Getting Better (or Worse) All the Time:
Support Trajectories and Employee Turnover

Bryan L. Rogers
East Carolina University

James M. Vardaman
The University of Memphis

Andrew J. Dhaenens
University of New South Wales

Peyton M. Berry
The University of Memphis

As employment relationships develop over time, changes in static perceptions of organizational support (POS) provide the basis for evaluating one's present and future with an organization. We develop and test hypotheses on how POS and referent POS (RΔPOS) trajectories influence employee turnover intentions. Drawing on a sample of 167 employees, our analysis shows that changes to static POS (ΔPOS) and RΔPOS significantly influence employee turnover intentions. This research extends organizational support theory by shedding light on the dynamic nature of POS and the effects of those changes on employee outcomes, specifically turnover intentions.

Keywords: perceived organizational support, employee turnover, social comparisons, attitudinal trajectories

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover has long been a key issue for organizations due to its steep financial costs and potential to impact the organization and its members (Allen & Vardaman, 2021). As managers and scholars alike have sought to understand and predict turnover, employee perceptions of organizational support (POS) emerged as a key turnover antecedent (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Maertz Jr, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007). According to organizational support theory (OST), employees interpret their treatment at work as a reflection of the extent to which they are valued and cared for by the organization, which is theorized to evoke reciprocity such as through continued participation (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Madden, Mathias, & Madden, 2015). However, despite a proliferation of POS-turnover studies, the dominant social exchange perspective has left other aspects of the POS-turnover relationship underdeveloped (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

First, as a social exchange phenomenon, the provision of organizational support is theorized to develop over time and through repeated exchanges (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Yet, the POS literature consists almost entirely of studies that treat POS as a static phenomenon, with little attention to the effects of changes in individual POS over time (ΔPOS; Caesens, Morin, & Stinglhamber, 2020). Second, there is a notable lack of full consideration for OST's self-enhancement component, which suggests POS fosters positive outcomes by fulfilling an individual's socioemotional needs (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Sluss, Klimchak, & Holmes, 2008). As Sluss and colleagues (2008, p. 462) note, "POS, then, via both reciprocity and self-enhancement, becomes a window to other organizationally-focused attitudes." Self-enhancement involves employee feelings of esteem, affiliation, and emotional support (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). The temporal and self-enhancement mechanisms through which POS might evoke continued participation in organizations remain mostly unknown.

Field theory could provide significant insight in this regard. Field theory holds that individuals exist in a psychological field that consists of one's historical and social contexts (Lewin, 1943). Accordingly, it is the joint influence of individual perceptual trajectories (i.e., historical contexts) and social comparisons (i.e., social contexts) that shape attitudinal and behavioral outcomes rather than static influences (Lewin, 1943). Lewin (1939) termed such trajectories "psychological locomotion" and suggested this locomotion pushes individuals from one psychological or behavioral state to another. In this way, field theory offers a holistic view of the perception that provides insight concerning how personal histories and social contexts in which individuals are ensconced serve as a backdrop for perceptions that take place in the present. Field theory's insight on perceptual trajectories should inform the self-enhancement aspect of OST because positive self-assessments involve transient and emotional assessments subject to an individual's past treatment and how others in the social sphere are treated.

For example, consider a pair of employees in the same organization who rate their perceived levels of organizational support similarly (e.g., a rating of 5 on a 7-point scale). A static approach rooted in the norm of reciprocity would suggest the two employees will have similar turnover intentions due to the similarity of their static POS. However, the outcomes might change if personal histories are accounted per the tenets of field theory. If Employee A's rating reflects improvement (e.g., moving from 2 to 5 rating) – positive ΔPOS – while Employee B's rating reflects decline (e.g., moving from 6 to 5 rating) – negative ΔPOS, Employee A would likely feel greater affirmation and esteem despite their equal POS levels.

Furthermore, field theory holds that individuals' psychological fields also reflect their social contexts (Lewin, 1943). In other words, employees are likely to compare any changes in how their POS compares to referent others' (Vardaman et al., 2016). Even the perceived improvements reflected in one's positive ΔPOS might be less meaningful when coworkers' POS is increasing at an even greater rate (i.e., negative RΔPOS). For instance, if Employee A's POS rating increases (e.g., moving from 2 to 5 rating) more than Employee B's (e.g., moving from 5 to 6 rating), then Employee B's will likely experience losses to self-enhancement in the present since organizational support is no longer viewed as discretionary. The status gap with coworkers is shrinking. As such, Employee B would likely react negatively as if they were treated poorly despite their high levels overall POS and a positive ΔPOS. In this way, field theory offers a holistic view on perception that provides insight concerning how personal histories and the social context in which individuals are ensconced serve as a backdrop for perceptions that take place in the present.

Thus, this paper aims to investigate the role of individual POS trajectories (ΔPOS) and POS trajectory comparisons (RΔPOS) in predicting employee turnover intentions. Field theory's insight on perceptual trajectories should inform the self-enhancement aspect of OST because positive self-assessments involve transient and emotional assessments subject to an individual's past treatment and how others in the social sphere are treated. We focus on turnover intentions for several reasons. First, turnover intentions capture both an attitudinal state and a behavioral intention and, in some ways, tap into field theory's coverage of both cognition and behavior. Second, although they are an imperfect proxy, turnover intentions are the most proximal predictor of turnover behavior (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, & Mitchell, 2018). Third, turnover intentions have deleterious consequences whether they are translated into turnover behavior or not, as unrealized turnover intentions have been linked to counterproductive and deviant employee behaviors that harm organizations (Mai, Ellis, Christian, & Porter, 2016; Sender, Morf, & Feierabend, 2021; Sheridan,

Crossley, Vogel, Mitchell, & Bennett, 2019). Fourth, given that turnover is subject to a two-stage process whereby employees develop the intention to leave and then execute that intention based on various factors such as the behavioral control to do so and the sacrifices involved (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005; Mobley, 1977; Vardaman, Taylor, Allen, Gondo, & Amis, 2015), turnover intentions are the crux of the turnover process. Hence, it is the focal outcome of our study.

By integrating insights from field theory, this paper extends research at the intersection of OST and turnover in at least three ways. First, this work extends the theory by shedding light on the way the self-enhancement component of OST promotes employee retention. Specifically, our study suggests the self-enhancement aspect of OST requires an examination of POS as a *dynamic* phenomenon by testing the idea that POS trajectories influence turnover intentions over and above the effects of static POS. Second, this work extends prior work on the role of POS comparisons in turnover by considering the trajectory of one's comparisons in predicting changes in turnover intentions. Although limited, past work has highlighted the role of self-enhancement by finding that static POS comparisons influence turnover intentions (e.g., Vardaman et al., 2016); this study offers a fuller picture by considering the import of POS comparisons *over time*. In so doing it extends knowledge on both turnover and OST. Finally, we test the relative strength of the two trajectories.

Although the past study shows, static comparisons explain variance in turnover intentions over and above that explained by static POS, the transient nature of self-enhancement and the need for concrete (rather than dynamic) reference points against which to make comparisons suggest comparison trajectories may be less powerful. Prior studies indicate that trends are commonly used by employees and employers alike as the foundation for decision-making. For instance, high-risk personnel decisions are often informed by performance trends, such as exploiting the change of scenery effect to disrupt and restore employees' performance declines or investing financial resources to acquire high-risk high reward rising stars (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Groysberg, Nanda, & Nohria, 2004; Rogers, Vardaman, Allen, Muslin, & Baskin, 2017). We analyze a sample of employees using latent growth modeling to shed light on this possibility.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Field Theory

Field theory provides a useful lens for examining behavioral antecedents because it is predicated on the idea that individual behaviors are a product of an interaction between a person and the environment in which the person exists, also referred to as a "psychological field" (Lewin, 1951). This interaction is represented by the symbolic expression, $B=f(P, E)$, where behavior (B) is a function of an individual's psychological state (P) and the environment in which they exist (E). By accounting for individuals' inherent differences, field theory notably explains how singular environmental stimuli result in differential–rather than isomorphic–responses among multiple individuals within the space context (Martin, 2003). Notably, one's psychological field reflects both historical (*perceptual trajectory*) and social contexts (*social comparisons*), and it is the joint influence of these two forces that bring about behaviors rather than discrete influences (Lewin, 1943). For example, field theory suggests a shared experience, like a pay raise, could evoke differential behaviors depending on each person's historical (e.g., how the recent pay raise compares to previous ones) and social contexts (e.g., how one's pay raise compares to referent others' pay raises). Consequently, behaviors are not directly brought about by discrete external stimuli but as outcomes of indirect changes in one's cohesive psychological field (Lewin, 1942).

In an employment context, field theory has the potential to provide insight into organizational support theory. According to field theory, changes to the psychological field of one's employment should drive variations in attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (Lewin, 1939). First, the unfolding trajectory of one's work experiences should influence individual behaviors by providing a backdrop for understanding present events relative to past experiences and informing projections of future experiences. Those with worsening experiences are likely in a significantly different psychological states than those with stable or improving ones. Thus, individuals could perceive a shared experience in very different ways depending on their historical contexts. It is this differential impact to which we now turn.

Organizational Support Theory and POS

Organizational support theory holds that employees perceive treatment by their employer and its representatives as reflections of the extent to which they are valued and cared for – otherwise referred to as perceived organizational support (POS; Eisenberger et al., 1986). When treatment is perceived favorably, employees are theorized to reciprocate at levels concordant with those perceptions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In this way, OST suggests that positive POS should foster enhanced retention via the norm of reciprocity, where employees' continued employment reflects an exchange of support for continued participation. As such, a relatively large body of research has drawn upon this perspective to highlight the negative link between POS and turnover (Allen et al., 2003; Campbell, Perry, Maertz, Allen, & Griffeth, 2013; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Interestingly, as a social exchange phenomenon, POS is theorized to develop over time and through repeated exchanges, which will likely cause static-POS levels to ebb and flow across experiences (Caesens et al., 2020; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Employment relationships are theorized to evolve into reciprocal-exchange relationships that include *explicit* and *implicit* obligations for both parties (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Rousseau & Parks, 1993). Repeatedly meeting these expectations is crucial to maintaining balance in the employment relationship and ensuring continued employee productivity and commitment (Flynn, 2003a). Employees view an employer's favorable treatment as signals of caring, approval, and respect, which contribute to socioemotional need fulfillment and thus evoke positive reactions (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Alternatively, unmet expectations may reflect an organization's indifference or lack of care and thus induce negative reactions (Dalal, Bhave, & Fiset, 2014; Eisenberger et al., 1997).

Importantly, these relationships are shaped by employee interactions with organizational proxies, such as supervisors and coworkers, which should cause static POS to fluctuate (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Smith & Lazarus, 1993). While favorable exchanges perpetuate POS, poor ones will be detrimental. Although organizations will inevitably fail to meet obligations at some point, employees can recover from those negative experiences (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Parzefall & Coyle-Shapiro, 2011; Solinger, Hofmans, Bal, & Jansen, 2016). For instance, a coworker's harsh feedback to cause an employee's POS to drop only to recover later after receiving a supervisor's praise. Static POS levels will likely fluctuate over the course of employment, but the impact of distinct transient events should fade within a relatively short time (Flynn, 2003b). Consequently, ΔPOS may provide more accurate depictions of employment relationships and better predict employee outcomes (Ariely & Carmon, 2000; Mitchell, Burch, & Lee, 2014). Thus, we anticipate that ΔPOS will impact employee turnover cognitions rather than static or aggregate POS levels.

POS Trajectories

Field theory posits that employees' psychological fields are cohesive wholes comprised of the many aspects of their external environments and constantly evolve as unfolding events are incorporated to the profile (Lewin, 2008). Each instance of employer treatment shapes and reshapes the historical trajectory of one's employment, thus impacting their psychological field and, consequently, should influence desires to remain with the organization. First, ΔPOS adds perspective for understanding one's current situation relative to the past, or, in other words, trajectories enable individuals to compare transient experiences at different points in time to make sense of their current states (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2011). This is important because the ongoing nature of employment means each work exchange occurs in the context of prior exchanges rather than isolation. In a vacuum, a sole instance of organizational treatment may be judged by its favorability alone. For instance, an employee would most likely view a year-end bonus positively. However, contextualizing a single event within the historical context of one's psychological field reveals whether treatment is part of a consistent narrative, an outlier, or reflects broader changes in the employment relationship. That year-end bonus may be judge negatively if it is considerably worse than the previous year and even more negatively if it reflects a year-over-year trend of declining bonuses.

In this way, ΔPOS captures an employer's growing (or shrinking) concern and respect for an employee and thus engenders (or reduce) socioemotional need fulfillment in the present (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Upward ΔPOS indicates the employment relationship is healthy and mutual. Even when static-POS

might be low, upward ΔPOS signals an organization's consideration for the employee and its commitment to rectifying a poor situation despite its current inability to provide much support (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Downward ΔPOS signifies a decaying relationship between the two parties. Employees may feel their employer's failure to match prior support levels is attributed to its unwillingness to support rather than inability (e.g., lack of resources). As such, downward ΔPOS may reflect an employer's *disregard* and *disrespect* for an employee. For these reasons, ΔPOS will likely evoke employee reactions based on its implications for the present state of employment relationships.

Additionally, employees may rely on the trajectory evidenced by ΔPOS may also support predictions regarding future experiences and subsequently motivate behaviors based on a desire to pursue (or avoid) anticipated outcomes (Kirkland, Eisenberger, Lewis, & Wen, 2017; Zheng et al., 2016). Positive ΔPOS should support favorable projections for continued employment and provide reassurance of the future availability of support. Consequently, this should instill confidence that remaining in the organization will fulfill employees' socioemotional needs. Further, positive changes in POS could suggest increased resource availability, facilitating work enjoyment and providing career opportunities (Kurtessis et al., 2017). As such, upward ΔPOS projects a vision of future employment in the organization which should attenuate the turnover intentions (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007).

Alternatively, negative ΔPOS might increase turnover cognitions by projecting a grim future for continued employment. In this way, workers' expectations for further losses of respect and socioemotional need fulfillment could lead them to seek alternative employment to mitigate anticipated losses. Declining resource availability could threaten future job performance and limit career growth. In this situation, seeking other employment might be a desirable alternative because short-term support losses project even greater long-term costs, regardless of whether projections are accurate. For these reasons, upward ΔPOS should increase workers' desires to perpetuate the reciprocal-employment relationship and thus lower turnover cognitions, while downward ΔPOS should increase workers' intentions to leave an organization. In retrospective fashion, future expectations can also influence perceptions of present states by increasing anticipation (or dread) of the future (Varey & Kahneman, 1992). Accordingly, we predict:

Hypothesis 1: ΔPOS will be negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.

Social Comparisons of POS Trajectories

In addition to signaling effects, we propose employee RΔPOS (RΔPOS) will impact employee turnover intentions to the extent that comparisons are favorable relative to peers. According to social comparison theory, employees compare their POS levels with referent peers (RPOS) for self-evaluation and to make sense of their organizational standing (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Greenberg, Ashton-James, & Ashkanasy, 2007). While POS generally evokes positive employee reactions, RPOS captures the *discretionary* nature of employer treatment and conveys high status, respect, and esteem in the organization (Helgeson & Mickelson, 1995; Suls, Martin, & Wheeler, 2002). As support levels change over time, we suspect that employees should similarly compare ΔPOS with referent peers (RΔPOS), subsequently impacting turnover cognitions.

According to field theory, RΔPOS will likely evoke turnover intentions for two reasons. First, the discretionary nature of employer treatment underlies employees' positive self-evaluations. The patterns evident in RΔPOS should clarify whether an employer's treatment is truly discretionary. For example, imagine two employees in the same organization. Employee A receives greater levels of employer support than Employee B, but Employee A's POS remains constant from Time 1 to Time 2 while Employee B's POS rises. At any given moment, Employee A's POS may compare favorably to Employee B, but when examined over time, Employee A has a negative RΔPOS because his ΔPOS compares unfavorably to Employee B's. In this scenario, Employee A's treatment is no longer discretionary, detrimental to self-enhancement, and will likely evoke turnover cognitions.

Second, RΔPOS may signal potential threats to an employee's status within an organization. As previously noted, employees compare their POS to referent others to assess the organizational status hierarchy. In this case, negative RΔPOS indicates lost status and projects further losses based on current

trends. As such, employees might question their present and future roles in the organization and their organization's commitment to them, which could eventually motivate them to seek alternative employment to mitigate losses. Thus, RΔPOS should influence employee turnover intentions to pursue status gains through continued employment or avoid losses through turnover.

Hypothesis 2: *RΔPOS will be negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.*

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

Data were collected from a sample of workers from a construction firm in the southern United States. Employees ranged from manager to foreman to various front-line roles. Work units consisted of those working on various projects. The company was involved in eight projects during the study period. Employees were surveyed at three time periods, with all hypothesized variables measured at each time and a six week lag between time periods. Variables such as age and gender were collected at time 1. Surveys were delivered to all company employees, with 167 completing all three surveys.

Measures
Perceived Organizational Support

POS was measured with Eisenberger et al.'s (1997) eight-item short-form measure of POS on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree". Sample items included "This company really cares about my well-being" and "This company strongly considers my goals and values." Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was acceptable at all three time periods.

Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions were measured using Hom and Griffeth's (1991) three item measure. Items were assessed on a five-point scale (1 = "Definitely No"; 5 = "Definitely Yes''). A sample item is "I intend to quit my present job." The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was acceptable at all three time periods.

Control Variables

Prior studies suggest the demographic variables gender and age can potentially influence employee turnover (e.g., Holtom et al., 2008; Ng & Feldman, 2009). Consequently, we controlled for these factors using dummy variables in our models. Gender was coded '1' for female and '2' for male. Age was operationalized as a continuous variable as is typical in most empirical studies.

Analysis

We tested Hypothesis 1 using a latent growth modeling procedure (Chan, 1998; Chen et al., 2011). We first estimated separate mixed-effects growth models for POS and turnover intentions in R, regressing the variables on time, with the time trend coded 0, 1, and 2 for times 1, 2, and 3 (Bliese & Ployhart, 2002). Per Chen et al. (2011), the growth coefficient for turnover intentions was then regressed on the growth coefficient for POS, while controlling for time 1 turnover intentions and other control variables. Controlling for time 1 turnover intentions provides added confidence that the change over time was responsible for the effect.

Hypothesis 2 was tested similarly but with one key difference. To uncover the effects of referent comparisons of POS, we group mean centered POS before estimating the mixed-effects growth models in R using the NMLE package (Chen et al., 2011). Doing so provides an estimate of the relative POS for each individual that is then regressed on time. The subsequent OLS regression controlled for time 1 turnover intentions and other covariates.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the study variables' means, standard deviations, and correlations.

Hypothesis 1 tested the relationship between changes in individual POS and changes in individual turnover intentions. Table 2 reports the results of tests of Hypothesis 1. The control variables (age, gender, and time 1 turnover intentions) were entered in step 1, with none being significantly related to change in turnover intentions. POS change was entered in step 2 and was significant ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. Hypothesis 2 proposed that the change to one's POS relative to their work unit would be associated with changes in turnover intentions. Table 3 reports the results of tests of Hypothesis 2. Control variables (age, gender, and time 1 turnover intentions) were entered in step 1, with none being significant. Referent POS change was entered in step 2, demonstrating significant effects ($\beta = -.35$, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 2 is supported.

TABLE 1
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND CORRELATIONS OF STUDY VARIABLES

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived Organizational Support (Time 1)	5.26	1.75	(0.90)						
2. Perceived Organizational Support (Time 2)	4.92	1.92	0.58**	(0.92)					
3. Perceived Organizational Support (Time 3)	4.99	2.00	0.68**	0.62**	(0.91)				
4. Turnover Intentions (Time 1)	2.95	0.97	-0.37**	-0.23**	-0.21**	(0.95)			
5. Turnover Intentions (Time 2)	2.87	1.02	-0.24**	-0.35**	-0.29**	0.53**	(0.94)		
6. Turnover Intentions (Time 3)	2.76	1.24	-0.26**	-0.33**	-0.52**	0.47**	0.60**	(0.94)	
7. Age	38.59	12.18	0.03	0.09	0.15*	-0.01	-0.05	-0.08	–
8. Gender	1.14	0.35	0.07	0.02	0.12	-0.07	-0.01	-0.06	-0.22

Notes: $N = 167$; Reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) are presented on the diagonal.
*p < .05, **p < .01

TABLE 2
MODEL TESTS OF ΔPOS AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS CHANGE

	Step 1		Step 2	
Variable	β	SE	β	SE
Age	-0.09	0.00	-0.04	0.00
Gender	-0.03	0.05	0.00	0.05
Time 1 turnover intentions	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.02
ΔPOS			-0.37**	0.13
R^2	0.02		0.15	
ΔR^2			0.13	

Notes: $N = 167$
**p < .01

TABLE 3
MODEL TESTS OF RΔPOS AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

Variable	Step 1		Step 2	
	β	SE	β	SE
Age	-0.09	0.00	-0.04	0.00
Gender	-0.03	0.05	0.00	0.05
Time 1 turnover intentions	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.02
RΔPOS			-0.35**	0.13
R^2	0.02		0.13	
ΔR^2			0.11	

Notes: N = 167
**p < .01

DISCUSSION

We have examined the roles of ΔPOS and RΔPOS in shaping employee turnover cognitions. We found evidence suggesting that the specific ways POS trajectories unfold over time can influence employee decisions to stay or leave organizations. Furthermore, we found support that, in addition to ΔPOS, employees may also be sensitive to the trajectories of POS concerning others. In doing so, we address a notable gap by accounting for the influence of temporal dynamics in POS. In addition, our research has several important theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

We extend POS theory by accounting for how POS operates over time and how ΔPOS and RΔPOS, rather than static POS and RPOS states, influence employee attitudes. First, we show that employees consider more than just "what have you done for me lately" when assessing organizational support. Instead, extended sequences of unfolding POS states form the basis for individual evaluations of their employment relationships. In other words, employees are sensitive to whether their organizational treatment is improving or worsening. Second, employees' POS trajectories inform decision-making for the future, as evidenced by the significant impact of ΔPOS on turnover intentions. This finding provides additional credence to the notion that POS is a temporal construct and highlights the need to consider how POS evolves. Third, by finding support for the significant influence of RΔPOS on employee turnover intentions, we extend recent work by Vardaman and colleagues (2016) to show that RPOS is also subject to temporal factors. These findings particularly highlight the complexity of POS beyond simple static states. Employees do not exist in a vacuum and how relative others' POS evolves can have meaningful consequences for employee attitudes.

Practical Implications

We also offer the following practical implications to managers. First, our findings highlight the need for managers to support their subordinate employees favorably and consistently. However, while managers may feel pressured to be "people pleasers," our findings indicate that employees' overall attitudes are unlikely to be shaped by one or two poor interactions. In other words, our findings should provide managers comfort toward establishing healthy work boundaries without fear of repercussions. Furthermore, managers should also recognize that employees are aware of changing workplace dynamics and will react poorly to losing discretionary status. When another employee infringes on one's favored status within the organization, that individual might perceive lost standing as an indication the organization does not care for them. However, while work relationships ebb and flow over time, employees will likely maintain favorable attitudes if treatment remains consistent and fair.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of our study concerns temporal boundaries. We should expect that the effects of singular events will fade over time, but questions remain as to when those static events no longer influence ΔPOS or employee outcomes. We also studied turnover intentions, not turnover behavior. Turnover intentions are an imperfect proxy for turnover (Vardaman, Allen, Renn, & Moffitt, 2008), suggesting future research should examine the behavioral outcome. Future research might also consider the influence changes in POS may have on other behavioral outcomes. This work advances theory and research on the importance of dynamic processes, specifically how changes in the interpretation of provision of organizational support. We hope that future work will explore relationships between changes to POS and other important outcomes, particularly as they relate to reference perceptions.

CONCLUSION

This article sheds light on the dynamic processes involved with providing support in organizations. The findings suggest that the positive trajectory of support provision from the organization can stifle employee turnover intentions. This finding specifically extends OST by showing that increases or decreases in support over time play a large role in keeping employees from leaving the organization. We hope that this work starts a conversation for future research.

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