

CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANTICIPATED CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT
TO EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT AND PERFORMANCE

by
Zihan Liu

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Chair of Committee: Dr. Robert Eisenberger

Committee Member: Dr. Christiane Spitzmueller

Committee Member: Dr. Rodica Damian

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ABSTRACT

Increasing uncertainties in the working environment have drawn the attention of employees to the possible changes in future organizational support. Extending previous research on employees' perceptions regarding current valuation and care from the organization (perceived organizational support, or POS), anticipated change in organizational support (ACOS) concerns employees' perception that their valuation by the organization will increase or decrease in the future. The current study compared mediational mechanisms that may distinguish ACOS from POS. Using three-wave data being collected from Korean employees, ACOS was found to relate to employee positive prospect-based emotions (i.e., hope) beyond the effect of POS, which, in turn, was associated with increased affective organizational commitment. The findings of this study can potentially contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of employees' future outlook of the relationship with the organization.

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Contributions of Anticipated Change in Organizational Support to Employee Commitment and Performance

How employees relate to their work organization is one of the fundamental aspects of employees' organizational life (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Shore et al., 2012).

Organizational support theory (OST) is a major account of the employee-organization relationship, suggesting that employees will develop a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (perceived organizational support, or POS; Eisenberger et al., 1986, 2020). A high level of POS would signify the organization's willingness to recognize and reward employees' efforts on behalf of the organization and help fulfill employees' socio-emotional needs.

Increasing uncertainties concerning future treatment at work, reflected by the high frequency of furloughs and changes in working patterns, particularly after the occurrence of COVID-19, have raised concerns for employees regarding their future relationship with the organization (Blustein et al., 2020; Mantler et al., 2005; Shoss et al., 2020; Spurk & Straub, 2020). Employees may not be able to obtain sufficient information based on current POS to fully determine future support by the organization. To reduce uncertainties and consider ways to adapt to the constantly changing working environment, employees today may be more likely to monitor signs of possible future changes in organizational support, such as indications of organizational change in structure, policy, and personnel. Extending OST, I propose that employees may form a general perception concerning the future changes in the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (anticipated change in organizational support, or ACOS; Wen et al., 2020).

Similar to POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986), employees would form ACOS to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased effort and meet socioemotional needs in the future. Specifically, when employees perceive that the organization will more than in the past value their contributions and care about their well-being in the future (i.e., positive ACOS), it may signal increased dedication to a long-term exchange relationship by the organization and indicate the organization's readiness to provide help and reward employees' contributions in the future. Also, employees with positive ACOS tend to envision future scenarios in which the organization will provide them with increased care and recognition, satisfying socio-emotional needs (e.g., approval, esteem, and emotional support). As such, employees may be more willing to invest in their social exchange relationship with the organization by assuming more positive work attitudes and by engaging in increased work-related behaviors valued by the organization. Consistent with this view, our previous research found that positive ACOS contributed to increased affective commitment and job satisfaction beyond the influence of POS (Wen et al., 2020). It should be noted that ACOS can also be negative in direction, implying possible decreases in future organizational support. Negative ACOS would reduce employees' perceived value of the social exchange relationship and lower their expectations of rewards for high effort and fulfillment of socio-emotional needs, resulting in decreased efforts at work.

However, the mediating mechanism underlying the positive effect of ACOS is still not clear. Investigations of the distinct mediation mechanisms can be a promising approach to further identify the unique contributions of ACOS in the employee-organization relationship. There have been multiple empirical studies exploring the mechanisms through which POS contributes to favorable job attitudes and performance. Consistent with the social exchange theory, POS has been found to elicit employees' perceived felt obligation to reciprocate the organization with

greater efforts on behalf of the organization, leading to increased affective commitment and in-role performance (Caesens et al., 2016; Eisenberger et al., 2001). By signaling the organization's readiness to reward employee performance and satisfy employee socio-emotional needs, POS also contributes to enhanced gratitude toward the organization and the resultant increased performance and reduced turnover (Eisenberger et al., 20; Ford et al., 2018).

Similarly, ACOS may also elicit employees' positive beliefs and affects in response to anticipated increases in favorable treatment from the organization beyond the influence of POS. I propose one cognitive mechanism (i.e., increased instrumentality) and one affective mechanism (i.e., increased hope) connecting ACOS with favorable work outcomes. First, by signaling an increase in future organizational valuation and concern, positive ACOS, like POS, should increase employee perceived instrumentality of the relationship with the organization, referring to employee beliefs that their efforts would be increasingly recognized and rewarded by the organization. Such beliefs will cause them to be more willing to strengthen the social associations and make investments in the relationship by performing favorable work behaviors in exchange for future benefits (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Second, positive ACOS may evoke employees' anticipations of upcoming favorable treatment by the organization, triggering positive emotions about the prospect of the relationship with the organization, reflected by increased hope toward the organization. Hope, as an anticipatory emotion, depicts currently experienced positive affect related to uncertain favorable prospects of future events (Ortony et al., 1990). Previous researchers argued that anticipatory emotions would elicit motivational tendencies and guide individual actions to bring about possible, desirable future states (Baumgartner et al., 2008). Specifically, individuals with high levels of hope would be more persistent in their goal-directed behaviors (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Lazarus, 1991). Thus, when

ACOS is high, hope may provide employees with the motivation to increase their efforts directed at future rewards from the organization (cf. Baumgartner et al., 2008).

Further, given the temporal perspectives involved in social exchange relationships, individuals' subjective experiences of the past, present, and future may impact how they react to POS and ACOS. Temporal focus, a tripartite individual difference construct, reflects the degree to which individuals characteristically allocate their attention to the past, present, and future (Bluedorn, 2002; Shipp et al., 2009). Past-focused and present-focused employees tend to attend more to the memories of past supportive treatment and present experiences of organizational support, strengthening the associations between POS and felt obligation and gratitude. Future-focused employees may pay more attention to how the organization will treat them in the future. As such, employees with high levels of future focus should be more likely to generate perceptions of instrumentality and the prospect-based emotions of hope in response to high levels of ACOS. Consistent with this view, previous research on ACOS revealed that the relationships of ACOS with affective commitment and innovative behaviors were stronger for high future-focused employees (Wen et al., 2020).

Taken together, as shown in Figure 1, the present research proposes that a) felt obligation and gratitude mediate the effect of POS on desirable work outcomes, such as affective commitment and performance; b) perceived instrumentality and hope mediate the effects of ACOS and POS on favorable work outcomes; c) employees' dispositional tendencies to think about the past, present, or future events (i.e., temporal focus) moderate the relationships of POS and ACOS with the respective mediators and the resulting favorable work-related outcomes.

The present study makes important contributions to our understanding of the employee-organization relationship. First, this study assesses the mediating role of perceived

instrumentality and hope linking ACOS to favorable work outcomes. This research is the first to explore the different mechanisms that underpin the relationship of ACOS with these work-related outcomes. Previous studies distinguished ACOS and POS by their differential relationships with various antecedents and their unique contributions in predicting employee affective commitment, job satisfaction, and innovative performance (Wen et al., 2020). Extending previous research, this study investigates whether ACOS works through similar mechanisms as POS, involving felt obligation and gratitude and whether ACOS makes contributions through other under-examined mechanisms involving perceived instrumentality and hope. Through investigations of the mediation of a prospect-based emotion (i.e., hope), the current study incorporates a future-oriented approach to investigate the role of anticipatory emotions and supplements the research in the employee-organization relationship with a future time perspective. By exploring the distinctive mediating mechanisms, this study can not only provide a refined understanding of how ACOS influences employee job attitudes and behaviors but also offer further evidence to distinguish the effects of future organizational support and current organizational support in the employee-organization relationship.

Second, this study examines how individual differences to think about the past, present, and future events (i.e., temporal focus) may exert an influence on employees' assessment of their relationship with the organization. Individuals with a past or present focus tend to give more consideration to past or current organizational treatment, so they are expected to react more strongly to POS. In contrast, future-focused employees may likely focus more on future consequences (Shipp et al., 2009; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999) and thus be more strongly influenced by ACOS. Exploring which kind of employees will react more strongly to POS or ACOS can

provide evidence to further differentiate the mechanisms underlying current organizational support and changes in future organizational support.

Finally, this study explores the benefits of ACOS on multiple favorable work outcomes beyond the influence of POS, including affective commitment and extra-role performance, and indicates practical utilities for employers to identify effective ways to enhance employee proactivity and performance. When an organization encounters temporary challenges to provide support to its employees, the organization may consider ways to enhance employee ACOS. For instance, communications conveying the organization's continued sincere regard for employees' welfare and upcoming plans for improving employee job conditions as well as establishments of formal or informal recognition programs for enhanced performance may facilitate the anticipation of increased future support and foster employee performance.

Organizational Support Theory: Current and Expected Favorable Treatment

OST maintains that employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution to evaluate the organization's readiness to reward improved performance and meet socioemotional needs (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Perceived favorable treatment of employees by the organization and its representatives, including fairness, supervisor and coworker support, human resource practices, and job conditions, contributes substantially to POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When perceiving a high level of POS, based on the reciprocity norm, employees tend to invest more effort at work on behalf of the organization, develop more positive orientations toward the organization and work, enjoy enhanced well-being and engage in increased favorable work-related behaviors, including in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger,

2002).

Employees may not only care about how the organization treats them in the past or at the present time but also tend to attend to signals concerning possible changes in future treatment from the organization. Extending OST, Wen et al. (2020) introduced the concept of ACOS, referring to employees' expectations regarding the extent to which the level of support from their organization will increase or decrease in the future. Employees may develop ACOS by mechanisms similar to the formation of POS. As suggested by OST, employees tend to personify their work organization and try to determine the supportive or exploitative intentions of the organization and its representatives toward them (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 2020; Levinson, 1965). In addition, the development of ACOS depends on how employees interpret the favorable treatment they received. Like POS, if employees believe the anticipated increases in favorable treatment are apparent voluntary choices out of the organization's sincere regard for their welfare, rather than due to external constraints as government regulations or union negotiations beyond the organization's control, it may further facilitate the formation of positive ACOS (Eisenberger et al., 1997).

By signaling the assurance that future help will be available from the organization, positive ACOS may lead to various desirable work-related outcomes, including increased affective commitment, extra-role performance, and innovative performance. Employees' anticipation of increases in organizational support could suggest that the organization, as a reliable exchange partner, will reciprocate high effort with increased rewards and will supply increased help of various kinds when needed. Envisioning future scenarios where the organization will increasingly provide care to its employees can meet employee socio-emotional needs and strengthen their attachment to the organization. Further, anticipating such positive

future returns, employees with positive ACOS may invest their efforts, before the actual receipt of support, by engaging in work-related behaviors valued by the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1987; Gouldner, 1960).

There has been some preliminary evidence from research concerning prospective or new employees' anticipation of organizational support. For instance, previous research found that anticipated organizational support positively predicted job seekers' intentions to pursue employment with the organization (Wayne & Casper, 2012). Anticipated future support of the organization was also found to be positively associated with employees' commitment toward the newly merged organization after the merger process (Mottola et al., 1997). Zheng et al. (2016) found that new employees with high levels of anticipated organizational support, examined prior to the first day of work, were more likely to seek out task-related information, contributing to higher-quality leader-member exchange and better adaptation to the new work environment.

These findings on *anticipated organizational support* revealed that prospective employees would generate anticipation of future organization help before the start of their jobs, and they will consider the implications of these expected treatments in their relationship with the organization. However, we need to note that compared to new hires, current employees already hold a general perception of current organizational support (i.e., POS) based on a cumulative history of organizational treatment (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When forming expectations of the organization's future supportiveness, employees may be more sensitive to possible changes and tend to view the current organizational support as a reference point to evaluate how future support will decrease or increase (Chen et al., 2011). Considering that, beyond previous research on prospective employees' anticipated organizational support, research on ACOS focuses more on deviations of employees' expected support from the current

support received, ranging from great decrease to great increase.

Furthermore, consistent with such arguments, our previous empirical research found that ACOS was positively associated with enhanced affective commitment, job satisfaction, and innovative performance (Wen et al., 2020), supporting the positive influence of ACOS beyond the well-examined influence of POS. However, there is a lack of studies exploring the pathways through which ACOS leads to these favorable outcomes. A joint investigation of the mediating mechanisms of POS and ACOS can offer a more comprehensive understanding of their distinctive contributions to the employee-organization relationship.

Mediating Mechanisms of POS and ACOS

The Mediating Role of Felt Obligation

The OST draws upon the social exchange framework to explain how POS contributes to a variety of desirable behavioral and attitudinal outcomes (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). In the social exchange relationship with the organization, employees invest their effort and loyalty in return for the material rewards, including pay and fringe benefits, and socioemotional resources, such as approval, esteem, and emotional support provided by the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Receipt of favorable treatment by another party would elicit the norm of reciprocity, leading employees to generate a prescriptive belief to reciprocate (i.e., felt obligation) (Gouldner, 1960; Wayne et al., 1997). Fulfilling such obligations can help individuals maintain positive self-images, avoid social stigma associated with violations of reciprocity norms, and promote future favorable treatment from the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001). POS signals the organization's readiness to reward employees' efforts on its behalf and can help satisfy employees' socio-emotional needs. As such, receiving a high level of support from the organization will make employees feel obligated to care about the organization's welfare and

help it to achieve its goals by engaging in behaviors valued by the organization (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

POS may lead to increased favorable job attitudes and performance through enhanced felt obligation. Affective commitment refers to employee emotional bonds to the organization, which involves increased positive affect associated with involvement in the organization, more loyalty and dedication, and a greater willingness to stay employed with the organization (Allen, 2016; Meyer, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1991). When perceiving a high level of POS, employees would feel obligated to return the organization's positive valuation with affective organizational commitment, prolonged organizational tenure, and increased performance (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Extra-role performance refers to employees' discretionary behaviors contributing to organization effectiveness beyond formal job requirements (George & Brief, 1992). Perceptions of obligations to repay the organization will motivate employees to engage in more voluntary efforts to help the organization achieve its objectives, resulting in improved extra-role performance. In the highly changing working environment, employees' self-initiated and change-focused actions such as innovation are strongly valued by the organization as a potential determinant of the organization's effectiveness in the long term (Griffin et al., 2007). Innovative behaviors, including the production or adoption of useful ideas and idea implementation (Scott & Bruce, 1994), may thus serve as useful ways for employees to reciprocate the organization and thereby strengthen the employee-organization relationship. In accord with this view, it was found that employees' felt obligation mediated the relationships of POS with organizational commitment, task performance, and turnover intention (Arshadi, 2011; Caesens et al., 2014). Felt obligation has also been found to mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and employee creativity (Pan et al., 2012). Thus, I propose that POS is

associated with increased affective organizational commitment, extra-role performance, and innovative behaviors through the influence of felt obligation.

Hypothesis 1. Felt obligation mediates the relationships of POS with affective commitment (H1a), extra-role performance (H1b), and innovative performance (H1c).

The Mediating Role of Gratitude

In addition to the well-established role of the norm of reciprocity, social exchange relationships may be associated with emotional uplifts or “effervescence” among employees (Lawler & Yoon, 1996), acting as another possible mechanism linking organizational support to these favorable work outcomes. According to the attributional view of emotions, when receiving favorable or unfavorable treatment, individuals first experience primitive generalized positive or negative affects as immediate and automatic responses to the desirable consequences (Weiner, 1985). In order to understand such affective experiences, individuals make attributions of specific emotions to explain the positive or negative affect experienced in social interactions (Lawler, 2001; Lawler & Thye, 1999; Ortony et al., 1990). According to the affect theory of social exchange (Lawler, 2001), gratitude is an important component in social exchange processes. Individuals will generate gratitude when they attribute benefits received to the efforts of the benefactor with a concern for their well-being (McCullough et al., 2001; Weiner, 1985). Gratitude may become even stronger when individuals believe that the benefactor intends to be helpful, the benefits come with a cost for the benefactor, and the benefits are of great value (Tesser et al., 1968).

Applied to the employee-organization relationship, attributions of general positive feelings obtained from repeated successful exchanges to the organization’s discretion and sincere regard would lead to gratitude. Such feelings of gratitude can be directed toward the organization

itself, as individuals tend to ascribe human-like qualities to the organization and view it as a powerful entity with benevolent or malevolent intentions (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Thus, employees would attribute the behaviors of organizational agents (e.g., supervisors and coworkers) to the intentions and purposes of the organization and direct their gratitude toward the organization when treated favorably by its agents (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Gratitude toward the organization may, in turn, promote the exchange relationship and lead to favorable work-related outcomes. As suggested by the affect theory of social exchange (Lawler, 2001), when employees' experiences within the social exchanges are rewarding, they may attach positive affect to the social relationship with the organization and be motivated to stay committed to the exchange relationship to repeat and reinforce these desirable experiences, contributing to the enhanced affective attachment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2018). Further, in order to maintain the rewarding positive emotions, employees would strive to maintain and enhance the relationship with the organization by reciprocating with behaviors valued by the organization, such as increased extra-role performance and innovative behaviors. Consistent with this view, Ford et al. (2018) found that POS was positively related to employee chronic gratitude directed toward the organization, which in turn positively predicted change in organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, I expect that gratitude will mediate the influence of POS on affective commitment, extra-role performance, and innovative performance.

Hypothesis 2. Gratitude mediates the relationships of POS with affective commitment (H2a), extra-role performance (H2b), and innovative performance (H2c).

The Mediating Role of Hope

People generate emotional responses to both actual consequences and prospective consequences (Ortony et al., 1990), suggesting that employees' emotions in their organization life may be influenced not only by current support received from the organization but also by expectations of future organizational support. For example, one may feel hopeful about his or her future in the organization because of the appointment of a friendly person as the new supervisor. Ortony et al. (1990) classified such emotions into prospect-relevant emotions, which are characterized as affective reactions to the prospect of future events. Baumgartner et al. (2008) further clarified the definition of anticipatory emotions and conceptualized hope as one of the prototypical anticipatory emotions. When individuals think about the possible future events that have desired consequences, they tend to experience anticipatory hope manifesting as feelings of excitement, optimism, and confidence (Ortony et al., 1990; Snyder & Lopez, 2001). As the actual consequence of the event has not been confirmed, hope is based on expectations of the desirable future experiences involving uncertainty as a critical component (Baumgartner et al., 2008). For instance, previous research in non-work contexts has found that reading positive evaluations of a restaurant can lead to enhanced feelings of hope regarding future consumption (Bee & Madrigal, 2013).

Hope may encourage individuals to approach and stay committed to pursuing the expected desirable outcomes (Lazarus, 1991). Averill et al. (1990) argued that individuals experiencing a high level of hope "should be willing to take appropriate action to achieve their goals if action is possible." As such, employees, excited by hope, may work harder and be more persistent in their effort to achieve the expected positive consequences, especially when they perceive high controllability of the situation (Baumgartner et al., 2008).

In accord with the original article on POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986), POS represents not only the organization's temporary favorable view of employees but also commitment to them. Thus, POS may evoke the employee's emotion of hope for favorable future outcomes of their relationship with the organization. Employees develop POS to assess the organization's willingness to reward their performance and meet their socio-emotional needs (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). In this case, high levels of POS may imply that the organization will reward increases in their subsequent performance. Employees with high POS may also believe that the organization will stand up in the future instead of dismissing them when they encounter challenges at work, satisfying their need for esteem and emotional support. Accordingly, Wang et al. (2013) found that POS mitigated the influence of work-related stressors on employee well-being by conveying to employees that they would be backed up by the organization (Wang et al., 2013). High levels of commitment to its employees by the organization, represented by high POS, may lend employees some evidence to believe that the forthcoming working experience in the organization would be desirable, which may trigger employees' positive anticipatory emotions accordingly.

However, in the increasingly changing working environment, information based on current POS may only be a partial guide for future favorable treatment by the organization. Hope may also be incurred by anticipated changes in the organization's supportiveness in the future (ACOS). Employees form ACOS to assess changes in the organization's readiness to meet employee socio-emotional needs and reward employees' efforts in the future. Such anticipation has its unique function in helping employees prepare for and adapt to future changes in organizational support beyond POS. Specifically, when employees construct scenarios where the organization is pictured to show increased rewards for improved performance or to fulfill socio-

emotional needs through displays of approval, esteem, and emotional support, they would feel more hopeful and optimistic about their future pleasant working experience in the organization. The anticipation of fulfilled socio-emotional needs by the organization and the resultant feelings of optimism may provide employees with the fuel for taking the initiative and motivate employees to devote effort on behalf of the organization to bring about the desirable future state (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Taylor & Pham, 1996).

The resultant hope may lead employees to engage in favorable work behaviors through both the formation of behavioral tendencies and the replenishment of personal resources. Employees with high levels of hope may be inspired by feelings of excitement and optimism brought by favorable future scenarios (Baumgartner et al., 2008; Lazarus, 1991), where employees' efforts will be well appreciated, and their socio-emotional needs will be taken care of. As such, employees may be excited to stay attached to the relationship with the organization to maintain positive feelings and engage in behaviors valued by the organization to bring about the desirable future state and achieve the expected rewards and fulfillment of socio-emotional needs. Further, hope, as a positive emotion, can build employees' personal resources and broaden employees' mindsets (Bakker et al., 2012; Fredrickson, 2001). In this case, employees experiencing a high level of hope would have refilled resources to assimilate new information and consider a wide range of discretionary and creative actions to help the organization achieve its goal (Fredrickson, 2001). As a result, increased hope stemming from the anticipated favorable treatment from the organization would foster employees' desire to stay committed to the favorable social exchange and lead employees to proactively increase their performance to better benefit the organization. As such, I propose that hope mediates the effects of ACOS and POS on favorable job attitudes and employee performance.

Hypothesis 3. Hope mediates the relationships of POS with affective commitment (H3a), extra-role performance (H3b), and innovative performance (H3c).

Hypothesis 4. Hope mediates the relationships of ACOS with affective commitment (H4a), extra-role performance (H4b), and innovative performance (H4c) beyond the influence of POS.

The Mediating Role of Perceived Instrumentality

In addition to eliciting hope, ACOS may increase perceptions of the instrumental value of the relationship with the organization, contributing to favorable work outcomes. Instrumentality refers to the belief that enhanced performance will lead to favorable outcomes, such as pay increase, promotion, and recognition (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996; Vroom, 1964). Because individuals are motivated to increase or maximize self-interest in social interactions, instrumentality plays an important role in the development of social exchange relationships (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1974). OST holds that there is a reciprocal relationship between organizational support and performance-reward expectancy (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Shore & Shore, 1995). On the one hand, reward opportunities for increased effort signal the organization's valuation for contributions, enhancing perceptions of organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). On the other hand, general perceptions of organizational support will also lead employees to believe that high performance will be recognized and rewarded by the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Kurtessis et al., 2017). High POS and the associated expectations of reward from the organization imply the organization's valuation of its employees and can help satisfy employees' socio-emotional needs, resulting in increased emotional bonds with the organization. Also, high levels of instrumentality signal the organization's readiness to reciprocate its employees with increased benefits. Thus, employees may increasingly value this

relationship and invest in the relationship with favorable job attitudes and behaviors. Previous research has found that opportunities for rewards and promotions were positively associated with employee affective commitment, job satisfaction, and creative performance (Kooij et al., 2010; Malik et al., 2015).

Beyond the well-established relationship between POS and instrumentality, the anticipation of increases in organizational support may also convey to employees that the organization will increasingly value employees' future contributions. Employees who expect more rewards for their efforts in their future may commit themselves to this perceived reliable and valuable exchange partner and engage in greater efforts to obtain rewards and strengthen their exchange relationship. Thus, instrumentality is expected to mediate the relationships of POS and ACOS with increased affective commitment and performance.

Hypothesis 5. Perceived instrumentality mediates the relationships of POS with affective commitment (H5a), extra-role performance (H5b), and innovative performance (H5c).

Hypothesis 6. Perceived instrumentality mediates the relationships of ACOS with affective commitment (H6a), extra-role performance (H6b), and innovative performance (H6c).

The Moderation of Temporal Focus

Employees' dispositions to focus on past, present or future may differentially impact how they react to POS and ACOS. Such individual differences in temporal focus may serve as an attentional filter, which influences how people process available information and determine their subsequent attitudes and behaviors (Shipp et al., 2009; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). Previous researchers have suggested that different behavioral patterns were associated with temporal focus. For instance, it was argued that individuals with a high level of past focus were more likely to scrutinize previous experiences and be influenced by recollections of the past in

decision-making (Shipp et al., 2009; Strack et al., 1985). Present-focused individuals were thought to have a “here and now” orientation and are more sensitive to current information and more flexible in seizing opportunities (Nadkarni & Chen, 2014; Shipp et al., 2009). Further, future focus was proposed to promote the envisioning of future scenarios and consideration of the long-term consequences (Balliet & Ferris, 2013; Strathman et al., 1994). In work settings, previously established job characteristics, including autonomy, pay, opportunities, and recognition, were more strongly related to turnover intentions for past-focused employees, whereas the anticipation of these job characteristics was more strongly related to current job satisfaction and commitment for future-focused employees (Shipp et al., 2009).

In line with this view, I propose that temporal focus may influence how employees react to POS and ACOS. Past and present-focused individuals tend to dwell on past or recent experiences (Shipp et al., 2009), so they will be more likely to reflect on previous or current treatment at work when evaluating their relationship with the organization. As POS primarily incorporates long-term cumulative and contemporaneous experiences of supportive treatment (Caesens et al., 2016), past and present-focused employees may more strongly value and appreciate POS for fulfilling their socio-emotional needs. Specifically, employees who spend more time thinking about recognition and reward received from the employer may be strongly influenced by POS and form heightened levels of felt obligation and gratitude toward the organization. Thus, past or present temporal orientations are expected to strengthen the effect of POS on felt obligation and gratitude toward the organization.

Hypothesis 7. Employee past focus moderates the relationship of POS with felt obligation (H7a) and gratitude (H7b), such that the relationship is stronger at a high level of past focus.

Hypothesis 8. Employee present focus moderates the relationship of POS with felt obligation (H8a) and gratitude (H8b), such that the relationship is stronger at a high level of present focus.

In contrast, future-focused individuals spend increased time thinking about future events and focus more on the implications of upcoming events for social relationships (Shipp et al., 2009). As such, they may be more likely to anticipate possible future treatment from the organization. These future-focused employees may also be more strongly influenced by the organization's future supportiveness in determining the cognitive and affective evaluations of their relationship with the organization. Previous research indicated that the development of ACOS was primarily determined by anticipated favorable job conditions, such as anticipated changes in supervisor support and human capital (Wen et al., 2020). In this way, high future-focused employees, who think more about their future working experience, may experience greater fulfillment of socio-emotional needs in response to positive ACOS, and thus more strongly value their social associations with the organization and become more optimistic about future working experience. In support of this view, previous research revealed that the relationships of employees' expected future autonomy, opportunities for advancement, and recognition of their next jobs with current job satisfaction were greater for those with high future temporal focus (Shipp et al., 2009). However, Shipp et al. (2009) focused on the anticipated characteristics of employees' subsequent jobs in unspecified organizations, so it did not directly address the potential role of future focus in the employee-organization relationship. Wen et al. (2020) found that ACOS was more strongly related to affective commitment and innovation performance among high future-focused employees, but the mediating mechanisms were still unexamined. Based on this, the current study further proposes that future temporal orientation

strengthens the effect of ACOS on employee perceived instrumentality and hope toward the organization.

Hypothesis 9. Employee future focus moderates the relationship of ACOS with hope (H9a) and instrumentality (H9b), such that the relationship is stronger at a high level of future focus.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Employees from organizations located in Seoul, Korea, which provided physical therapy, were invited to participate in the study. Three hundred and forty-five employees completed the survey at Time 1. Six weeks later, 315 employees provided complete responses at Time 2 (response rate: 91 percent). Six weeks after the second-wave survey, 308 employees responded to the survey at Time 3 (response rate: 89 percent). Employees' direct supervisors were also invited to rate their extra-role performance and innovative performance at Time 3. The final sample sizes included 284 employees who provided complete responses and received performance ratings from their direct supervisor.

Sixty-six percent of the employees who participated at both time points were female. Thirty-nine percent of the employees were 20-30 years old, 42 percent 30-40 years old, 16 percent 40-50 years old, and 1 percent in 50-60 years old. In terms of tenure with the organization, 5 percent worked for the organization for less than one year, 36 percent one to three years, 26 percent three to six years, 19 percent six to ten years, and 14 percent more than ten years. T-test analyses suggested that participants who failed to respond to the Time 2 or Time 3 survey did not differ significantly from those who participated at all three time points regarding their gender ($t = .82, ns$), age ($t = -.71, ns$), and organizational tenure ($t = -.05, ns$).

Measures

POS, ACOS, and employee temporal focus were measured at Time 1. The mediators, including felt obligation, gratitude, hope, and instrumentality, were assessed at Time 2. The outcome variable, affective commitment, was measured at Time 3. Control variables and demographic information were also assessed at Time 3. Supervisors were asked to rate employee extra-role performance and innovative performance at Time 3. Unless otherwise noted, all the measures used a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 7 = *Strongly Agree*).

POS ($\alpha = .92$). Participants reported their POS using an eight-item version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Sample items are “My organization really cares about my well-being” and “My organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.”

ACOS ($\alpha = .92$). Participants reported their ACOS using an eight-item scale adapted from the SPOS (Eisenberger et al., 1986). These items assessed employees’ perceptions of the extent to which the organizational support would change during the next 12 months. Previous researchers conducted confirmatory factor analyses with 407 employees from a social welfare organization to examine the reliability of the ACOS scale and discriminant validity of ACOS and POS (Wen et al., 2020). Results showed that Cronbach’s α for ACOS scale is .92. The hypothesized two-factor model of POS and ACOS provided good fit ($\chi^2 = 205.07$, $df = 103$, $p < .001$; CFI = .96, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .04) and better fit than the one-factor model based on a Chi-square difference test ($\chi^2 = 1521.36$, $df = 104$, $p < .001$; CFI = .71, TLI = .66, RMSEA = .18, SRMR = .13). Thus, the previous study offered us evidence for the reliability and validity of the ACOS scale. To increase the interpretability of the scale, in the current study, I slightly modified the wording of the scale items by explicitly emphasizing both

decrease or increase in future organizational support in the questions. For example, “During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which your organization cares about your general satisfaction at work?” and “During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which the organization values your contribution to its well-being?” Employees rated their agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Great Decrease*, 7 = *Great Increase*).

Felt Obligation ($\alpha = .90$). Six items from the Felt Obligation Scale (Eisenberger et al., 2001) were used in the present study. The items measured the degree to which an employee has a feeling of obligation to his/her organization. Sample items are “I feel a personal obligation to do whatever I can to help this organization achieve its goals” and “I have an obligation to this organization to ensure that I produce high-quality work.”

Gratitude ($\alpha = .99$) and *Hope* ($\alpha = .86$). Gratitude and hope were measured using four adjectives, respectively. Participants were instructed to report the extent to which they feel each of the following emotions when they think of their organization. Four items from Ford et al. (2018) were used to assess employee gratitude, including “grateful,” “gratitude,” “thankful,” and “appreciative.” Items for hope were adapted from Bee and Madrigal (2013), including “optimistic,” “enthusiastic,” “hopeful,” and “wishful.” Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Very slightly or not at all*, 5 = *Extremely*).

Perceived Instrumentality ($\alpha = .94$). Participants reported their instrumentality using a seven-item scale designed for the present study based on the Work-Related Expectancies Scale (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Sims et al., 1976). The scale reflected the extent to which an employee believes that high performance will lead to recognition and rewards in the organization. Sample

items are “If I perform well in this organization, the organization helps me reach my goals,” and “In this organization, good performance will lead to higher approval.”

Affective Organizational Commitment ($\alpha = .97$). Affective organizational commitment was measured using a six-item scale adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990), which included the items specifically reflecting the affective component of the three-component organizational commitment model. Sample items are “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career working with my organization” and “My organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.”

Extra-role Performance ($\alpha = .93$). Supervisors rated employees’ extra-role performance using a six-item scale adapted from Eisenberger et al. (2001). Supervisors were asked to rate a specific employee’s performance in comparison to other employees holding similar jobs that he/she supervises. Sample items are “This employee keeps well-informed of where his/her knowledge might benefit the organization,” “This employee looks for ways to help the organization achieve its goals,” and “This employee gains knowledge, skills, and abilities that will be of benefit to the organization.” Supervisors responded on relative skewed anchors (1 = *Disagree*, 2 = *Slightly Agree*, 3 = *Moderately Agree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Very Strongly Agree*).

Innovative Performance ($\alpha = .93$). Supervisors were also asked to rate employee innovative performance using five items developed by Scott and Bruce (1994). Sample items are “This employee searches out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas,” and “This employee promotes and champions ideas to others.” Supervisors responded on relative skewed anchors (1 = *Disagree*, 2 = *Slightly Agree*, 3 = *Moderately Agree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Very Strongly Agree*).

Temporal Focus. Temporal focus was measured with Shipp et al.'s (2009) 12-item scale, which assessed how frequently individuals engage in past-, present- or future-oriented thoughts related to work. Sample items include, "I reflect on what has happened at work (past focus, $\alpha = .91$)," "My mind is on the here and now at work (present focus, $\alpha = .85$)," and, "I think about what my future has in store at work (future focus, $\alpha = .91$)." Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Never*, 7 = *Constantly*).

Control Variables. Employee age, gender, and tenure were controlled. To differentiate gratitude and hope from employees' overall positive mood in everyday life, I controlled for trait positive affect (Ford et al., 2018; Spence et al., 2014). Five items from the short form of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) developed and validated by Thompson (2007) were used to assess positive affect ($\alpha = .70$). Respondents reported how much they generally feel each of the five positive emotions in everyday life on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Very Slightly* or *Not at All*, 5 = *Extremely*). Sample items include "inspired" and "active."

Analytical Strategy

Hypotheses were tested using path analyses in Mplus 8.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). As the participants were rated by different supervisors, I used "Type = Complex" syntax in Mplus to take into consideration the nested nature of the data (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). I included the responses of the participants who participated at Time 1 but not Time 2 or Time 3 and utilized full information maximum likelihood (FIML; Muthén & Muthén, 2017) to estimate models with all available information, which provides less biased estimates than a listwise deletion procedure (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Considering that the primary focus of the current study is to distinguish ACOS from POS in terms of their mediating mechanisms and the relatively high intercorrelations among mediators, I ran separate path models for each mediator to estimate their

effects on the outcome variables and indirect effects of ACOS and POS. To estimate the indirect effects, I used the Monte Carlo resampling method, which is the recommended approach with MLR estimators (Preacher & Selig, 2012). Specifically, I used a tool developed by Selig and Preacher (2008) to obtain asymmetric confidence intervals (CIs).

Results

Measurement Model

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations. Prior to hypothesis testing, I performed a series of confirmatory factor analyses to test the measurement model of the ten reflective measures: POS, ACOS, felt obligation, gratitude, hope, perceived instrumentality, affective organizational commitment, future focus, present focus, and past focus. Because of the low ratio of the sample size to the number of parameters (Little et al., 2002), I used the item-to-construct balance technique to construct three parcels for the constructs with more than five items. The hypothesized ten-factor model provided an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(515) = 1050.90, p < .001$ CFI = .93; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .06) and fitted significantly better based on Chi-square difference tests than the nine-factor model combining POS with ACOS ($\chi^2(524) = 1304.89, p < .001$ CFI = .90; TLI = .89; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .06), the nine-factor model combining gratitude with felt obligation ($\chi^2(524) = 1540.62, p < .001$ CFI = .87; TLI = .86; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .10), the nine-factor model combining hope with instrumentality ($\chi^2(524) = 1539.62, p < .001$ CFI = .87; TLI = .86; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .08), the nine-factor model combining gratitude with hope ($\chi^2(524) = 1233.70, p < .001$ CFI = .91; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .07), and the eight-factor model combining temporal focus ($\chi^2(524) = 1692.74, p < .001$ CFI = .86; TLI = .84; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .09).

Mediation Hypothesis Testing

First, a series of path analyses were conducted to test the hypothesized mediation models (Hypothesis 1 to Hypothesis 6). Hypothesis 1 stated that felt obligation mediated the positive effects of POS. As shown in Figure 2, POS at Time 1 was positively related to felt obligation at Time 2 ($b = .58, SE = .07, p < .001$), which, in turn, was positively related to affective organizational commitment at Time 3 ($b = .46, SE = .08, p < .001$), but not related to supervisor-rated extra-role performance ($b = .16, SE = .07, p = .024$) and innovative performance ($b = .07, SE = .08, p = .380$). To estimate the indirect effect of POS on affective commitment via felt obligation, I then applied a 20,000-repetition Monte Carlo test to estimate the indirect effects. The results indicated that POS had a significant indirect effect on affective organizational commitment via felt obligation (*unstandardized estimate* = .27, 95% CI [.17, .39]). These findings provided partial support to Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 stated that gratitude mediated the positive effects of POS. As shown in Figure 3, POS at Time 1 was positively related to gratitude at Time 2 ($b = .58, SE = .09, p < .001$), which, in turn, was positively related to affective organizational commitment at Time 3 ($b = .35, SE = .06, p < .001$). but not related to extra-role performance ($b = .04, SE = .07, p = .542$) and innovative performance ($b = -.01, SE = .06, p = .818$). To estimate the indirect effect of POS on affective commitment via gratitude, I conducted a 20,000-repetition Monte Carlo test. The results indicated that POS had a significant indirect effect on affective organizational commitment via gratitude (*unstandardized estimate* = .20, 95% CI [.11, .30]). These findings provided partial support to Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 and 4 stated that hope mediated the positive effects of POS and ACOS. As shown in Figure 4, both POS and ACOS at Time 1 was positively related to hope at Time 2 (b

= .30, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$; $b = .18$, $SE = .09$, $p = .053$, respectively), which, in turn, was positively related to affective organizational commitment at Time 3 ($b = .49$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$), but not related to supervisor-rated extra-role performance ($b = .02$, $SE = .07$, $p = .757$) and innovative performance ($b = -.06$, $SE = .07$, $p = .338$). To estimate the indirect effect of POS and ACOS on affective commitment via hope, I conducted 20,000-repetition Monte Carlo tests. The results indicated that POS had a significant indirect effect on affective organizational commitment via hope (*unstandardized estimate* = .14, 95% CI [.07, .24]). Similarly, ACOS had a significant indirect effect on affective organizational commitment via hope (*unstandardized estimate* = .09, 95% CI [.01, .20]). These findings provided partial support to Hypothesis 3 and 4.

Hypothesis 5 and 6 stated that perceived instrumentality mediated the positive effects of POS and ACOS. As shown in Figure 5, POS at Time 1 was positively related to instrumentality at Time 2 ($b = .58$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$) but not ACOS ($b = .05$, $SE = .08$, $p = .465$), which, in turn, was positively related to affective organizational commitment at Time 3 ($b = .38$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$), but not related to supervisor-rated extra-role performance ($b = .16$, $SE = .09$, $p = .063$) and innovative performance ($b = .00$, $SE = .07$, $p = .995$). To estimate the indirect effect of POS on affective commitment and extra-role performance via instrumentality, I conducted a 20,000-repetition Monte Carlo test. The results indicated that POS had a significant indirect effect on affective organizational commitment via instrumentality (*unstandardized estimate* = .22, 95% CI [.12, .33]). These findings provided partial support to Hypothesis 5 but not Hypothesis 6.

Moderation Hypothesis Testing

Next, to test the moderation hypotheses (Hypothesis 7 to 9), predictors were grand mean centered and the corresponding interaction terms were added into the path analysis models used in the mediation hypothesis testing section. Hypothesis 7 and 8 stated that past focus and present

focus moderated the effect of POS on felt obligation and gratitude. As shown in Figure 6a and 6b, past focus did not significantly moderate the effect of POS on felt obligation ($b = -.04$, $SE = .06$, $p = .469$) or gratitude ($b = .08$, $SE = .08$, $p = .287$). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was not supported. Similarly, as shown in Figure 7a and 7b, present focus did not significantly moderate the effect of POS on felt obligation ($b = -.01$, $SE = .04$, $p = .814$) or gratitude ($b = .06$, $SE = .07$, $p = .355$). Thus, Hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Hypothesis 9 stated that future focus moderated the effect of ACOS on hope and instrumentality. As shown in Figure 8a and 8b, future focus did not significantly moderate the effect of ACOS on hope ($b = -.02$, $SE = .05$, $p = .643$) or instrumentality ($b = -.02$, $SE = .04$, $p = .693$). Thus, Hypothesis 9 was not supported.

General Discussion

OST has focused on employee perceptions of current support from the organization while leaving out employee expectations of future organizational support. Wen et al. (2020) first proposed that employees formed anticipation concerning the future change in the organization's valuation of their contributions and concern for their well-being (ACOS) and found that ACOS was positively associated with employee organizational commitment and performance when controlling for POS. However, there has been no study investigating the mechanism underlying the distinct positive effect of ACOS. Extending previous research, the current study focused on how ACOS made unique contributions to the employee-organization relationship and found that ACOS was positively associated with employee positive anticipatory emotion (i.e., hope) beyond POS, which, in turn, positively predicted employee affective commitment. Our findings further support that ACOS supplements POS in influencing employee associations with the organization.

The current study makes three central contributions to the understanding of the employee-organization relationship. First, the findings suggest a major underlying mechanism through which ACOS contributes to the employee-organization relationship. Controlling for POS, ACOS was positively related to employee hope toward the organization. Positive ACOS may focus employees on future opportunities and benefits, which can evoke feelings of confidence and excitement about their relationship with the organization. Such feelings of hope elicited by ACOS can further motivate employees to stay committed to the relationship and invest emotional resources in order to strengthen their relationship with the organization and achieve the desirable consequences.

Second, OST and social exchange theory may benefit from incorporating emotions in explaining the employee-organization relationship. Previous research in OST and social exchange theory has focused primarily on reciprocation of received favorable treatment based on the reciprocity norm (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Gouldner, 1960). The current findings indicated that positive emotions played a role in explaining the impact of organizational support on the employee-organization relationship. Specifically, gratitude mediated the positive outcome of POS. Employees will feel grateful when receiving favorable treatment from the organization. Directed gratitude toward the organization may motivate employees to stay attached to the relationship to repeat such pleasant experiences and lead to sincere concern for the organization's welfare, resulting in increased commitment (Lawler, 2001; McCullough et al., 2001).

We also found that hope mediated the positive outcome of POS and ACOS on employee commitment. Both POS and ACOS signal the upcoming favorable treatment from the organization. Furthermore, ACOS can make distinct contributions to hope beyond the influence

of POS, suggesting that information from POS may not be sufficient to predict future treatment in the increasingly changing working environment. ACOS can imply organizational readiness to reward increased effort and satisfy socioemotional needs in the future, which offers greater assurance to employees and evokes feelings of optimism and confidence about the future working experience in the organization. Such feelings of hope can motivate employees to strengthen their relationship with the organization to bring about the anticipation of reward and fulfillment of socioemotional needs (Baumgartner et al., 2008). Taken together, the mediation effects of gratitude and hope suggest that employee emotions play an important role in the employee-organization relationship.

Third, there are useful, practical implications based on the current study. ACOS was found to be associated with increased affective commitment through hope. Employees tend to experience hope when they think about possible future events with desired consequences (Snyder & Lopez, 2001). Managers may consider enhancing ACOS and hope by conveying potential benefits to employees that are associated with upcoming changes in organizational policies and practices, especially when the organization has temporary difficulty providing support to employees. For instance, organizations can introduce their upcoming training to supervisors to better support employees in the face of complaints about poor supervision, which may lead to employees' positive expectations. In addition, organizations can discuss plans to give a pay raise or improve job conditions after the economic downturns to enhance employee hope during difficult periods. In these cases, the organization needs to clearly convey the concern for employee welfare and the benefits of this upcoming practice. In this way, employees can realize such practices will improve their well-being in the near future and then develop greater hope, motivating them to strengthen their relationship with the organization with increased

commitment even before the receipt of actual benefits.

The current study did not find the proposed moderation of temporal focus on the effects of POS and ACOS, suggesting that the effects of POS and ACOS may be invariant for individuals who tend to think more about past, present, or future events. Although the current study proposed that employees with different temporal focus might attend to and rely on signals and information from different time points to evaluate their relationship with the organization (Shipp et al., 2009), the decreased long-term job tenure and more frequent furloughs and layoffs in recent years may result in increasing need by employees *regardless of temporal focus* to look out for every piece of information to evaluate the relationship with the organization (Shoss et al., 2020). For instance, even for employees with a low future focus, the increased uncertainty in the working environment may require them to attend to signals concerning changes in organizational treatment to be prepared for and adapt to such changes. Thus, the need to monitor organizational support may become a strong situational demand, which may suppress the effect of individual differences (Cooper & Withey, 2009). In this case, the dispositional temporal focus may not impact the extent to which employees attend to and react to POS and ACOS.

Methodological Advantages and Limitations

The current study assessed antecedents, mediators, and outcome variables with a time interval of six weeks, and employee performance was rated by their direct supervisors. Such separations in time and sources may help mitigate some concerns for common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, the initial levels of the mediators and outcome variables were not controlled, which may not allow strong inferences about the directionality of the proposed relationships.

Furthermore, the current study did not find any effects on supervisor-rated extra-role

performance and innovative performance. One possible reason is that these measures may not apply well to the current sample because the job of physical therapists may be routinized, which does not allow much room for proactive changes and innovative efforts to help the organization. Future research might test the effect of ACOS on extra-role performance and innovative performance in more knowledge-based industries. In addition, in the current study, I treated affective commitment, extra-role performance, and innovative performance, which were all assessed at the same time point, as three outcomes in parallel. Meta-analytic findings have shown that affective commitment was positively related to task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Meyer et al., 2002), so future research can look at whether affective organizational commitment mediates the positive effect of ACOS and the resultant hope on performance outcomes in a sequential manner.

One of the two proposed mediators of ACOS relationships, perceived instrumentality, was not significantly related to ACOS after controlling for POS. A closer look at the measure of instrumentality indicated that it might be concerned more with reward opportunities rooted in the current policy and system instead of reward expectations in the future. For instance, one item of perceived instrumentality states, “High performance in the organization will lead to greater pay.” The lack of a specific time period in the instruction may lead employees to respond with the currently perceived reward opportunities in general. Thus, employees may tend to form such judgments based on more proximal cues (i.e., POS). In contrast, ACOS is about anticipated changes in organizational valuation in the next 12 months, which may not take effect yet and seem too distal to influence the perceptions of current reward expectations. Instead, employees may use ACOS to determine the extent to which expectations of reward and recognition by the organization will change in the future. Future research can explore the effect of ACOS on future

reward expectations by explicitly specifying the time frame in the instructions (e.g., in the next 12 months).

Future Research Directions

The current study found the mediation role of two positive emotions, gratitude and hope, in the effects of POS and ACOS on favorable work outcomes. Future research can explore possible boundary conditions of these associations. For instance, how employees make attributions of organizational support may influence their emotional reactions. Specifically, employees with high levels of POS may attribute such favorable treatment to the benign intention of the organization or to their own accomplishments. The development of gratitude has been argued to rely on the favorable intent of the benefactor (Ortony, 1988; Smith, 1790). Employees may be less likely to experience high levels of gratitude if they believe the recognition and care from the organization are the consequences of their own performance and effort. In contrast, attributions to the organization's sincere regard may strengthen the relationship between POS and gratitude. Furthermore, the attribution process may play a role in the impact of ACOS. Employees may speculate the reasons and motives behind anticipated positive changes in organizational support. When employees believe that anticipated positive changes are due to new external regulations or policies instead of the organization's voluntary decisions, such positive expectations may less strongly signal the long-term commitment from the organization to its employees. In this case, such attributions to the external constraints may reduce the symbolic value of positive ACOS and limit its influence in evoking employee feelings of hope regarding their future in the organization.

The current study aimed to differentiate ACOS from POS based on their underlying mechanisms. Future research can further distinguish them based on the antecedents. Human

resource practices conveying a long-term commitment to employees and investment in employees' human capital by the organization may be more strongly related to ACOS than to POS. For instance, development-oriented feedback and training designed to supply employees with advanced knowledge and skills may be related to ACOS. In contrast, feedback and recognition focusing on current performance and achievement may be more related to POS. Also, employees who have the opportunities to express opinions in organizational decision making, such as changes concerning job conditions, reward structure, and supervisory personnel, may be more likely to form optimistic expectations in future organizational support because employees tend to believe that they can have influence over important organizational decisions that will impact future treatment.

Furthermore, as positive ACOS indicates increased future support and care from the organization, it may offer employees assurance about their future in the organization and thus have positive influences beyond enhanced commitment and performance. For instance, employees who believe that they will receive increased support from the organization may have fewer concerns about taking risks to help the organization, including accepting tasks with a high likelihood of failures and trying new procedures (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014). Employees with positive ACOS may also feel secure to express their constructive thoughts and concerns over existing practices (Liang et al., 2012). Future research can explore unique outcomes of ACOS, such as risk-taking behaviors and voice, to further distinguish it from POS.

Conclusion

Previous research on ACOS suggests that employee anticipation of future change in organizational support plays a unique role in influencing employee commitment and performance beyond the well-established effect of POS. Extending previous research, the current

study investigated the distinct mechanisms underlying ACOS. Felt obligation, gratitude, hope, and instrumentality were found to mediate the relationships of POS with affective commitment, whereas ACOS was positively related to affective organizational commitment through hope beyond the influence of POS. These findings indicate that ACOS can foster employees' positive affective reactions about their future in the organization and thereby strengthen the employee-organization relationship.

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Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

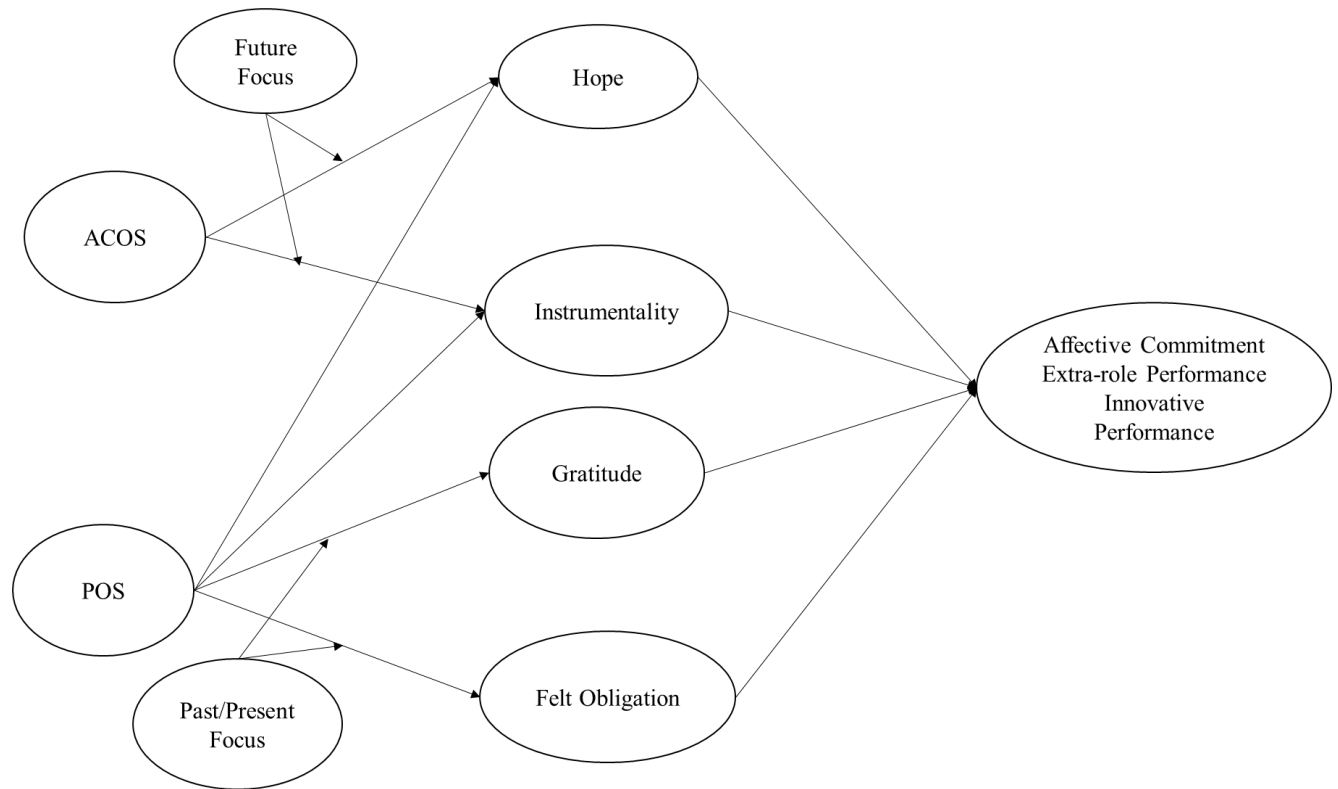
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 Gender	0.33	0.47	—															
2 Age	1.78	0.74	.53**	—														
3 Tenure	4.01	1.16	.39**	.71**	—													
4 Positive affect	3.26	0.94	-.17**	-.24**	-.13*	(.70)												
5 POS	3.98	1.02	.06	.01	-.06	-.21**	(.92)											
6 ACOS	4.06	0.84	-.02	-.06	-.07	-.09	.66**	(.92)										
7 Past focus	3.79	1.14	-.07	-.20**	-.15*	.22**	.21**	.19**	(.91)									
8 Present focus	4.14	1.22	.08	.05	-.05	.03	.49**	.37**	.55**	(.85)								
9 Future focus	4.14	1.23	.19**	.08	.06	.05	.21**	.19**	.50**	.55**	(.91)							
10 Felt obligation	3.99	1.07	-.06	.08	-.05	-.19**	.55**	.34**	.22**	.52**	.25**	(.90)						
11 Gratitude	4.20	1.33	.10	.22**	.11	-.23**	.43**	.24**	.08	.38**	.22**	.52**	(.99)					
12 Hope	4.17	1.06	.14*	.24**	.06	-.27**	.43**	.35**	.10	.45**	.27**	.60**	.80**	(.86)				
13 Instrumentality	3.35	1.11	-.02	-.11	-.10	-.02	.55**	.40**	.22**	.29**	.20**	.53**	.42**	.40**	(.94)			
14 Affective commitment	3.72	1.46	.10	.36**	.22**	-.33**	.53**	.32**	.05	.39**	.08	.57**	.56**	.58**	.43**	(.97)		
15 Extra-role performance	4.29	1.08	-.10	-.05	.002	-.08	.05	-.04	-.07	-.04	-.09	.10	.06	.01	.13*	.16**	(.93)	
16 Innovative performance	3.98	1.09	-.08	-.03	-.01	-.17**	.11	.02	-.03	-.02	-.05	.01	.05	.01	.06	.10	.36**	(.93)

Note. *N* ranges from 259 to 284. Cronbach's alphas are on the diagonal. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; POS = Perceived organizational support; ACOS = anticipated change in organizational support. Gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male. Age was coded as 1 = 20-30 years old, 2 = 30-40 years old, 3 = 40-50 years old, 4 = 50-60 years old. Tenure was coded as 1 = less than 6 months, 2 = 6 months to 1 year, 3 = 1 year to 3 years, 4 = 3 years to 6 years, 5 = 6 years to 10 years, 6 = more than 10 years.

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

Figure 1

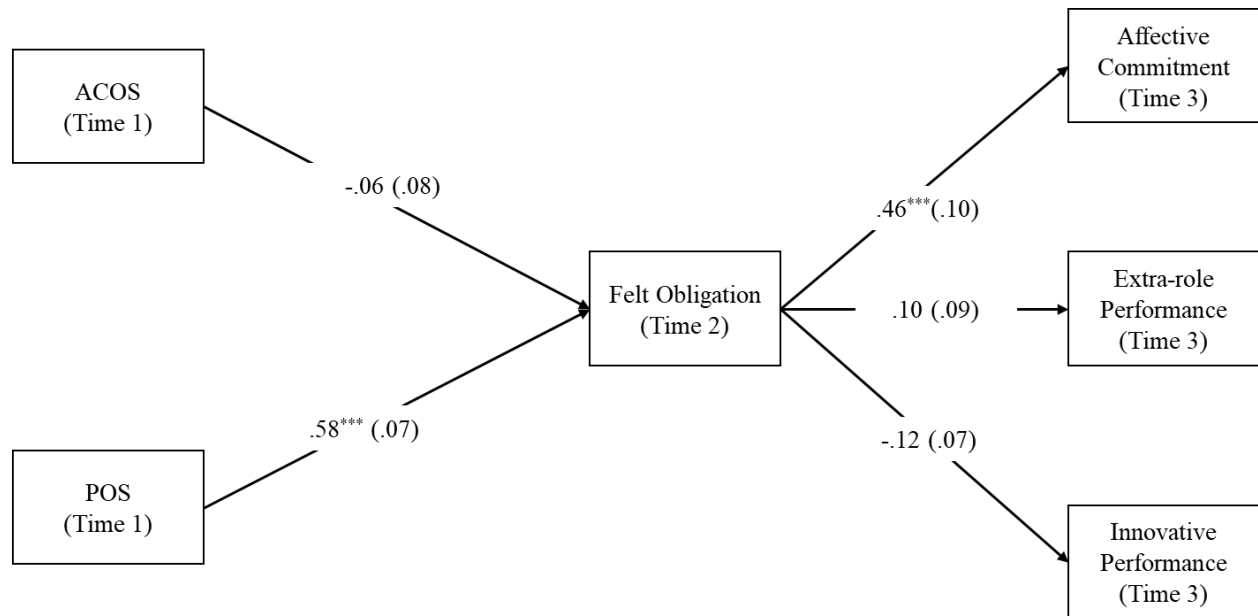
Conceptual Model



Note. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support.

Figure 2

The Mediation of Felt Obligation

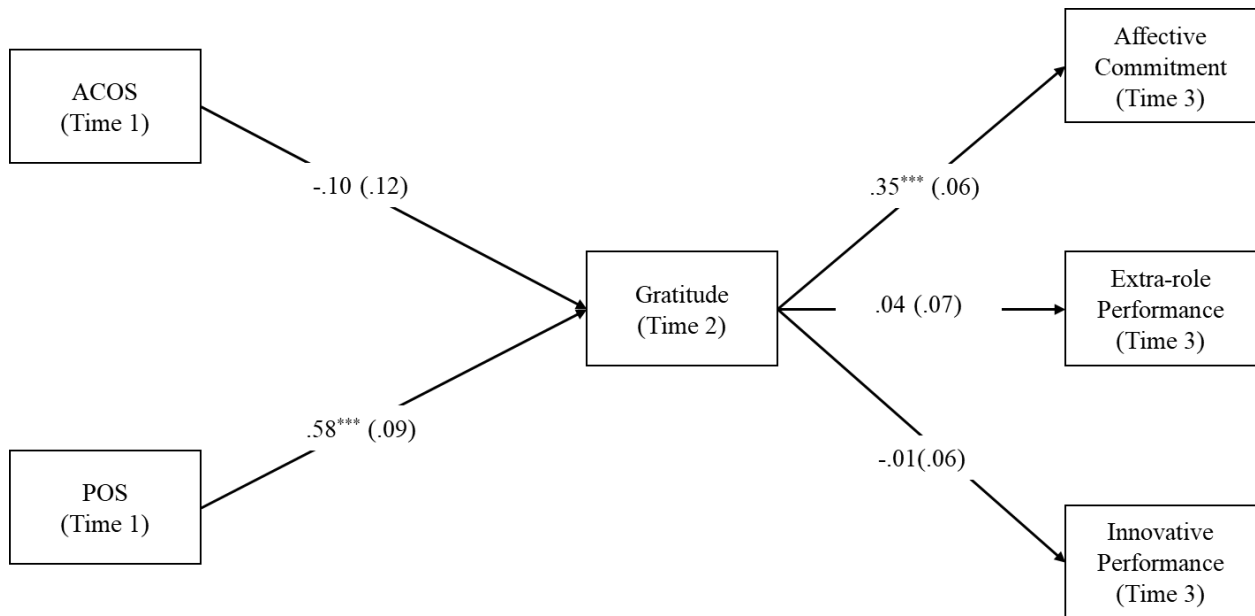


Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support.

*** $p < .001$.

Figure 3

The Mediation of Gratitude

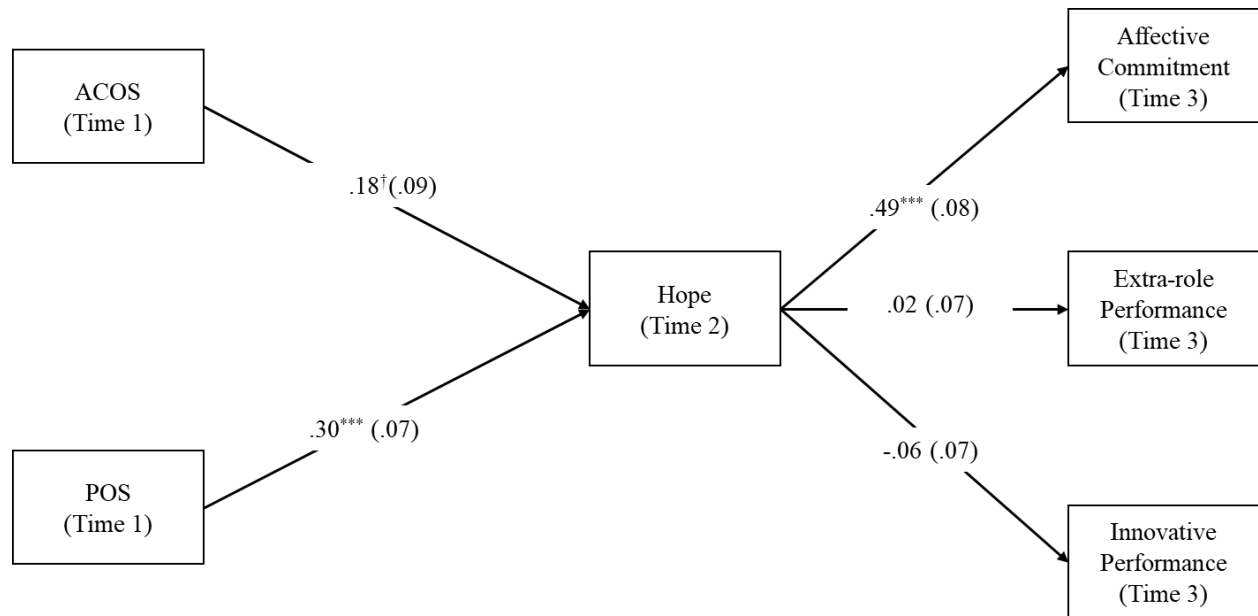


Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support.

$^{***} p < .001$.

Figure 4

The Mediation of Hope

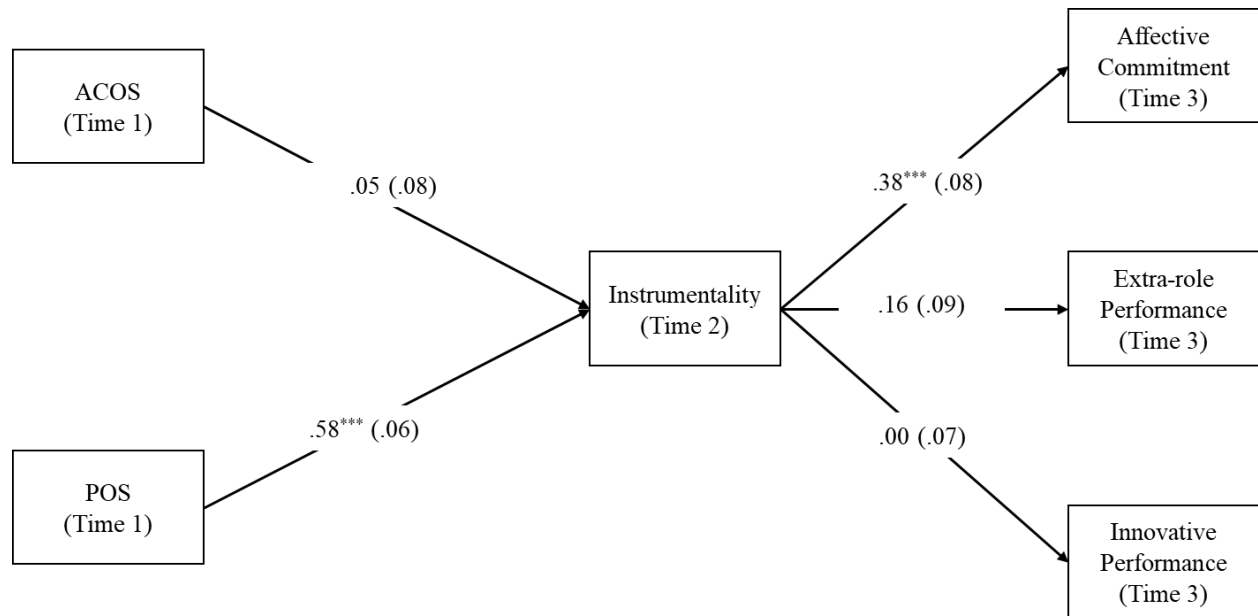


Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support.

$^{\dagger}p = .053$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Figure 5

The Mediation of Instrumentality

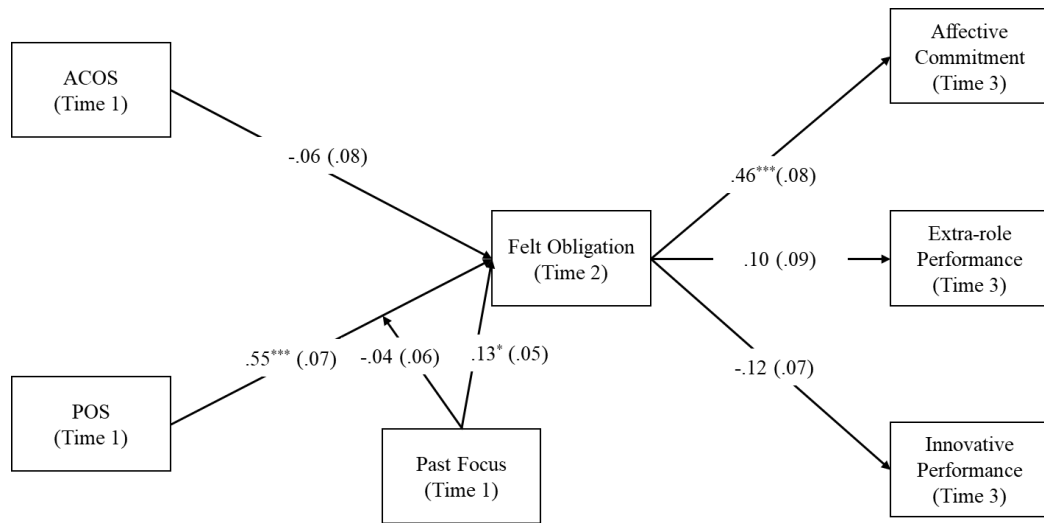


Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support.

*** $p < .001$.

Figure 6a

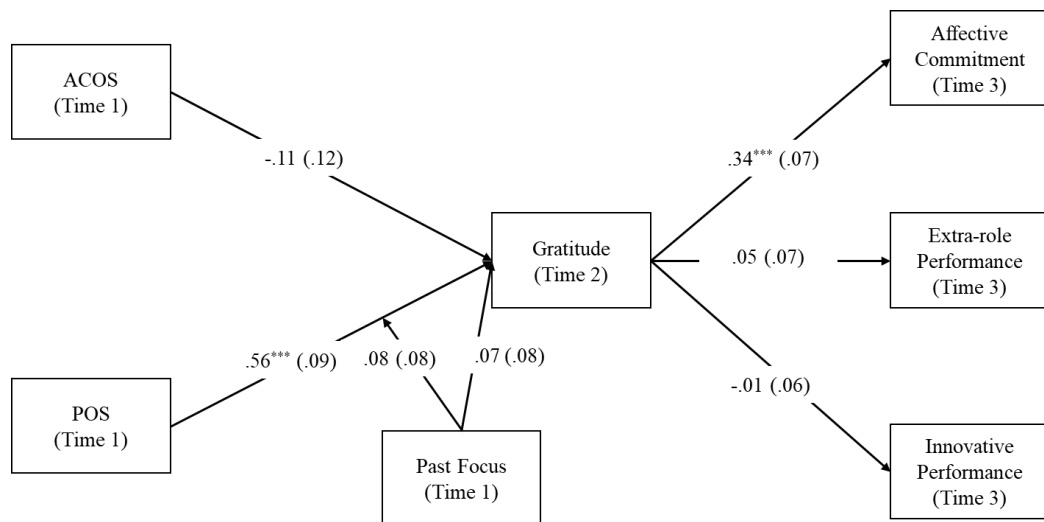
The Moderation of Past Focus on Felt Obligation



Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 6b

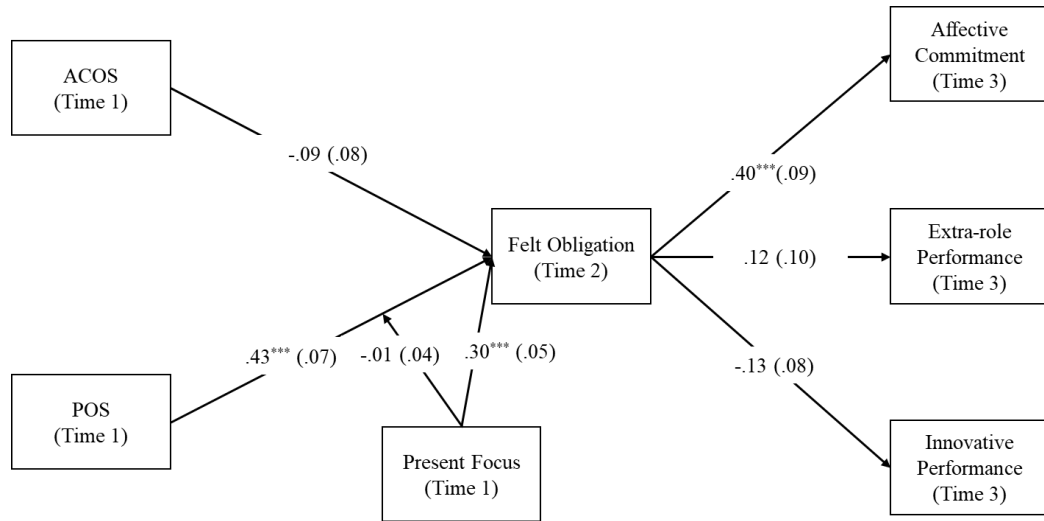
The Moderation of Past Focus on Gratitude



Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 7a

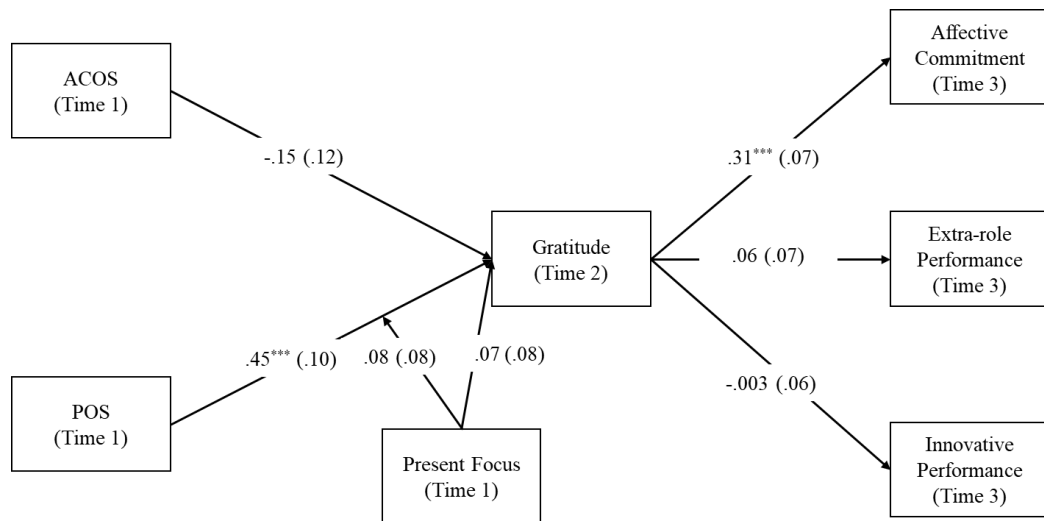
The Moderation of Present Focus on Felt Obligation



Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support. $*** p < .001$.

Figure 7b

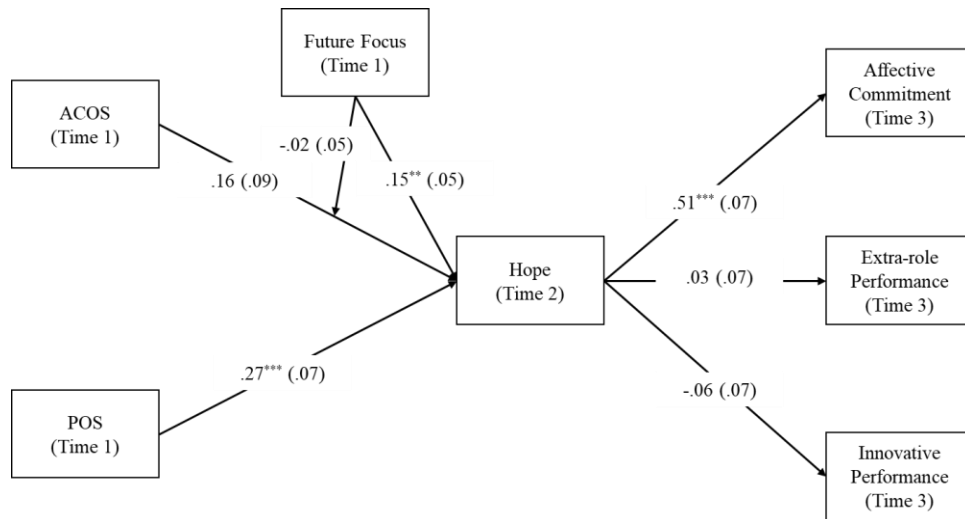
The Moderation of Present Focus on Gratitude



Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support. $*** p < .001$.

Figure 8a

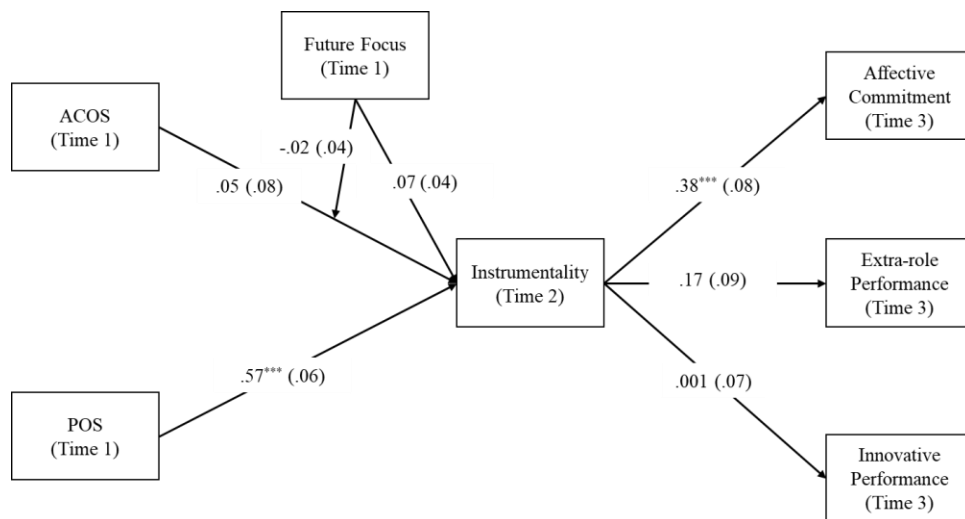
The Moderation of Future Focus on Hope



Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 8b

The Moderation of Future Focus on Instrumentality



Note. $N = 284$. POS = Perceived organizational support. ACOS = Anticipated change in organizational support. *** $p < .001$.

Appendix

Anticipated Change in Organizational Support

The following items concern possible NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE CHANGES that you expect during the next 12 months at work. Please choose one of the following amounts of negative or positive change for each one of the statements below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Great Decrease	Moderate Decrease	Slight Decrease	No Change	Slight Increase	Moderate Increase	Great Increase

1. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] would try to persuade you to stay if you decided to quit?
2. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] values your contribution to its well-being?
3. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] would understand a long absence due to your illness?
4. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] strongly considers your goals and values?
5. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] cares about your opinions?
6. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] would grant a reasonable request for a change in your working conditions?
7. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which [the name of the organization] cares about your general satisfaction at work?
8. During the next 12 months, how much decrease or increase will there be in the extent to which help is available from [the name of the organization] when you have a problem?

Perceived Organizational Support

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the choices below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. [The name of the organization] is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.
2. [The name of the organization] is willing to forgive an honest mistake on my part.

3. [The name of the organization] is willing to help me when I need a special favor.
4. [The name of the organization] really cares about my well-being.
5. [The name of the organization] wishes to give me the best possible job for which I am qualified.
6. [The name of the organization] takes pride in my accomplishments at work.
7. [The name of the organization] understands when I am unable to finish a task on time.
8. [The name of the organization] tries to make my job as interesting as possible.
9. [The name of the organization] considers my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.
10. [The name of the organization] appreciates extra effort from me.
11. [The name of the organization] cares about my general satisfaction at work.
12. [The name of the organization] values my contribution to its well-being.

Felt Obligation

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the choices below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I feel a personal obligation to do whatever I can to help [the name of the organization] achieve its goals.
2. I have an obligation to [the name of the organization] to ensure that I produce high-quality work.
3. I would feel an obligation to take time from my personal schedule to help [the name of the organization] if it needed my help.
4. I would feel guilty if I did not meet [the name of the organization]'s performance standards.
5. I feel an obligation to [the name of the organization] to fulfill the duties of my job.
6. I owe it to [the name of the organization] to give 100% of my energy to [the name of the organization]'s goals while I am at work.

Gratitude

Please indicate the extent to which you experience the following emotions when thinking about your relationship with [the name of the organization].

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

1. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel grateful.

2. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel thankful.
3. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel appreciative.
4. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel gratitude.

Hope

Please indicate the extent to which you experience the following emotions when thinking about your relationship with [the name of the organization].

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

1. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel optimistic.
2. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel hopeful.
3. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel wishful.
4. When thinking about my relationship with [the name of the organization], I feel enthusiastic.

Instrumentality

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the choices below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. If I perform well in [the name of the organization], [the name of the organization] will help me reach my goals.
2. If I do a good job in [the name of the organization], [the name of the organization] will try to help me achieve my objectives.
3. If I perform well in [the name of the organization], I will be rewarded for it.
4. High performance in [the name of the organization] will lead to greater pay.
5. If I perform well in [the name of the organization], it will lead to greater recognition.
6. In [the name of the organization], good performance will lead to higher approval.
7. High performance in [the name of the organization] will lead to increased chances for promotion.

Affective Organizational Commitment

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the choices below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career working with [the name of the organization].
2. I really feel as if [the name of the organization]’s problems were my own.
3. I feel a strong sense of belonging to [the name of the organization].
4. I feel emotionally attached to [the name of the organization].
5. I feel like part of the family at [the name of the organization].
6. [The name of the organization] has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Extra-Role Performance

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about [employee’s] performance, as compared to other employees holding similar jobs that you supervise.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

1. This employee keeps well-informed where his/her knowledge might benefit [the name of the organization].
2. This employee gains knowledge, skills, and abilities that will be of benefit to [the name of the organization].
3. This employee looks for ways to help [the name of the organization] achieve its goals.
4. This employee makes suggestions to help [the name of the organization] improve.
5. This employee encourages coworkers to try new and more effective ways of doing their job.
6. This employee always looks for new ways to improve the effectiveness of his/her work.

Innovative Performance

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about [employee’s] performance, as compared to other employees holding similar jobs that you supervise.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

1. This employee searches out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas
2. This employee generates creative ideas.

3. This employee promotes and champions ideas to others.
4. This employee develops adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas.
5. This employee is innovative, in general.

Temporal Orientation

Please choose the response beside each statement that best describes you.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never		Sometimes		Frequently		Constantly

1. I think about what my future has in store at work.
2. I replay memories of the past at work in my mind.
3. I think about where I am today at work.
4. I imagine what tomorrow will bring for me at work.
5. I think about things from my past at work.
6. I think about times to come at work.
7. I live my life in the present at work.
8. I think back to my earlier days at work.
9. I focus on my future at work.
10. I reflect on what has happened at work.
11. I focus on what is currently happening at work.
12. My mind is on the here and now at work.

Positive and Negative Affect

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate how much you generally feel each one of the following feelings or emotions in EVERYDAY LIFE. That is, how you feel on average. Use the following scale to record your answers:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly or Not at All	A Little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

_____ Afraid

Demographic information

1. Your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other

2. Your age: _____

3. What is your educational level?

- completed grade school
- some high school
- completed high school
- some college
- completed college

4. How long have you worked with your current supervisor?

- More than 10 years
- 6 years - 10 years
- 3 years - 6 years
- 1 year - 3 years
- 6 months - 1 year
- Less than 6 months

5. How long have you worked in [the name of the organization]?

- More than 10 years
- 6 years - 10 years
- 3 years - 6 years
- 1 year - 3 years
- 6 months - 1 year
- Less than 6 months