



**Leader-Member Exchange and Perceived Organizational Support
during Organizational Socialization**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined a model of the relationships between leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived organizational support (POS), socialization tactics, and work outcomes. First, it was hypothesized that LMX would have a positive impact on POS, and that this relationship would be moderated by socialization tactics. Second, it was predicted that POS would mediate the effects of LMX on indicators of newcomer adjustment (i.e., affective commitment and intent to leave). Using a two-wave longitudinal survey of 159 newcomers, LMX was positively related to POS, and socialization tactics were found to moderate this relationship. In terms of consequences, POS was found to fully mediate the relationship between LMX and affective commitment. However, POS did not mediate the relationship between LMX and intent to leave the organization.

KEYWORDS: POS; LMX; Socialization tactics; Newcomer adjustment.

Leader-Member Exchange and Perceived Organizational Support during Organizational Socialization

Researchers have increasingly adopted social exchange as a theoretical foundation for understanding exchange relationships between individuals and their organizations (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). In fact, social exchange theory is arguably one of the fundamental conceptual paradigms in understanding behavior in organizations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), individuals who are the beneficiaries of favorable actions by others feel obligated to reciprocate through positive attitudes or behaviors toward the source of the favorable treatment.

Two streams of research applying social exchange theory in organizations have developed separately: leader-member exchange (LMX: Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997) and perceived organizational support (POS: Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger, Jones, Aselage, & Sucharski, 2004; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). LMX focuses on the quality of exchange relationship that evolves between the employee and his or her immediate manager within a formal organization (Graen & Scandura, 1987). LMX theory suggests that, rather than treating all subordinates alike, leaders differentiate between subordinates, forming relationships that range from being based strictly on contractual transactions to relationships that involve the exchange of resources and support that extend beyond the formal job description (Liden & Graen, 1980). In contrast, POS focuses on the quality of exchange relationship between the employee and the organization. It has been conceptualized as employees' general perception of the degree to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being; in other words, the employer's commitment to the employee (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Because LMX and POS are both based on social exchange theory, the question has been raised as to whether they are conceptually distinct. Recent studies integrating these literatures have found that POS and LMX are distinct constructs that are differentially related to employee attitudes and behaviors (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Furthermore, studies integrating both POS and LMX has consistently demonstrated that POS positively affects LMX (e.g., Masterson et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2002). However, there has been mixed results regarding the impact of LMX on POS. While Wayne et al. (1997) found support for the reciprocal relationship between POS and LMX, other studies have failed to replicate the positive impact of LMX on POS (Masterson et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2002). However, some scholars argue and have empirically demonstrated that the quality of exchange relationship with the immediate leader may help employees in their evaluation of support provided by the organization (Liden, Bauer, Erdogan, & Wayne, 2004; Wayne et al., 1997). One purpose of this study is to examine the potential impact of LMX on POS in the context of socialization.

Previous empirical research failing to demonstrate the positive impact of LMX on POS suggest that the organizational context may play a role in determining whether LMX influences POS. Because the quality of exchange relationships with both the organization and the immediate supervisor develops during organizational socialization, this context might be relevant when investigating the relationship between LMX and POS. For newcomers in the process of assimilating into the organization, their socialization experience may impact the degree to which they perceive supervisory actions as attributable to the organization. In this respect, organizations can purposefully manage the socialization of newcomers through its socialization tactics defined as “ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition

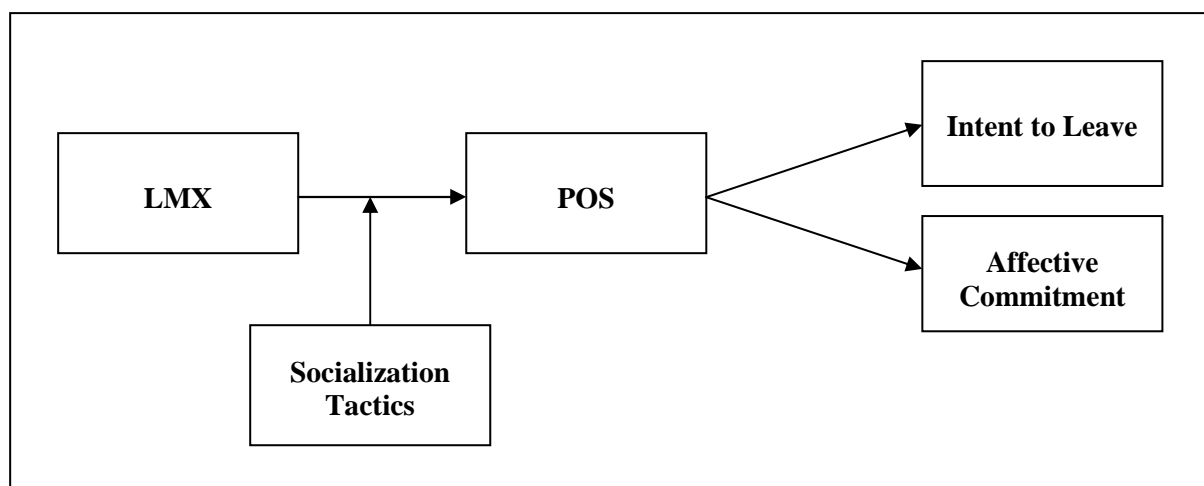
from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 250). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed six bipolar tactics that organizations can use to structure the socialization experiences of newcomers (i.e., collective *vs.* individual, formal *vs.* informal, sequential *vs.* random, fixed *vs.* variable, serial *vs.* disjunctive, investiture *vs.* divestiture) that can be arranged on a single continuum from individualized to institutionalized socialization (e.g., Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998). Institutionalized tactics reflect a structured program of socialization, while individualized socialization tactics reflect a unique, relatively unplanned, and loosely structured approach. A key difference between institutionalized and individualized tactics is the potential role of the supervisor in the socialization process. In the case of individualized tactics, the supervisor may play a crucial role in providing information, facilitating and supporting the employee through this adjustment period. In contrast, newcomers exposed to institutionalized tactics will have greater exposure to other organizational representatives, departments, managers during the socialization process. Therefore, a second purpose of this study is to examine the potential moderating role of socialization tactics on the relationship between and LMX and POS.

In addition to role of the organizational context as a potential determinant in determining whether LMX influences POS, there is the question of whether and how the quality of exchange relationships with the organization and the supervisor may lead to subsequent adjustment in the context of socialization. A prominent strand of empirical research has largely demonstrated that the effective management of the socialization process may ultimately lead to subsequent adjustment between an individual and his or her organization. When looking at the process of socialization, researchers argue that the development of high quality relationships may have critical effects on socialization outcomes

(e.g., Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004; Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). On the basis of the norm of reciprocity, employees who are treated favorably by others feel a sense of indebtedness to the exchange partner and are motivated to repay the partner (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Greenberg, 1980). Thus, employees who have high-quality exchange relationships with their organization or their supervisor feel a sense of indebtedness and reciprocate in terms of attitudes and behaviors. In support of this, research has demonstrated that LMX and POS tend to be differentially related to work outcomes, such that individuals tend to reciprocate the sources of favorable treatment (Masterson et al., 2000; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 2002; Wayne et al., 1997). As an extension of these research, a final purpose is to examine the potential mediating role of POS on the relationships between LMX and indicators of newcomer adjustment (i.e., affective commitment and intent to leave the organization). The model tested in this study is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

**Hypothesized Model of the Relationships
between LMX, POS, Socialization Tactics, and Outcomes**



HYPOTHESES

Relationship between LMX and POS

According to Organizational Support theory (OST), supervisory treatment will enhance POS to the extent that this treatment is sanctioned and approved by the organization as employees generalize from their immediate supervisor to the broader organization (Pygmalion effect: Eden, 1992). There are two potential reasons for why high-quality LMX might lead to an increase of POS.

First, as suggested by Levinson (1965), actions taken by agents of the organization, such as the immediate leader, are often viewed as indications of the organization's intent rather than attributed solely to the agents' personal motives. Empirical research exploring both POS and LMX suggests that the quality of relationship with the immediate leader helps employees in their evaluation of support provided by the organization (Wayne et al., 1997). In other words, the leader plays a critical role as a key agent of the organization through which members form their perceptions of the organization (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004).

Next, while being a representative of the organization, the supervisor is also an important purveyor of resources and support to employees (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004). In this respect, scholars argue that leaders tend to allocate more rewards and resources to employees with whom they have high-quality exchange relationships (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004; Wayne et al., 2002). For example, it has been empirically shown that employees who have a high-quality LMXs relationships are more likely to receive rewards, such as delegation of important assignments (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980), empowerment (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Scandura, Graen, & Novak, 1986), sharing of network ties (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005), and mentoring (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994).

Because leaders tend to allocate more rewards and resources to employees with whom they have LMXs relationships, and because that leaders may be viewed as a personification of the organization, we propose that newcomers with high-quality LMXs relationships will be more likely to perceive they are being valued and supported by their organization. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Leader-member exchange will be positively related to perceived organizational support.

Socialization Tactics as a Moderator of the LMX-POS Relationship

For newcomers in the process of assimilating into the organization, their socialization experience may impact the degree to which they perceive supervisory actions as attributable to the organization. In this respect, organizations can use a wide variety of tactics and techniques to socialize newcomers during the encounter or accommodation stage.

Specifically, organizations can purposefully manage the adjustment of newcomers through its socialization tactics defined as “ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 250).

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed six bipolar tactics that organizations can use to structure the socialization experiences of newcomers (i.e., collective *vs.* individual, formal *vs.* informal, sequential *vs.* random, fixed *vs.* variable, serial *vs.* disjunctive, investiture *vs.* divestiture) thereby influencing the role orientations that newcomers ultimately adopt and their subsequent adjustment to the organization. Building on Van Maanen and Schein (1979) framework, Jones (1986) argued that the six tactics form a gestalt that he termed *institutionalized* socialization at one end of the continuum and *individualized* socialization at the opposite end of the continuum. Institutionalized socialization tactics (i.e., collective,

formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics) reflect a structured program of socialization that provides information to reduce uncertainty and anxiety inherent in early work experiences. Individualized socialization tactics (i.e., individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics) reflect a unique, relatively unplanned, and loosely structured approach, creating ambiguity thereby encouraging newcomers to develop their own approaches to situations.

A key difference between institutionalized and individualized tactics is the potential role of the supervisor in the socialization process. In the case of individualized tactics, the supervisor may play a crucial role in providing information, facilitating and supporting the employee through this adjustment period. As a consequence, the newcomer may be more likely to equate the actions of the supervisor with the actions of the organization. In contrast, newcomers exposed to institutionalized tactics will have greater exposure to other organizational representatives, departments, managers during the socialization process and thus be better able to differentiate their relationship with their supervisor from their relationship with broader organization (i.e., other organizational agents). Hence, they will be less likely to equate supervisory actions to the wider organization (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Institutionalized socialization tactics will moderate the relationship between LMX and POS, such that a highly institutionalized socialization process will weaken the positive relationship between LMX and POS.

Relationship between LMX, POS, and Outcomes

According to OST, when employees perceive that the organization provides them with broad and valued set of socioemotional and impersonal resources, the norm of reciprocity, in turn, produces a general felt obligation to help the organization achieve its goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995). Suggesting the presence of an underlying norm of reciprocity, a positive relationship has been found between POS and both behaviors and attitudes such as affective commitment (e.g., Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis LaMastro, 1990; Randall, Cropanzano, Borman, & Birjulin, 1999; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993) and intent to leave the organization (Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994; Wayne et al., 1997).

In an attempt to replicate prior empirical research in the context of socialization, we propose that newcomers with high POS would place an obligation on them to reciprocate the organization for favorable treatment. Specifically, it is expected that this reciprocation may take the form of strengthening their emotional attachment and their willingness to remain in the organization. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: POS will be positively related to affective commitment to the organization, and negatively related to intent to leave the organization.

We predicted that LMX would be positively related to employees' perceptions of organizational support (Hypothesis 1). Furthermore, we also hypothesized that employees' perceptions of organizational support would be positively related to their affective commitment, and negatively related to their intent to leave the organization (Hypothesis 3). Therefore, combining these two hypotheses together, it is plausible that POS may mediate the relationships between LMX and work outcomes. Individuals with high quality relations with

their supervisor may take this as indicative of organizational support which they reciprocate by enhancing their commitment to the organization and reducing their intentions to leave the organization. Thus, we examine this with the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a: POS will mediate the effect of LMX on affective commitment to the organization.

Hypothesis 4b: POS will mediate the effect of LMX on intent to leave the organization.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Data for this study were collected in two waves in three large Belgian organizations. At Time 1 (i.e., six months after organizational entry), the survey was administered to 364 employees, of which 241 responded (66%). At Time 2 (i.e., six months subsequent to Time 1), of the 241 respondents at Time 1, 159 responded giving an overall response rate of 44.2%. At Time 2, respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 52 years with a mean of 28 years. 53% of respondents were men. Work experience ranged from 0 to 32 years, with an average of 8 years and 8 months. The time intervals were based on socialization literature research suggesting that 6 months and 12 months are meaningful intervals in the socialization process (Bauer et al., 1998). Respondents were assigned a unique ID so that we could match their surveys at the three different time periods. No significant differences were found for the variables included in this study between employees who responded at Time 1 and 2 and those who only responded at Time 1.

Measures

All measures were submitted to exploratory factor analysis to assess dimensionality and convergent and discriminant validity. Items used in the final measures had factor loadings greater than .50 on the intended construct and no cross loadings greater than .25. Except where otherwise noted, all measures were based on a 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

Leader-member exchange. Leader-member exchange (LMX) was measured at Time 1 with the seven-item Leader-Member Exchange VII scale developed by Scandura and Graen (1984). This measure captured the relationship quality between a leader and subordinate. This scale has demonstrated adequate levels of reliability in past research (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87 in Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999). A sample item included: "How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?" Respondents were asked to make a choice among five item-specific response options for each question. The seven items were averaged to form a scale, with higher values representing a greater degree of leader-member exchange. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.91.

Perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support (POS) was measured at Time 1 with an eight-item shortened version of Eisenberger and his colleagues' (1986) scale. The shortened version of this scale has demonstrated adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in past research (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90 in Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). This measure captured the perceived degree to which the organization values and supports individual employees and was used to operationalize the overall exchange quality between an individual and the organization. A sample item included: "My organization really cares about my well-being". The eight items were averaged to form a scale, with higher values representing a greater degree of perceived

organizational support. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.90.

Socialization tactics. Socialization tactics were measured at the Time 1. Newcomers reported the socialization tactics they experienced in their organizations by responding to questions from the socialization scale developed by Jones (1986). Jones (1986) developed six five-item self-report scales to operationalize socialization tactics. Given the longitudinal nature of this research and our concerns about response rate, we elected to keep the survey as short as possible and did not employ all of Jones' (1986) thirty items. Instead, we selected eighteen items: three items from each of the six socialization tactics that loaded highest on Jones' proposed socialization factors (i.e., context, content, and social aspects). This approach has been used in other studies (e.g., Cable & Parsons, 2001).

We conducted a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation on the socialization items. Results revealed a 6-factor solution (with eigenvalues greater than 1) that accounted for 79.43% of the variance and clearly supported Jones' (1986) tactics. The factors representing distinct dimensions of socialization were sufficiently internally consistent to combine into single composite indices of dimensions of socialization tactics.

Work outcomes. Work outcomes were measured at Time 2. Affective commitment was assessed using the revised version of the six-item measure scale elaborated by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). A sample item for the affective commitment scale included: "I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization" (reverse scored). The six items of each commitment dimension were averaged to form a scale, with higher values representing a greater degree of affective commitment. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.88. The degree of intent to leave the organization was assessed with a three-item measure taken from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979), cited in Cook, Hepworth, Wall, and Warr (1981). A sample item included: "I often think about quitting my job with my present

organization”. The three items were averaged to form a scale, with higher values representing a greater degree of intent to leave the organization. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was 0.91.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables. We tested the remaining hypotheses using hierarchical multiple regression controlling for gender and age in step 1 of all the equations.

In Hypothesis 1, we predicted that leader-member exchange (LMX) would be positively related to perceived organizational support (POS). As shown in Table 2, LMX was positively related to POS ($\beta = .35, p < .001$), thereby providing support for Hypothesis 1.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Hypothesis 2 suggested that institutionalized socialization tactics would moderate the relationships between LMX and POS. Hierarchical moderated regression equations were used to test the hypotheses. Following Cohen and Cohen (1983) we first entered the main effects for hypothesized variables, followed by their cross-product interaction terms. As reported in Table 3, the interaction term was significant for collective ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$), sequential ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$), and fixed tactics ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$). By partialling out the cross-product term, we were able to identify an incremental change in R^2 of .04 ($p < .01$) for collective tactics, .02 ($p < .05$) for sequential tactics, and .02 ($p < .05$) for fixed tactics. The nature of the interaction was determined by plotting the relationship between LMX and POS at high and low levels of institutionalized socialization (defined as +1 and -1 standard deviation from the mean: Aiken & West, 1991). Figure 2 illustrates the nature of the relationship between LMX and POS for high and low fixed socialization tactics. This figure

demonstrates that for employees experiencing a highly institutionalized socialization process, there was a weaker relationship between LMX and POS, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Insert Table 3 about here

Hypothesis 3 predicted that POS would be positively related to affective commitment to the organization, and negatively related to intent to leave the organization. As shown in Table 4, POS was positively related to affective commitment to the organization ($\beta = .33, p < .001$), and negatively related to intent to leave the organization ($\beta = -.19, p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

In Hypothesis 4, we suggested that POS would mediate the relationships between LMX and work outcomes (i.e., affective commitment and intent to leave the organization). We followed Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure for assessing the mediating role of perceived organizational support. The authors suggest that three conditions must be met in order to demonstrate mediation. First, the independent variable (i.e., LMX) must be significantly related to the proposed mediator (i.e., POS). Second, the independent variable (i.e., LMX) and the proposed mediator (i.e., POS) must each be significantly related to the dependent variable (i.e., affective commitment or intent to leave the organization). Third, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable should be significantly weaker (partial mediation) or non-significant (full mediation) when the proposed mediator is included in the regression equation.

As previously reported for Hypothesis 1, the first condition of Baron and Kenny (1986) was met since LMX was positively related to POS ($\beta = .35, p < .001$). Next, the dependent variables were regressed on the independent variables (Table 4). Satisfying the

second requirement of mediation, LMX was positively related to affective commitment ($\beta = .18, p < .05$), and negatively related to intent to leave the organization ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$). To test the third step of mediation, the dependent variables were regressed on the mediating variable, with the independent variable included in the equations. As shown in Table 4, POS fully mediated the effects of LMX on affective commitment (the β reduces from $.18, p < .05$ to $.08, ns$). Thus, hypothesis 4a was supported. For intent to leave (Hypothesis 4b), POS did not mediate the effect of LMX, thus providing no support for Hypothesis 4b.

Insert Table 4 about here

Although these three conditions are essential to test a mediation, Holmbeck (2002) argued that they are insufficient. What is needed is a method of ascertaining whether the indirect path between the predictor (i.e., LMX by means of POS) and the criterion (i.e., affective commitment) is significant. Consequently, Holmbeck (2002) recommended a direct test of the indirect path (i.e., the impact of LMX by means of POS), removing the variance as a result of the direct effect. To further test this mediated path, a direct test of the full mediational path (LMX \rightarrow POS \rightarrow affective commitment) was also conducted. The obtained z score for affective commitment was significant ($z = 3.23, p < .001$), thereby confirming the role of POS as a mediator between LMX and affective commitment.

DISCUSSION

This research advances knowledge in both the social exchange and socialization literature by investigating the quality of relationships with the organization and the supervisor in the context of socialization.

Recent studies have found that POS and LMX are distinct but related constructs that differentially impact employee attitudes and behaviors (Masterson et al., 2000; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 2002; Wayne et al., 1997). While prior empirical research has consistently demonstrated that POS positively affects LMX (e.g., Masterson et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2002), there has been mixed results regarding the impact of LMX on POS. Indeed, Wayne et al. (1997) found support for the positive impact of LMX on POS, while other studies have failed to replicate this finding (Masterson et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2002). In the context of socialization, our research suggests that newcomers with high-quality LMXs relationships are more likely to perceive they are being valued and supported by their organization. This finding broadly supports the idea that the quality of relationship with the immediate leader influences employees' evaluation of the support provided by the organization (Liden, Bauer, Erdogan et al., 2004; Wayne et al., 1997)

Furthermore, drawing on the idea that the organizational context may play a role in determining whether LMX influences POS (Wayne et al., 2002), our research suggests that the socialization period may be a particular context in which LMX is more likely to have positive impact on POS. Indeed, newcomers entering an organization are likely to possess unstructured cognitive maps and have to make sense of their new work environment. It is also during the socialization period that newcomers develop perceptions of the quality of exchange relationships they have with different exchange partners (e.g., organization, supervisor, colleagues). As suggested by Liden, Bauer and Erdogan (2004), newcomers' global view of the organization is primarily based on the nature of interactions with others in the organization, including immediate leaders, coworkers, subordinates, and contacts outside of focal individuals' functional area. It is also through their interactions with organizational agents that they receive support from the organization that creates an obligation to

reciprocate. In this respect, because newcomers may possess relatively unstructured cognitive maps regarding the relationships they have with different exchange partners, they may be subsequently less able to differentiate the sources of favorable treatment. As a consequence, actions taken by agents of the organization – such as the immediate leader – may be viewed as indications of the organization’s intent rather than attributed solely to the agents’ personal motives. In other words, because the leader may be viewed as a socializing agent and plays a critical role as a key agent of the organization through which members form their perceptions of the organization (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004), newcomers may be more likely to equate the actions of the supervisor with the actions of the organization.

Our research also suggests that the socialization process experienced by newcomers is also likely affect the degree to which they perceive supervisory actions as attributable to the organization. It was found that newcomers’ perceptions of the degree of institutionalized socialization that they experienced influenced the positive relationship between LMX and POS. A key difference between institutionalized and individualized tactics is the potential role of the supervisor in the socialization process. In this respect, newcomers who experienced a unique, relatively unplanned, and loosely structured socialization process (i.e., individualized socialization) were more likely to report of stronger relationship between LMX and POS. Specifically, this relationship was stronger for newcomers who experienced individual, variable, and random socialization.

Individual-collective tactics refer to the context in which organizations provide information to newcomers. When newcomers are experiencing individual socialization tactics, they have a unique set of learning experiences and they do not benefit from off-the-job training. Sequential-random and fixed-variable socialization tactics deal with the content of the information given to newcomers. As mentioned by Jones (1986), “variable socialization

tactics provide no information about when newcomers may reach a certain stage in a learning process and, when a process is random, they do not know the sequence of its stages” (p. 264).

When newcomers are experiencing an individualized socialization, the organization is not providing them with an adequate context for acquiring information regarding their role, job and organization (e.g., Mignerey, Rubin, & Gorden, 1995). Therefore, newcomers are encouraged to develop their own approach to situations (Ashforth & Saks, 1996) by acquiring such information on their own initiative. Because the supervisor may be viewed as a socializing agent and as key provider of task-, role- and organization-related information (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), newcomers experiencing an individualized socialization process may rely more heavily on their supervisor than newcomers experiencing an institutionalized socialization process. In other words, in the case of individualized tactics, the supervisor may play a crucial role in providing information, facilitating and supporting the employee through this adjustment period. As a consequence, the newcomer may be more likely to equate the actions of the supervisor with the actions of the organization.

In contrast, the relationship between LMX and POS was weaker for newcomers who experienced collective, fixed, and sequential socialization. With collective socialization tactics, newcomers are put together and experience a common set of learning experiences. Tactics that are more collective also ensure that newcomers receive a common message about the organization the organization, roles, and how they should interpret and respond to situations. Sequential tactics give recruits explicit information about the sequence of activities they will go through in their new environment, and fixed tactics provide them with precise knowledge of the timetables associated with completing each stage in the socialization process.

Therefore, when organizations are providing newcomers with a highly institutionalized context and content of socialization, they offer them a standardized framework of viewing and interpreting events within the organization. Furthermore, newcomers may have greater exposure to other organizational representatives (e.g., HR manager) during the socialization process. Because a highly institutionalized socialization represent a favorable context to provide newcomers with clear and explicit information about their role, job and organization, the supervisor may play a less significant role in providing information, facilitating and supporting the employee through this adjustment period. Because of this, newcomers may be less likely to perceive supervisory actions as attributable to the organization.

In terms of outcomes, POS was positively related to affective commitment and negatively related to intent to leave the organization. These findings are consistent with previous empirical research investigating the relationships between POS and these outcomes (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1990; Guzzo et al., 1994; Randall et al., 1999; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne et al., 1997). In addition, our findings suggest that these relationships hold true in the context of the socialization period for newcomers. Furthermore, it was found that POS fully mediated the relationship between LMX and affective commitment. While previous research has demonstrated that POS is a stronger predictor of affective commitment than LMX (e.g., Wayne et al., 2002; Wayne et al., 1997), there has been mixed results regarding the relationship between LMX and affective commitment. Some studies have reported non significant relationships between LMX and affective commitment (e.g., Wayne et al., 1997), while other have found support for it (e.g., Major et al., 1995). In this respect, our research suggests that POS may be one of the key mechanisms through which LMX leads to affective commitment. In other words, the quality of exchange

relationship with the supervisor may help employees in their evaluation of support provided by the organization which in turn influence their emotional attachment to the organization.

Finally, POS did not mediate the relationship between LMX and intent to leave. Furthermore, when both POS and LMX were entered in the same regression equation, LMX remained the only significant predictor of intent to leave. This finding is not consistent with previous empirical research reporting the negative relationship between POS and intent to leave the organization (Guzzo et al., 1994; Wayne et al., 1997). Because one of the purposes of this study was to examine the potential mediating role of POS between LMX and attitudinal indicators of adjustment, we did not consider the causal chain between the indicators. Drawing on previous theoretical and empirical work conducted in the field of commitment (e.g., Jaros, 1997; Meyer & Allen, 1991), it would have been more adequate to consider intent to leave as a direct outcome of affective commitment.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, LMX was positively related to POS, thereby replicating the finding obtained by Wayne et al. (1997). This finding broadly supports the idea that the quality of relationship with the immediate leader helps employees in their evaluation of support provided by the organization (Liden, Bauer, Erdogan et al., 2004; Wayne et al., 1997). Second, in answering the call for additional research on the role of organizational context that may influence the relationships between both LMX and POS (Wayne et al., 2002), our research suggests that the way organizations structure newcomer socialization experience – through socialization tactics – impact the degree to which they perceive supervisory actions as attributable to the organization. Specifically, it was found that institutionalized socialization tactics (i.e., collective, sequential, and fixed socialization) moderated the relationship between LMX and POS, such that this relationship was weaker. In this respect, we encourage future studies to examine what other situational

factors may influence the relationship between LMX and POS. Finally, it was found that POS fully mediated the relationship between LMX and affective commitment. This finding suggests that POS may be one of the key mechanisms through which LMX impacts the emotional attachment to the organization.

There are a number of limitations of this study. A first concern in our research is that it relied on self-reports. However, self-report data is generally accepted in organizational socialization research when the research is concerned with determining newcomer perceptions and attitudes (e.g., perceived socialization tactics) (Bauer & Green, 1994). A related issue concerns the potential for common method variance. Although this study relied on a longitudinal design, this would reduce but not eliminate all common method bias as all of the variables were assessed using survey measures, which may have inflated the relationships observed. A final limitation relates to the modest interaction effects (2-4%). However, McClelland and Judd (1993) in a review of moderator effects observe that as moderator effects are so difficult to detect, explaining 1% of the variance should be considered important with most field study interactions accounting for 1–3% of the variance.

In summary, this study provides further support for the positive impact of LMX on POS. In the context of socialization, this study also highlights the role of the organizational context in the study of the relationship between LMX and POS. Finally, this finding suggests that POS may represent one mechanism through which LMX impacts work outcomes.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Leader-member exchange	3.61	.77	.91									
2. Perceived organizational support	3.26	.63	.37***	.90								
3. Collective	3.21	.98	.09	.28***	.82							
4. Formal	3.09	.82	.15†	.26***	.55***	.76						
5. Sequential	3.18	1.01	.22**	.35***	.55***	.55***	.91					
6. Fixed	2.70	1.03	.14†	.24**	.42***	.26***	.70***	.87				
7. Serial	3.54	.88	.35***	.29***	.20**	.36***	.43***	.26***	.86			
8. Investiture	3.79	.88	.46***	.44***	.21**	.28***	.23**	.12	.50***	.80		
9. Affective commitment	3.29	.75	.22**	.37***	.19*	.29***	.20**	.20**	.12	.30***	.88	
10. Intent to leave	2.09	1.15	-.36***	-.26***	-.11	-.17*	-.13	-.10	-.15†	-.22**	-.42***	.91

Note. $N = 159$. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. The main diagonal contains Cronbach's internal consistency reliability estimates.

TABLE 2
Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Effect of LMX on POS

Predictor Variables	Perceived Organizational Support	
	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
Step 1		
Gender	-.09	-.08
Age	.12	.10
Step 2		
Leader-member exchange		.35***
F	2.17	8.62***
ΔF		20.93***
R ²	.03	.15
ΔR^2		.12***

Note. $N = 159$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 3
Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Moderating Effects
of Institutionalized Socialization Tactics on the Relationships between LMX and POS

Predictor variable	Perceived Organizational Support		
	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1		.02	
Gender	-.08		
Age	.11		
Step 2		.19	.17***
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	.33***		
Collective	.16**		
Step 3		.23	.04**
LMX x Collective	-.16**		
Step 2		.19	.17***
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	.35***		
Formal	.12*		
Step 3		.20	.01†
LMX x Formal	-.11†		
Step 2		.21	.19***
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	.33***		
Sequential	.21***		
Step 3		.23	.02*
LMX x Sequential	-.12*		
Step 2		.21	.19***
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	.35***		
Fixed	.24***		
Step 3		.23	.02*
LMX x Fixed	-.14*		
Step 2		.19	.17***
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	.32***		
Serial	.20**		
Step 3		.19	.00
LMX x Serial	-.03		
Step 2		.23	.21***
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	.26***		
Investiture	.28***		
Step 3		.23	.00
LMX x Investiture	-.01		

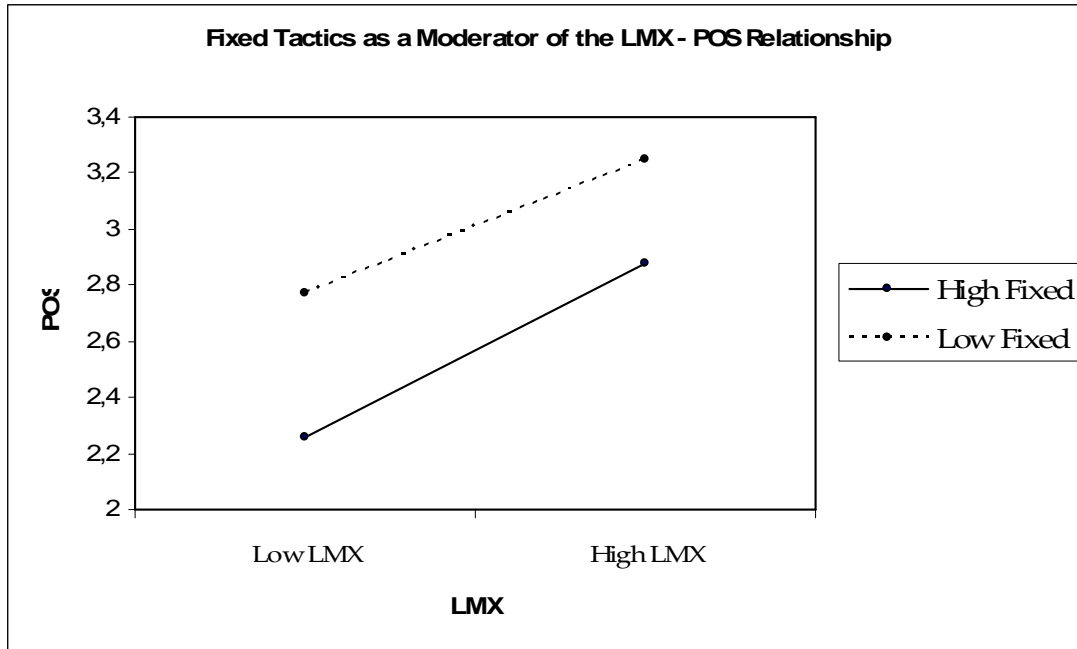
Note. $N = 159$. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 4
Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis
for the Mediating Effects of POS between LMX and Work-Related Outcomes

Predictor Variables	Affective Commitment		Intent to Leave	
	Step 1 β	Step 2 β	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
Step 1				
Gender	.00	.03	.07	.05
Age	.14	.06	-.28***	-.26**
Step 2				
Perceived organizational support		.33***		-.19**
F	1.73	7.33***	7.63***	7.34***
ΔF		18.11***		6.23*
R ²	.02	.13	.09	.13
ΔR^2		.11***		.04*
Step 2				
Leader-member exchange		.18*		-.32***
F	1.73	2.96*	7.63***	11.98***
ΔF		5.31*		18.85***
R ²	.02	.06	.09	.20
ΔR^2		.04*		.11***
Step 2				
Perceived organizational support		.30***		-.09
Leader-member exchange		.08		-.29***
F	1.73	5.72***	7.63***	9.33***
ΔF		9.51***		10.10***
R ²	.02	.14	.09	.20
ΔR^2		.12***		.11***

Note. $N = 159$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

FIGURE 2
Moderating Effects of Fixed Tactics on LMX-POS Relationship



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