

Journal of Management

<http://jom.sagepub.com>

Perceived Organizational Support: Reducing the Negative Influence of Coworker Withdrawal Behavior

Paul Eder and Robert Eisenberger
Journal of Management 2008; 34; 55
DOI: 10.1177/0149206307309259

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://jom.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/34/1/55>

Published by:

 SAGE Publications

<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



Southern Management Association

Additional services and information for *Journal of Management* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jom.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jom.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations (this article cites 28 articles hosted on the SAGE Journals Online and HighWire Press platforms):
<http://jom.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/34/1/55>

Perceived Organizational Support: Reducing the Negative Influence of Coworker Withdrawal Behavior

Paul Eder*

The Center for Organizational Excellence, 15200 Shady Grove Road, Suite 400, Rockville, MD 20850

Robert Eisenberger

University of Delaware

When employees' coworkers exhibit higher levels of withdrawal, individual employees are more likely to withdraw from their own work. The authors explored whether this relation would be curbed by a positive exchange relationship with one's organization, as suggested by organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Among 23 work groups in a manufacturing organization (Study 1), high perceived organizational support (POS) eliminated the relation between work group and individual tardiness. Among 94 work groups in a retail sales organization (Study 2), POS reduced the relation between work group withdrawal and individual withdrawal.

Keywords: *perceived organizational support; withdrawal behavior; tardiness; reciprocity*

Employees have been found to develop general beliefs concerning the degree to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (perceived organizational support [POS]; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). A considerable amount of evidence indicates that employees having a high level of POS experience their jobs more favorably (e.g., demonstrating increased job satisfaction, positive mood, and reduced stress) and are more invested in their work organization (e.g., demonstrating increased affective organizational commitment and increased performance; see review by Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Organizational support theory considers the development, nature, and outcomes of POS (e.g., Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Shore & Shore,

*Corresponding author. Tel.: 301-948-1922 x 321.

E-mail address: PaulEder@center4oe.com

Journal of Management, Vol. 34 No. 1, February 2008 55-68

DOI: 10.1177/0149206307309259

© 2008 Southern Management Association. All rights reserved.

1995). According to organizational support theory, employees develop POS to meet socioemotional needs and to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased efforts made on its behalf (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995). Rooted in social exchange theory (P. M. Blau, 1964), organizational support theory assumes that the employee–organization relationship is strengthened through the trade of positive outcomes between employees and their organization. Based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), POS would obligate employees to increase their positive outputs, attendance, and punctuality. Accordingly, POS was found to be related to employees' felt obligation to aid the organization, and this relationship was greater among employees who strongly endorsed the norm of reciprocity as applied to the employee–employer relationship (Eisenberger et al., 2001). The norm of reciprocity requires recipients of favorable treatment to help and to avoid harming those who have aided them (Gouldner, 1960: 171). Thus, employees with high POS should avoid high levels of voluntary withdrawal behaviors, such as unnecessary absenteeism, tardiness, and engaging in non-work-related conversations, which meet a variety of personal needs while being harmful to the organization. Accordingly, Eisenberger and colleagues (1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001) found a negative relationship between POS and absenteeism and supervisor-rated withdrawal behaviors, including employee lateness at the beginning of shifts and after breaks. Similarly, POS was found to be negatively associated with turnover intention (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999) and employee turnover (Allen et al., 2003; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001).

The general negative relationship between POS and withdrawal behavior has been well established (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In the present research, we investigate the possibility that POS may have an especially strong influence when employees are members of work groups that engage in high levels of withdrawal behavior, allowing the individual employee's own high level of withdrawal behavior to go unnoticed. Vardi and Weitz suggest that "when individual loafing and withholding effort are the prevalent group norm, [the group's] members will join in and withhold effort even if [expending effort] is likely to be of some personal benefit to them" (2004: 162). Individuals may feel safer to withdraw their effort when work group members do so, potentially due to phenomena such as social loafing (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979) or modeling (Bandura, 1977). Whatever the driving force behind the withdrawal, in work groups where employees observe other members withdrawing from their work, the temptation to engage in withdrawal behaviors would be enhanced. Under such circumstances, employees' reciprocation of high POS might have a strong preventive effect on the contagion of withdrawal behavior.

Work Group Influence on Individual Employee Withdrawal Behavior

Using random mailings of questionnaires to employees in Ohio, Bennett and Robinson (2000) reported that throughout the previous year, 31% had intentionally worked slowly, 33% had come to work late without permission, and 52% had taken a longer work break than acceptable. The costs of withdrawal and other counterproductive behaviors for organizations have been estimated to be as high as \$200 billion per year (Murphy, 1993). With such prevalence and costs, it is important for researchers to examine the potential causes of withdrawal behavior and the ways in which it can be prevented.

Coworkers have long been considered an important normative influence on the prosocial and antisocial behavior of employees (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004; Greenberg, 1997; Homans, 1950). Bommer, Miles, and Grover (2003) reported that the extra-role behaviors of employees' coworkers were positively related to their own participation in pro-organizational activities. Researchers have shown that the frequency of absenteeism among work group members is related to individual employee absenteeism (Mathieu & Kohler, 1990) and that this relationship is mediated by perceived norms of withdrawal in the work group (Gellatly, 1995). Similarly, G. Blau (1995) found that the aggregated tardiness of employees' work groups is related to the tardiness of individual employees.

When the work group engages in a high level of withdrawal behavior, individual employees may reap the personal benefits of high withdrawal behavior by simply conforming to the group's norms. If the group has a high level of absenteeism or tardiness and is not called to task, then the individual employee should feel safer to engage in similar actions than in a group in which such withdrawal behavior occurs at a low rate. In addition, when work group withdrawal behavior is high, employees may believe that they will face the group's criticism for violating the group's standard (cf. Bandura, 1977, 1986; Mars, 1974).

Despite this potentially strong influence of work groups on the individual employee's behavior and the potential rewards associated with withdrawal, some employees manage to resist the temptation to arrive late frequently or to neglect job tasks. We suggest that this resistance may be due in part to employees' reciprocal exchange relationships with their organization. In deciding whether to conform to high work group withdrawal behavior, individuals may pay attention to their obligation to return favorable treatment received from the organization.

Perceived Organizational Support and Work Group Withdrawal Behavior

Withdrawal behavior, even in the presence of coworkers who do so, may be a negative experience for employees high in POS. POS, signifying the organization's positive valuation and care for the welfare of an employee, is generally a valued resource. The reciprocity norm obliges employees to return such advantageous resources (e.g., Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Rousseau, 1995; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Eisenberger et al. (2001) suggest that meeting the obligations to one's organization incurred by the norm of reciprocity serves three functions: (a) one maintains positive self-image, (b) one avoids violating the reciprocity norm, and (c) one continues to benefit from favorable organizational treatment. Accordingly, employees with high POS should show an increased tendency to repay the organization by avoiding the opportunity for conforming to the high withdrawal behavior of a work group.

Hypothesis 1: The withdrawal behavior of other members of employees' work groups will be positively related to employees' own levels of withdrawal behavior.

Hypothesis 2: POS will be negatively related to employee withdrawal behavior.

Hypothesis 3: The positive relation between the withdrawal behavior of other work group members and employees' own withdrawal behavior will be lessened by perceived organizational support.

To test these hypotheses, we investigated employee withdrawal behavior in two different organizations: a manufacturing company and a chain of retail electronics and appliance

stores. In Study 1, we examined the influence of POS on the relation between work group tardiness and individual employees' tardiness (G. Blau, 1995). In Study 2, we considered the influence of POS on the association of several work group withdrawal behaviors (taking undeserved work breaks, spending time in idle conversation, and neglecting one's job—rated by the supervisor) with individuals' withdrawal behaviors.

For both organizations, we calculated work group withdrawal behavior by aggregating withdrawal behavior across each employee's work group, excluding the employee's withdrawal behavior (Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). This method allowed for the necessary independence of the measures of work group and individual withdrawal behavior.

Study 1: Tardiness Among Manufacturing Employees

Surveys were distributed to 219 employees who were employed in two manufacturing facilities of the same company located near each other in the same town in the Northeastern United States. A total of 187 employees returned complete survey information (85% response rate). Employees voluntarily completed the survey during their regularly scheduled working hours in conference rooms. To encourage openness by employees, we gave employees written and verbal assurances that their individual responses would be kept confidential.

Of the 187 employees with available information, 25 were omitted in the final sample because data were not available for more than one other employee in their work group (too few coworkers to calculate a meaningful value for group-level withdrawal). In the final sample of 162 employees, 67% were machine operators, 17% were warehouse employees, 11% were office staff, and 6% were maintenance/quality assurance workers. The mean tenure of these employees was 8.5 years ($SD = 8.7$), and 60% were men. The sample consisted of 23 work groups ($M = 7.0$ employees per group, range = 3-18).

Measures

Perceived organizational support. Prior research has consistently shown the high internal reliability and unidimensionality of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Shore & Tetrick, 1991) in both its full and shortened versions. Six high-loading items from the SPOS were selected for use in this study. Respondents indicated the extent of their agreement with each statement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A sample item is "[Organization name] values my contribution to its well-being." Reliability of the scale was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$).

Tardiness. We obtained objective counts of each employee's incidents of tardiness from company records. In this organization, an employee was considered tardy if he or she punched the time clock 1 min or more past due. The tardiness counts were obtained for the 1 year period up to the day of the survey. For instances when an employee's tenure prior to the survey was less than 1 year, tardiness was projected to a full year.

Covariates. Organizational tenure was obtained from employee records because meta-analytic research suggests that lower tenure employees are more likely to come to work late (Lau, Au,

& Ho, 2003). Also, the employees for this sample were located in two adjacent plant sites. Because one of the plants regularly implemented schedule rotation between day and evening shifts and the other plant had set schedules, we controlled for plant location in our analyses.

Results

To assess the influence of work group tardiness on individual tardiness, we calculated the average tardiness for the work group of each employee, eliminating his or her contribution to that average. Then we regressed individual tardiness on group tardiness, POS, and the interaction of group tardiness and POS. This analysis assumes that there are systematic differences in tardiness at the group level. To test this assumption, we conducted a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the tardiness of the different work groups. This procedure has previously been used to establish reliable differences between work groups in other studies of negative group-level behavior (Dunlop & Lee, 2004; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). We also calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC[1]) to assess the proportion of variation accounted for by work group. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there were significant between-group differences for tardiness, $F(22, 139) = 2.39, p < .01$, suggesting systematic differences in work group tardiness. In addition, $ICC(1) = .06$, suggesting that 6% of the variance in tardiness occurs between work groups. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of Study 1 variables can be seen in Table 1.

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to assess how POS affected the relationship between average group tardiness and individual employee tardiness. Results of this analysis are displayed in Table 2. To reduce potential collinearity between the interaction terms and their component variables, all component scales were converted to Z-scores prior to the calculation of the interaction term. Employees' tenure with the organization, plant location, average work group tardiness, and POS were entered in the first step of the analysis. Consistent with Hypothesis 1 and previous findings (G. Blau, 1995; Robinson & O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), there was a positive relationship between group and individual tardiness. The relation between POS and tardiness was in the right direction but not significant. However, this relation became significant in step 2 when we added the multiplicative composite of POS and average work group tardiness to assess the interaction between these two variables. The significant main effect for POS in the final model lends support to Hypothesis 2. Nonetheless, this significant main effect was qualified by the significant interaction between POS and group tardiness. In support of Hypothesis 3, this interaction suggests that the positive relationship between group and individual tardiness was reduced with high POS.

To examine this interaction further, we plotted regression lines representing the relationship between average group tardiness and individual tardiness among individuals with low and high levels of POS (i.e., 1 *SD* above and below the mean; Aiken & West, 1991; see Figure 1). Simple slope analyses showed that, as predicted, for employees with low POS, there was a significant positive relationship between group tardiness and individual tardiness, $\beta = .40, t(156) = 4.16, p < .05$. In contrast, among employees with high POS, there was a nonsignificant relationship between group tardiness and individual tardiness, $\beta = .04, t(156) = 0.35, p = ns$. The pattern of these results was consistent with Hypothesis 3—the influence of work group tardiness on individual tardiness weakened as POS increased. The interaction between POS and average group tardiness accounted for only about 2% of the variance. Nonetheless, Figure 1 shows that, on average, the influence of POS on the relationship between group tardiness and individual

Table 1
Study 1 Scale Reliabilities and Intercorrelations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Tenure	8.47	8.71	(-)			
2. Individual tardiness	1.51	1.75	-.10	(-)		
3. Average group tardiness	1.51	.97	.16*	.24**	(-)	
4. Perceived organizational support	3.45	1.33	-.06	-.06	.05	(.83)

Note: $N = 162$. Cronbach's α on diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

tardiness was quite strong. When POS was low, individual tardiness increased greatly with average group tardiness. When POS was high, there was little relationship between average group tardiness and individual tardiness.

Study 2: Withdrawal Among Retail Sales Employees

In Study 1, POS reduced the relationship between work group and individual tardiness. To explore the generality of our findings, Study 2 was designed to examine the effects of work group withdrawal behavior on individual withdrawal behavior in a very different work environment (a retail organization) using a measure of an array of withdrawal behaviors. In this study, we obtained supervisory evaluations of taking undeserved work breaks, spending time in idle conversation, and neglecting one's job. A replication of the results of Study 1 in a different work environment with a different means of assessing withdrawal would provide additional support for our hypotheses.

We administered surveys assessing POS to 713 employees working for a chain of large discount electronics and appliance stores located in the Northeastern United States. Employees voluntarily completed the survey during regularly scheduled working hours in conference rooms at each of 10 sites. To encourage employees' candidness, we gave employees written and verbal assurances that their individual responses would be kept confidential. For each employee, the name of a direct supervisor was obtained from company records. Supervisors rated each employee's level of withdrawal. In all, 94 supervisors provided ratings ($M = 6.8$ employees per supervisor, range = 3-19).

A total of 702 employees (98%) returned completed surveys and, of these, we were able to match 669 (95%) with supervisor evaluations. Twenty-nine of the matched employees were not included in the final sample because information was not available for more than one other employee in their work group (too few coworkers to calculate a meaningful value for group-level withdrawal). In the final sample, 45% were hourly salespeople, 34% were hourly paid sales support employees (e.g., cashiers, stockers), 15% were salaried support employees, and 6% were salaried salespeople. The mean tenure of these employees was 3.9 years ($SD = 4.0$), and 73% were men.

Measures

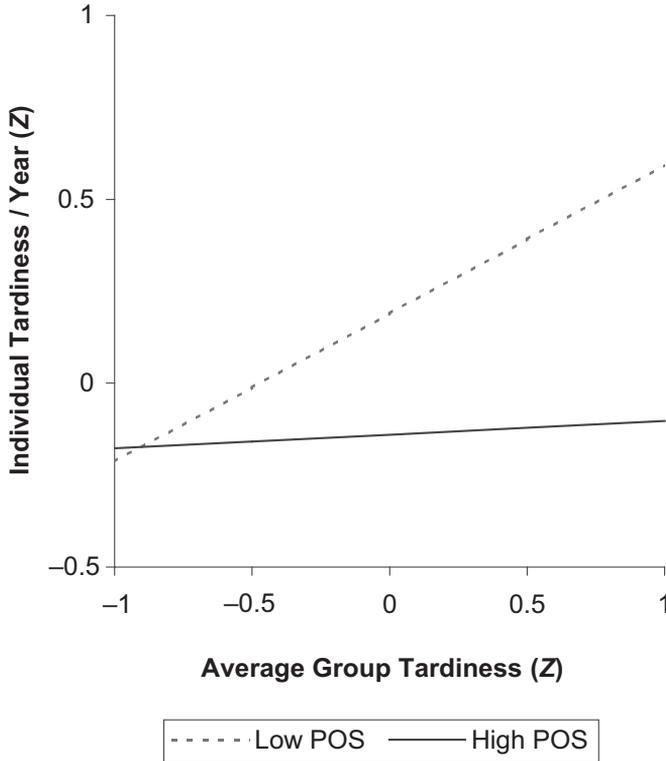
Perceived organizational support. Because we were permitted more time to survey employees than in the first study, 10 rather than 6 items were used. Although the SPOS has generally been found to have high internal reliability (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), recent

Table 2
Hierarchical Regression Results for Moderation Analyses for Studies 1 and 2

Step	Variable	Study 1: Tardiness			Study 2: Withdrawal		
		Stand. β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ² Change	Stand. β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ² Change
1	Tenure	-.17	-2.26*	.12**	-.05	-1.44	.29**
	Plant Average group withdrawal (AGW)	.21	2.42*				
2	Perceived organizational support	.19	2.32*		.51	15.01**	
	(POS)	-.13	-1.69		-.15	-4.51**	
2	Tenure	-.18	-2.39*	.02*	-.05	-1.54	.01*
	Plant	.22	2.56*				
	AGW	.22	2.66**		.50	15.03**	
	POS	-.17	-2.09*		-.15	-4.54**	
	(AGW) \times (POS)	-.15	-1.98*		-.08	-2.38*	

Note: Stand. = standardized.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 1
The Moderating Influence of POS on the Relationship Between
Average Group Tardiness and Individual Tardiness



Note: POS = perceived organizational support. High and low POS are, respectively, 1 *SD* above and 1 *SD* below the mean.

findings indicate gains in reliability and predictive validity when the number of items is low and additional items are added (Hellman, Fuqua, & Worley, 2006; Worley, Fuqua, & Hellman, 2006). The scale's reliability was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$).

Withdrawal behavior. A search of frequently used measures of in-role and extra-role performance (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Williams & Anderson, 1991) found three relevant items related to withdrawal behavior that were adapted for the present study: taking undeserved work breaks, spending time in idle conversation, and neglecting aspects of the job one is obligated to perform. Supervisors rated employees on each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The scale's internal reliability was modest (Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$), but the scale was retained because of its objective nature and conceptual importance (cf. Schmitt, 1996).

Covariate. Organizational tenure was obtained from employee records.

Results

The supervisor-rated scale used to measure individual withdrawal behavior also was used to measure average work group withdrawal. For this group variable, a value was assigned to each employee that reflected an average of the withdrawal levels reported by the supervisor for all employees in his or her work group, excluding the employee's own level of withdrawal. As in Study 1, we conducted a one-way ANOVA on withdrawal using work group as the grouping variable to justify the appropriateness of aggregating withdrawal at the group level. We also calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient to assess the proportion of variation accounted for by work group. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there were significant between-group differences for withdrawal, $F(93, 545) = 4.90, p < .001$, justifying its aggregation in the current study. In addition, $ICC(1) = .04$, indicating that 4% of the variance in withdrawal existed between groups. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of all Study 2 variables can be seen in Table 3.

Hierarchical regression analysis assessed whether POS lessened the relationship between group withdrawal and individual employee withdrawal. Results are shown in Table 2. To reduce potential collinearity between the interaction terms and their component variables, all component scales were converted to Z-scores prior to the calculation of the interaction term. Tenure with the organization, average group withdrawal, and POS were entered in the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis. Consistent with past research and Hypotheses 1 and 2, both average group withdrawal and POS showed significant relationships with individual withdrawal in the predicted directions. In the second step, we added the multiplicative composite of POS and average work group withdrawal and found an interactive effect on individual withdrawal. The interaction suggested that the positive relationship between work group withdrawal and individual withdrawal was reduced among individuals with high POS.

To examine this interaction further, we plotted regression lines representing the relationship between average group withdrawal and individual withdrawal in individuals with low and high levels of POS (see Figure 2). Simple slope analyses showed that for employees with low POS, there was a significant positive relationship between group withdrawal and individual withdrawal, $\beta = .58, t(634) = 16.61, p < .001$. Among individuals with high POS, there was still a significant relationship between group withdrawal and individual withdrawal, $\beta = .43, t(634) = 12.40, p < .001$. However, the relationship was significantly weaker among individuals with high POS than those with low POS, $t(634) = -2.38, p < .05$. The pattern of these results was consistent with Hypothesis 3, holding that the relationship between group and individual withdrawal becomes weaker as POS increases. Comparison of Figures 1 and 2 suggests that the effects of POS in lessening the relationship between group and individual withdrawal behavior were weaker than in the first study. Nevertheless, the results provide a conceptual replication of the first study, adding to its generality. In combination with the findings of Study 1, these findings suggest that employees are less likely to withdraw from work activities in the presence of coworkers who withdraw if such behavior violates their positive exchange relationship with their organization.

General Discussion

Among two samples of employees, POS lessened the relationship between the aggregate withdrawal behavior of the work group and individual employees' withdrawal behavior.

Table 3
Study 2 Scale Reliabilities and Intercorrelations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Tenure	3.89	4.00	(-)			
2. Individual withdrawal	1.68	.75	-.14**	(.65)		
3. Average group withdrawal	1.68	.52	-.14**	.52**	(-)	
4. Perceived organizational support	3.47	1.29	-.12**	-.17**	-.02	(.90)

Note: *N* = 640. Cronbach's α on diagonal.

***p* < .01.

When POS was low, the work group's tardiness was strongly associated with the individual employee's tardiness (Study 1); the work group's combination of undeserved work breaks, spending time in idle conversation, and neglecting standard job responsibilities was strongly associated with similar neglect by the individual employee (Study 2). In the first study, with high POS, the positive association between group tardiness and individual tardiness was eliminated. In the second study, weaker but nonetheless reliable effects were obtained.

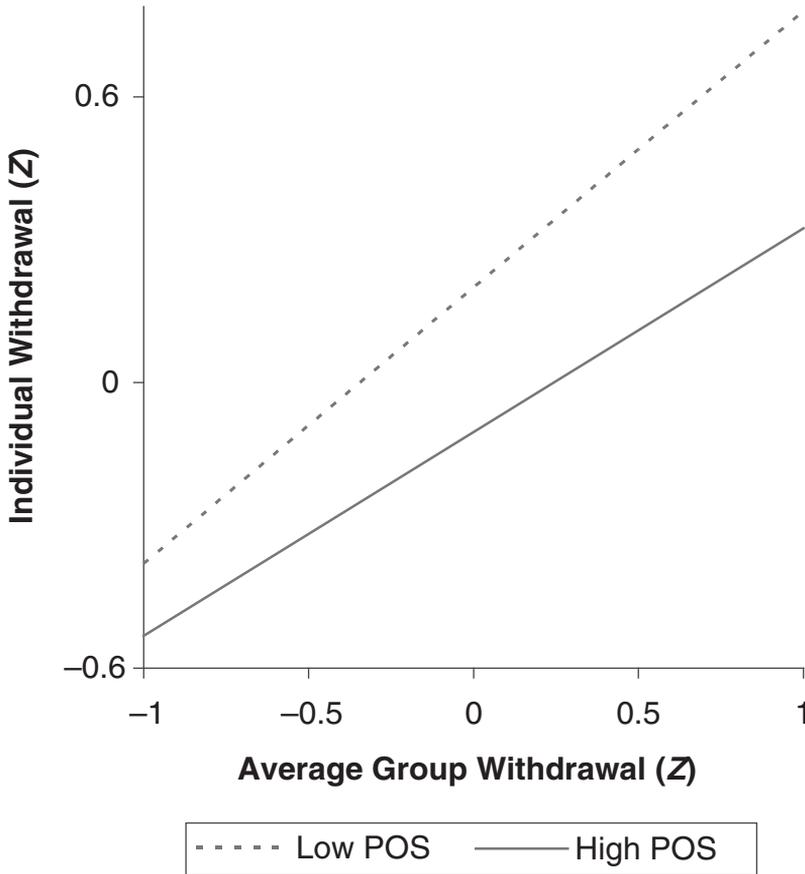
The findings that POS lessened the relationship between individual and group withdrawal are consistent with organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001). Based on the reciprocity norm, POS would lead employees to feel an obligation to repay favorable treatment (Eisenberger et al., 2001) and to avoid harming the organization. Although some work groups sanction withdrawal behaviors that benefit the individual employee at a cost to the organization, employees high in POS would view such behaviors as a violation of their positive reciprocal relationship with the organization. Therefore, high POS individuals would be motivated to meet their exchange obligations by remaining more fully engaged in their work responsibilities.

The results are consistent with prior findings of a negative relationship between POS and withdrawal behaviors (e.g., Allen et al., 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Randall et al., 1999). The present findings extend organizational support theory by showing that POS not only acts as a deterrent to individual withdrawal behavior but increases resistance to the opportunities for withdrawal behavior potentially encouraged by the high levels of withdrawal behavior of fellow employees. When group withdrawal behavior occurs at a high rate, the salience of the individual employee's withdrawal behavior decreases and detection and punishment may become less likely. POS serves to reduce the tendency to take personal advantage of such opportunities because employees also recognize the opportunities and obligations brought about by POS.

Eisenberger and colleagues (1986) found that the negative relationship between POS and employee absenteeism was strongest among those employees endorsing a reciprocal exchange relationship with their organization. Together with the present findings, this suggests the importance of reciprocation of favorable treatment in employees' desire to avoid harming the organization. Future research should investigate whether strong acceptance of the reciprocity norm applied to work will increase the influence of POS in reducing withdrawal behavior in the face of high group levels of such activity.

Although the findings from both of our studies are consistent with theory, the graphs of the results suggest different patterns. In the study of tardiness, high POS eliminated the relation

Figure 2
The Moderating Influence of POS on the Relation Between
Average Group Withdrawal and Individual Withdrawal



Note: POS = perceived organizational support. High and low POS are, respectively, 1 *SD* above and 1 *SD* below the mean.

between group and individual tardiness. However, in Study 2, the relation between group and individual withdrawal was only reduced. This difference could be due to a number of factors. The kinds of employment (manufacturing vs. retail) differed, as did the measure of withdrawal behavior. Finally, tardiness was assessed objectively in the first study, whereas supervisors rated withdrawal behavior in the second study. Although the locus of the difference is unclear, the effect's occurrence with different employees and different measures of withdrawal behavior suggest the generality of the findings.

Limitations of the current studies should be noted. Because the data are cross-sectional, they can be said to confirm the research hypotheses and advance organizational support theory

without, of course, providing direct evidence of causality. As an alternative to the present interpretation, individual employee withdrawal might lead to the individual's work group members withdrawing more frequently; based on the individual's degree of social influence in the group, the group as a whole could conform to the individual's behavior. The complex interactions we observed between group withdrawal and POS in predicting individual withdrawal provide evidence toward the predicted sequence of variables, as do past longitudinal studies showing evidence of group influences on individual withdrawal (G. Blau, 1995; Mathieu & Kohler, 1990). Future longitudinal research, specifically invoking POS, would provide stronger evidence of the effects demonstrated in the current studies.

The interactions observed in the current studies accounted for relatively little variance in the withdrawal outcomes (2% of tardiness, 1% of supervisor-rated withdrawal). However, such small values for R^2 are common in studies of organizational behavior, especially when involving interactional effects on objective or other-rated data. Also, a small R^2 does not in itself indicate that a finding is unimportant.

In addition to tardiness, wasting time, and neglecting job responsibilities, the influence of POS on increasing resistance to other withdrawal behaviors might be examined. For example, Mathieu and Kohler (1990) found a relationship between work group and individual absenteeism. POS might lessen this relationship. POS also might reduce the relationship between group and individual performance of active counterproductive behaviors that harm the organization, such as employee theft of organization property (Greenberg, 1997).

POS is one of a number of psychological factors that might influence the relationship between work group and individual withdrawal behavior. Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998) found that the relation between work group and individual antisocial behavior was strongest when there was less variability in the group's self-reported antisocial actions. Members of groups with less variability in withdrawal norms might be more resistant to the influence of POS. In addition, Drago and Wooden (1992) reported that cohesion was positively related to self-reported absence when satisfaction was low but negatively related to absence when satisfaction was high. This suggests that positive attitudes toward the organization (e.g., POS, satisfaction) actually may inhibit the development of withdrawal norms in cohesive groups.

The present research supports the assertion by Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly that "antisocial groups encourage antisocial individual behavior" (1998: 670). Based on their findings, Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998) suggested that managers should punish negative behaviors to prevent their contagion. What the current studies add to this literature is the possibility that positive organizational actions also serve as a deterrent to the contagion of withdrawal. Enjoyable activities associated with withdrawal behavior are often great, whereas opportunities for detection are frequently limited. POS has the advantage of enlisting felt obligation and affective commitment in combating withdrawal behavior (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Prior research suggests that POS is enhanced by fair treatment, supervisor support, and favorable rewards and job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). With the caveat that the magnitudes of the present effects were limited, managers may consider such favorable treatment as a way to reduce employee withdrawal behavior.

Overall, the findings in this article suggest the importance of a favorable exchange relationship between employee and employer for reducing employees' potential susceptibility to negative work group influences. As shown in the present studies, when employees perceive that their organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions, they are

less likely to withdraw from their usual work responsibilities, even when such behaviors are encouraged through the high levels of withdrawal displayed by coworkers.

References

- Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. 1991. *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Allen, D. G., Shore, L. M., & Griffeth, R. W. 2003. The role of perceived organizational support and supportive human resource practices in the turnover process. *Journal of Management*, 29: 99-118.
- Aselage, J., & Eisenberger, R. 2003. Perceived organizational support and psychological contracts: A theoretical integration. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24: 491-509.
- Bandura, A. 1977. *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. 1986. *Social foundations for thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bennett, R. J., & Robinson, S. L. 2000. Development of a measure of workplace deviance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85: 349-360.
- Blau, G. 1995. Influence of group lateness on individual lateness: A cross-level examination. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38: 1483-1496.
- Blau, P. M. 1964. *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: John Wiley.
- Bommer, W. H., Miles, E. W., & Grover, S. L. 2003. Does one good turn deserve another? Coworker influences on employee citizenship. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24: 181-196.
- Cropanzano, R., Howes, J. C., Grandey, A. A., & Toth, P. 1997. The relationship of organizational politics and support to work behaviors, attitudes, and stress. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18: 159-180.
- Cropanzano, R., Rupp, D. E., Mohler, C. J., & Schminke, M. 2001. Three roads to organizational justice. In J. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in personnel and human resources management*, vol. 20: 1-113. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Drago, R., & Wooden, M. 1992. The determinants of labor absence: Economic factors and workgroup norms across countries. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 45: 764-778.
- Dunlop, P. D., & Lee, K. 2004. Workplace deviance, organizational citizenship behavior, and business unit performance: The bad apples do spoil the whole barrel. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25: 67-80.
- Ehrhart, M. G., & Naumann, S. E. 2004. Organizational citizenship behavior in work groups: A group norms approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89: 960-974.
- Eisenberger, R., Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, B., Lynch, P. D., & Rhoades, L. 2001. Reciprocation of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86: 42-51.
- Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P., & Davis-LaMastro, V. 1990. Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75: 51-59.
- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. 1986. Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71: 500-507.
- Eisenberger, R., Stinglhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, I., & Rhoades, L. 2002. Perceived supervisor support: Contributions to perceived organizational support and employee retention. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87: 565-573.
- Gellatly, I. R. 1995. Individual and group determinants of group absenteeism: Test of a causal model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 16: 469-485.
- Gouldner, A. W. 1960. The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 25: 161-178.
- Greenberg, J. 1997. A social influence model of employee theft: Beyond the fraud triangle. In R. J. Lewicki, R. J. Bies, & B. H. Sheppard (Eds.), *Research on negotiation in organizations*, vol. 6: 29-51. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Hellman, C. M., Fuqua, D. R., & Worley, J. A. 2006. The effects of mean age and number of items on score reliability: A reliability generalization study on the survey of perceived organizational support. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66: 631-642.
- Homans, G. C. 1950. *The human group*. Cambridge, MA: Harcourt Brace.
- Latane, B., Williams, K., & Harkins, S. 1979. Many hands make light the work: The causes and consequences of social loafing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37: 822-832.

- Lau, V. C. S., Au, W. T., & Ho, J. M. C. 2003. A qualitative and quantitative review of antecedents of counterproductive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 18: 73-99.
- Mars, G. 1974. Dock pilferage: A case study in occupational theft. In M. Warner (Ed.), *The sociology of the workplace*: 200-210. New York: Halsted.
- Mathieu, J. E., & Kohler, S. S. 1990. A cross-level examination of group absence influences on individual absence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75: 217-220.
- Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W., & Steers, R. M. 1982. *Organizational linkages: The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Murphy, K. R. 1993. *Honesty in the workplace*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Randall, M. L., Cropanzano, R., Bormann, C. A., & Birjulin, A. 1999. Organizational politics and organizational support as predictors of work attitudes, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20: 159-174.
- Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. 2002. Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87: 698-714.
- Rhoades, L., Eisenberger, R., & Armeli, S. 2001. Affective commitment to the organization: The contribution of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86: 825-836.
- Robinson, S. L., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. M. 1998. Monkey see, monkey do: The influence of work groups on the anti-social behavior of employees. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41: 658-672.
- Rousseau, D. M. 1995. *Psychological contracts in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schmitt, N. 1996. Use and abuses of coefficient alpha. *Psychological Assessment*, 8: 350-353.
- Shore, L. M., & Shore, T. H. 1995. Perceived organizational support and organizational justice. In R. S. Cropanzano & K. M. Kacmar (Eds.), *Organizational politics, justice, and support: Managing the social climate of the workplace*, 149-164. Westport, CT: Quorum.
- Shore, L. M., & Tetrick, L. E. 1991. A construct validity study of the survey of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76: 637-643.
- Smith, C. A., Organ, D., & Near, J. P. 1983. Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature and antecedents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68: 653-663.
- Vardi, Y., & Weitz, E. 2004. *Misbehavior in organizations: Theory, research, and management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Wayne, S. J., Shore, L. M., & Liden, R. C. 1997. Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40: 82-111.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. 1991. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 17: 601-617.
- Worley, J. A., Fuqua, D. R., & Hellman, C. M. 2006. *The survey of perceived organizational support: Which measure should we use?* Unpublished manuscript, University of Oklahoma.

Biographical Notes

Paul Eder earned his PhD at the University of Delaware; he is a management and strategy consultant at The Center for Organizational Excellence. His research interests include perceived organizational support, negative reciprocity, and employee creativity.

Robert Eisenberger earned his PhD at the University of California, Riverside; he is a professor of psychology at the University of Delaware. His current research interests include perceived organizational support, creativity, intrinsic interest, and learned industriousness.