseau, 1998; van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2005; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). One issue that has received little attention is who the *organization* is construed to be in the assessment of employee perceptions of *organizational* support. When employees are

asked to characterize their obligations with their employer they might ask, 'do you mean my boss, the people who hired me or the company as a whole?'

Perhaps the POS measure, in combination with other global measures of job satisfaction, could be used to develop a multidimensional construct of organizational identity. As mentioned earlier, the theoretical foundation upon which the measure of POS was developed provides only a limited interpretation of the development of organizational identity or the various ways that individual employees might develop a relationship with their organization. It is conceivable that a combination of measures of different components of job satisfaction (e.g., satisfaction with coworkers, pay, supervisor, etc.) in conjunction with POS would contribute to a broader interpretation and understanding of organizational identity.

In related studies on politics perceptions and work outcomes, for example, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewé, and Johnson (2003) suggest that information gathered by individuals to assess whether the organization is attending to their psychosocial needs likely originates from a source higher than their immediate work environment. A broadly focused, single-factor scale such as POS may engender certain biases such that global attitudes influence the employee's evaluation of their relationship with the organization and precludes the interpretation dynamics among employee relations with an organization. It could be that some dimensions of organizational identity, however that might be conceptualized, are more highly correlated with perceived organizational support than others. A multidimensional measure of organizational identity and/or organizational support might contribute to a broader understanding and interpretation of the employee-organization relationship.

A related area for further study is whether a multi-level structure might be meaningful in an organizational setting. Considering the multiple exchange relationships that are certain to exist in most organizational settings, a measure of perceived support that is equivalent across the levels of exchange might be informative. Kraimer and Wayne (2004) have developed a multidimensional measure of perceived organizational support (adjustment POS, career POS, and financial POS) within an integrated model for assessing stress factors and the success of expatriate employees. A similar measure might be developed for use with native employees.

Another area for future research might be how organizational characteristics such as the structure of the organization moderate the relationships between POS and common antecedents such as perceptions of justice, support from supervisors, and opportunities for rewards, training, and promotions. For example, is there a difference in how POS is conceptualized by employees or employers when the organizational structure is mechanistic (e.g., highly formalized, downward communication, little participation in decision-making) as opposed to a more organic structure (e.g., less formalized, decentralized decision-making)? A systematic evaluation of organizational characteristics including organization structure might be of value in the organizational literature that includes POS because such an evaluation would expand upon the more typical focus on variables such as personality and individual differences, which are of limited use in an applied setting. If there is a strong relationship between organizational structure and the extent to which employees feel supported, then it is reasonable to anticipate that the implementation of programs for organizational improvement would also influence employee satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Since the development of the survey of perceived organizational support in 1986, research practitioners have used a reduced number of POS items to represent the measure based on an assumption that the measure was unidimensional. Results from this study affirm that the 36-item survey of perceived organizational support is unidimensional. Three other versions of the instrument that were examined as part of the current study, and that contain a reduced number of items, are also unidimensional. All four versions are comparable in terms of internal consistency reliability. Likewise, all four versions performed equally in terms of the observed relationship between POS, affective commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation. In general, the use of shorter versions of the POS measure appears to be warranted by the evidence.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A. Study Characteristics and Constructs Measured.

Author (Date)	Number of POS Items	Extraction Method or CFA[1]	Rotation Method[2]	Number of Factors Retained	Total Variance Accounted For	Constructs Measured[3]
Eisenberger et al. (1986)	36	PCA	NR	1	48.3%	
	36	Factor Analysis	Varimax	1		
	17	Factor Analysis	NR	1	50.0%	
	17	Factor Analysis	Oblique	2		POS; Exchange Ideology
Kottke & Sharafinski (1988)	16	PCA	NR	2	63.8%	POS; Perceived Supervisor Support
Shore & Tetrick (1990)	17	CFA		3-factor model fit best		POS; Job Sat.; OCQ; ACS; CCS
Settoon et al. (1996)	8	CFA				POS
Hutchison (1997)	8	CFA		5-factor model fit best		POS; PSS; ODQ; OCQ; ACS
Wayne et al. (1997)	9	PCA	Oblique	6	66.7%	POS; Dev. Exp; LMX; ACS; Intent to Quit; Favor Doing
Eisenberger et al. (1997)	8	CFA		2-factor model fit best		POS; Favorable Job Conditions; Control Over Job; Job Satisfaction

Appendix A. Study Characteristics and Constructs Measured (Continued).

Author (Date)	Number of POS Items	Extraction Method or CFA[1]	Rotation Method[2]	Number of Factors Retained	Total Variance Accounted For	Constructs Measured[3]
Armeli, et al. (1998)	11	PCA	NR	1	57%	
Lynch, et al. (1999)	8	PCA	NR	1	58%	
Eisenberger, et al. (2001)	6	CFA		8-factor model fit best		POS; Felt Obligation; Exchange Ideology; ACS; Positive Mood; In-Role Performance; Org. Spontaneity; Withdrawal Behavior
Rhoades, et al. (2001)	8	CFA		5-factor model fit best		POS; ACS; Rewards; Procedural Justice; Supervisor Support
	8	CFA		2-factor model fit best		POS; ACS
Self et al. (2005)	16	PAF	Oblique	2		POS; Work-Group Support

1 PCA=Prinicpal Components Analysis; CFA= Confirmatory Factor Analysis
2 NR=Not Reported in the study
3 POS=Perceived Organizational Support; Job Sat= Job Satisfaction; OCQ=Organizational Commitment Questionnaire; ACS=Affective Commitment Scale; CCS=Continuance Commitment Scale; PSS=Perceived Supervisor Support; ODQ=Organizational Dependability Questionnaire; OCQ=Organizational Commitment Questionnaire; Dev. Exp=Developmental Experiences; LMX=Leader-Member Exchange.

APPENDIX B

Please indicate the extent to which you
agree with each of the statements listed below.

Organizational Support (items 1-36)

1   The organization values my contribution to its well-being.

2   If the organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so.

3   The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.

4   The organization strongly considers my goals and values.

5   The organization would understand a long absence due to my illness.

6   The organization would ignore any complaint from me.

7   The organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.

8   Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.

9   The organization really cares about my well-being.

10   The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.

11   The organization would fail to understand my absence due to a personal problem.

12   If the organization found a more efficient way to get my job done they would replace me.

13   The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.

14   It would take only a small decrease in my performance for the organization to want to replace me.

15   The organization feels there is little to be gained by employing me for the rest of my career.

16   The organization provides me little opportunity to move up the ranks.

17   Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice.

18   The organization would grant a reasonable request for a change in my working conditions.

19   If I were laid off, the organization would prefer to hire someone new rather than take me back.

20   The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor.

21   The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.

22   If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me.

23   The organization shows very little concern for me.

24   If I decided to quit, the organization would try to persuade me to stay.

25   The organization cares about my opinions.

26   The organization feels that hiring me was a definite mistake.

27   The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

28   The organization cares more about making a increasing enrollment than about me.

29   The organization would understand if I were unable to finish a task on time.

30   If the organization earned a greater profit, it would consider increasing my salary.

31   The organization feels that anyone could perform my job as well as I do.

32   The organization is unconcerned about paying me what I deserve.

33   The organization wishes to give me the best possible job for which I am qualified.

34   If my job were eliminated, the organization would prefer to lay me off rather than transfer me to a new job.

35   The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.

36   My supervisors are proud that I am a part of this organization.

Organizational Communication (items 37-42)

37   My coworkers are afraid to express their real views.

38   If we have a decision to make, everyone is involved in making it.

39   We tell each other the way we are feeling.

40   In my department/division/area, everyone's opinion gets listened to.

41   In my college, employees say what they really mean.

42   We are encouraged to express our concerns openly.

Organizational Participation (items 43-69)

43   My supervisor asks for my opinion about how the work gets done.

44   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about how the work gets done.

45   My supervisor asks for my opinion about how to monitor quality.

46   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about how to monitor quality.

47   My supervisor asks for my opinion about how fast the work gets done.

48   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about how fast the work gets done.

49   My supervisor asks for my opinion about how work is assigned.

50   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about how work is assigned.

51   My supervisor asks for my opinion about when work gets done.

52   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about when work gets done.

53   My supervisor asks for my opinion before hiring a coworker.

54   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion before hiring a coworker.

55   My supervisor asks for my opinion before disciplining a coworker.

56   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion before disciplining a coworker.

57   My supervisor asks for my opinion before evaluating the performance of a coworker.

58   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion before evaluating the performance of a coworker.

59   My supervisor asks for my opinion about training needs.

60   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about training needs.

61   My supervisor asks for my opinion before making important purchases.

62   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion before making important purchases.

63   My supervisor asks for my opinion about organizational goals.

64   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about organizational goals.

65   My supervisor asks for my opinion about organizational policies and rules.

66   I want my supervisor to ask for my opinion about organizational policies and rules.

67   I decide how to do my job.

68   My ideas get serious consideration.

69   I get credit for my ideas.

Organizational Commitment (items 70-76)

70   I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.

71   I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.

72   I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.

73   I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization.

74   I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization.

75   This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

76   I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.

Please indicate your position and length of employment. This information will be used only to group the overall responses to this survey. Your individual responses will remain anonymous.

Position: **Sex:**   **Age:** (years) _____

❍ Faculty   ❍ Male

❍ Staff   ❍ Female

❍ Administration

How many years (total) have you been employed at Tulsa Community College? ____

Additional Comments:

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (16-item Form)
Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) JAP, 71, 3, 500-507.

1. The organization values my contribution to its well-being.
2. If the organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so. (R)
3. The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)
4. The organization strongly considers my goals and values.
5. The organization would ignore any complaint from me. (R)
6. The organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me. (R)
7. Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.
8. The organization really cares about my well-being.
9. Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice. (R)
10. The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor.
11. The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.
12. If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me. (R)
13. The organization shows very little concern for me. (R)
14. The organization cares about my opinions.
15. The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.
16. The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (8-item Form)
Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch (1997) JAP, 82, 5, 812-820.

1. My organization cares about my opinions.
2. My organization really cares about my well-being.
3. My organization strongly considers my goals and values.
4. Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.
5. My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.
6. If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me. (R).
7. My organization shows very little concern for me. (R).
8. My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (3-item Form)
Eisenberger, R., Singlhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, & Rhoades, L. (2002).
JAP, 87, 3, 565-573.

1. The organization values my contribution to its well-being.
2. The organization strongly considers my goals and values.
3. The organization really cares about my well-being.

APPENDIX C

Request for Determination of Non-Human Subject or Non-Research

Federal regulations and OSU policy require IRB review of all research involving human subjects. Some categories of research are difficult to discern as to whether they qualify as human subject research. Therefore, the IRB has established policies and procedures to assist in this determination.

1. **Principal Investigator Information**

First Name: Jody		Middle Initial: A	Last Name: Worley
Department/Division: School of Educational Studies		College: Education	
Campus Address:		Zip+4:	
Campus Phone:	Fax:	Email:	
Complete if PI does not have campus address:			
Address: 2010 West 120th Street South		City: Jenks	
State: OK	Zip: 74037	Phone: 918-298-2690	

2. **Faculty Advisor (complete if PI is a student, resident, or fellow)** ☐ NA

Faculty Advisor's name: Dale Fuqua	Title: Professor
Department/Division: School of Educational Studies	College: Education
Campus Address: 444 Willard Hall	Zip+4: 74078
Campus Phone: 744-9443 Fax:	Email: fuqua@okstate.edu

3. **Study Information:**

   A. Title
   A Factor Analytic Study to Evaluate the Structure of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support

   B. Give a brief summary of the project. (See instructions for guidance)

   The purpose of the study is to evaluate the underlying factor structure of the original 36-item survey of Perceived Organizational Support (POS). The proposed study will contribute to organizational literature related to the measurement of POS by examining the factor structure of the POS survey using Principal Axis Factor (PAF) analysis with oblique rotation. The goal of the study is to determine the number of structural dimensions of the POS survey by using analytic procedures that have not been used in prior studies. A hierarchical factor analysis will be conducted using the factor scores as a means to assess the possibility of a second-order factor. Finally, factor scores will be regressed on a measure of affective commitment that is frequently used in studies that also use the POS survey.

Request for Determination of Non-Human Subject or Non-Research

C. Describe the subject population/type of data/specimens to be studied. (See instructions for guidance)

I will be receiving de-identified data that were collected without my personal involvement. I had no direct contact or intervention with the participants in the study. The participants (survey respondents) include full-time employees at Tulsa Community College. All participants are over 18 years of age. The de-identified data file to be received does not contain any of the 18 identifiers listed in Part B of the Determination of Human Subject, and the data are not coded in any way that would allow the investigator to establish the identity of the participants.

4. **Determination of "Human Subject".**
   45 CFR 46.102(f): *Human subject* means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains: (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or (2) identifiable private information. Intervention includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (for example venipuncture) and manipulations of the subject or the subject's environment that are performed for research purposes. Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. Private information includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects.

   All of the following must be "no" to qualify as "non-human subject":

   A. Does the study involve intervention or interaction with a "human subject"?
      ☒ No   ☐ Yes

   B. Does the study involve access to identifiable private information?
      ☒ No   ☐ Yes

   C. Are data/specimens <u>received</u> by the Investigator with identifiable private information?
      ☒ No   ☐ Yes

   D. Are the data/specimen(s) coded such that a link exists that could allow the data/specimen(s) to be re-identified?
      ☒ No   ☐ Yes
      If "*Yes*," is there a written agreement that prohibits the PI and his/her staff access to the link?
      ☐ No   ☐ Yes

5. **Determination of "Research".**
   45 CFR 46.102(d): *Research* means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities, which meet this definition, constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program, which is considered research for other purposes.

   One of the following must be "no" to qualify as "non-research":

   A. Will the data/specimen(s) be obtained in a systematic manner?
      ☒ No   ☐ Yes

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Request for Determination of Non-Human Subject or Non-Research

B. Will the intent of the data/specimen collection be for the purpose of contributing to generalizable knowledge (disseminating the knowledge obtained outside of Oklahoma State University, e.g., presentation or publication)?
☐ No ☒ Yes

6. **Signatures**

Signature of PI _____ Date 11/10/05

Signature of Faculty Advisor _____ Date 11-11-05
(If PI is a student)

☒ Based on the information provided, the OSU-Stillwater IRB has determined that this research **does not** qualify a human subject research as defined in 45 CFR 46.102(d) and (f) and **is not subject to oversight by the OSU IRB.**

☐ Based on the information provided, the OSU-Stillwater IRB has determined that this research **does** qualify as human subject research and **submission of an application for review by the IRB is required.**

_____
Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair

_____
Date

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VITA

Jody A. Worley

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: A FACTOR ANALYTIC STUDY TO EVALUATE THE STRUCTURE OF
          THE SURVEY OF PERCEIVED ORGANINZATIONAL SUPPORT

Major Field: Educational Psychology – Research and Evaluation

Biographical:

    Personal Data: Caucasian, Male, born 1970, Married, 3 children

    Education:

        Bachelor of Science - 1992
        Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK

        Master of Arts - 1994
        Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City, OK, 1994

    Experience:

        Director of Institutional Research and Assessment – 1999 to Present
        Tulsa Community College
        Tulsa, Oklahoma

        Psychology Research Technician – 1997 to 1999
        Federal Aviation Administration
        Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center
        Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI)
        Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

    Professional Memberships: AERA, AIR, OKAIR-P

Name: Jody A. Worley   Date of Degree: May, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University   Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A FACTOR ANALYTIC STUDY TO EVALUATE THE STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY OF PERCEIVED ORGANINZATIONAL SUPPORT

Pages in Study: 78   Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Scope and Method of Study:

The original 36-item survey of perceived organizational support (SPOS) was evaluated to determine the underlying structure of the instrument. The survey items were subjected to a principal axis factor analysis. Reliability analyses for shorter versions of the SPOS were also conducted as a means to compare the internal consistency across forms (36-items, 16-items, 8-items, and 3-items). Finally, to evaluate the validity of the total scores for the different versions of SPOS, total scores from the three versions were regressed on three measures commonly included in studies that also use the SPOS: affective commitment, organizational participation, and organizational communication.

Findings and Conclusions:

Results indicate that the 36-item survey of perceived organizational support is unidimensional. The three versions that contain a reduced number of POS items are also unidimensional. All four versions of the SPOS are comparable in terms of internal consistency reliability. Likewise, all four versions performed equally in terms of the observed relationship between POS, affective commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation. In general, the use of shorter versions of the SPOS appears to be warranted by the evidence.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dale R. Fuqua, Ph.D.