

## **We Get By With a Little Help from Our Friends: Exploring the Effects of Perceived Coworker Support on Employee Burnout and Job Attitudes**

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*Perceived Organizational Support is but one source of employee support; perceived coworker support is important as well. This study examined the effects of perceived coworker support on employees' job satisfaction, burnout, deviance, and turnover. Results indicate that perceived coworker support and perceived organizational support affect job satisfaction burnout and deviant behavior both directly and indirectly by moderating the effects of work pressure on these outcomes. Additionally, perceived coworker supporter exerted a stronger influence on these variables than did perceived organizational support. Implications for both research and practice are discussed.*

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We live in difficult and stressful economic times. Depending on where an individual lives, and perhaps which political party they pay attention to, there may be signs of recovery and improvement. However, the reality for many workers remains uncertain and therefore stressful. Other changes in the nature of business and new organizational structures, including an increase in team-oriented work, may further magnify these feelings of stress among workers. Increased tele-work arrangements, while offering convenience, may also isolate workers and create added stress and pressure. Many firms are decentralizing their organizational structure, thereby flattening out their once hierarchal chain of command. Employees from different departments and levels of authority are working side by side. New multi- and cross-functional work teams are being formed to handle both long-term and short-term tasks. Given that these work teams are often required to work closely together on various projects, inevitably this will involve some degree of stress. In short, in today's economic and business climate, managing and coping with stress is critical for both individuals and organizations.

Research indicates that one critical factor in relations to work place stress and pressure is perceived organizational support (POS). A significant amount of research by Eisenberger and colleagues (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2001; Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001) indicates that POS is an influential determinant of a number of employee attitudes and behaviors. However, this paper argues that POS provides only a partial picture of support in the workplace. Specifically, coworkers are also an important source of support. However, research has largely ignored this possibility. The objective of this study is to bridge this gap in the literature. Specifically, we examine the dual role of both perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived coworker support (PCS) in determining employee attitudes and turnover intentions.

Below, we first review the existing research on Perceived Organizational Support (POS). Subsequently, we review research indicating that PCS may also be important. Based on these literature reviews, we next draw several hypotheses proposing that both PCS and POS directly impact employees' job attitudes. In addition, we predict that PCS and POS moderate the relationship between job-related stress and worker attitudes. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of our study's findings for work organizations.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Over the past two decades, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has increasingly received a great deal of attention. POS has been shown to have a strong relationship with several aspects of employee behavior. Organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) asserts that employees establish a common belief in regards to how much their organization cares about their socioemotional and overall well-being, and to what degree their performance and loyalty to the company is rewarded. Reflected in this common belief is the assurance that aid will be available from the organization when it is needed to perform their job effectively and to deal with stressful situations (George, Reed, Ballard, Colin, & Fielding, 1993).

In addition, Rhodes, Eisenberger and Armeli (2001), point to POS as contributing to an emotional bond formed by the employee toward the organization. Eisenberger et al. (1986) further asserts that employees attribute humanlike characteristics to their organization. For example, if an employee perceives the organization as treating them fairly, they translate this into the organization liking them on a personal level. Conversely, if they feel they

have been unfairly treated, they view this as the organization disliking them. With these human-like characteristics assigned to the organization, it follows that employees would feel the need to reciprocate favorably or negatively to the organization (Blau, 1964).

POS is also credited with moderating the effect of employees' intent to quit. Rhoades et al. (2001) noted that increased POS leads to employees feeling committed and obligated to help the organization, which reduces turnover. Furthermore, the findings of Armeli et al. (1998) stated that "...the organization plays an important social role in employees' lives. Satisfying socio-emotional needs by the communication of respect, caring, and approval, and has the potential of markedly increasing employees' performance". It follows that when employees feel their needs are being met by the organization, job satisfaction increases resulting in an increase in their desire to stay with the organization and reducing their desire to quit.

### **Perceived Coworker Support**

Although there have been two decades of empirical studies on Perceived Organizational Support (Armeli et al., 1998; Aselage & Eisenberger 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1997; and Eisenberger et al., 1999), less attention has been paid to the effects of coworker support. Perceived Coworker Support (PCS) is also an important moderator of work-related stress, employee conduct and outcomes. Perceived Coworker Support is the degree to which employees feel they are supported and treated favorably by their coworkers; and provided aid when it is needed to carry out their job effectively and to deal with stressful situations.

Typically employees who feel a high degree of work pressure would be expected to experience higher rates of burnout. Toppinen-Tanner et al. (2002) attributes burnout to prolonged work-related stress. Employees experiencing burnout may use deviant behavior as a coping mechanism and/or as retaliation to stress they feel was brought on by work pressure. As a result, it is expected that they would not only engage in deviant acts, but also feel less committed to the organization, leading to higher rates of turnover. However, we predict that support from coworkers will reduce these relationships. Specifically, if employees feel they receive sufficient support from coworkers, then work stress will not necessarily lead to burnout or negative behaviors and attitudes. For example, an employee who is feeling the pressure of an impending deadline may be relieved of some of this pressure by help offered from a coworker to meet said deadline. Thus, the help from the coworker reduces the pressure which may have led to burnout and negative attitudes or behaviors.

Mohrman and Cohen (1995) have asserted that coworker interaction influences both individual and group behavior. Further, they suggest that individuals working in teams must possess certain social skills, among which is helpfulness. In addition, Bishop et al. (2000) assert that an employee's perception of team support affects his or her commitment to the team, thereby moderating individual job performance. If an employee feels that he or she is taking on more work than the rest of the team and/or receiving little or no support from fellow team members, then he or she may exhibit deviant behavior. Deviance may take the form of such behaviors as absenteeism, tardiness, work slowdown, resigning and, in severe cases, theft or aggression.

### **Psychological Contract Theory**

Psychological Contract Theory proposes that individuals negotiate their needs via psychological contracts. As numerous studies have shown in reference to POS, any lack of coworker support would be viewed as a psychological contract breach, which, as Aselage and Eisenberger (2003) states, "leads employees to decrease their level of commitment and production. When fulfilled, the psychological contract would be expected to have positive effects on employee performance. This is because the reciprocity norm would encourage employees to fulfill their contractual obligations."

Employees who enjoy perceived support from coworkers will reciprocate by being helpful themselves, thus fostering a supportive work environment. In essence, favorable treatment generates more favorable treatment. This theory of an individual's need or obligation to reciprocate favorable treatment is supported by Eisenberger et al. (2001). They also noted that George and Brief (1992), previously asserted that positive mood may prime employees to think about favorable characteristics of coworkers, leading to helpful behavior.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory denotes that reciprocity is a fundamental aspect of social life (Deckop, Cirka, Andersson, 2003). Reina and Reina (2006) argue that reciprocity is fundamental to organizational effectiveness. They argue that trust is vital to organizational success in today's competitive global economy marked by difficult, even distressing changes. For them to be successful, trust is vital. After all, business is conducted via relationships, and trust is the

foundation to effective relationships. Based on 15 years of research with thousands of people, Reina and Reina conclude that strong relationships involve three types of transactional trust. They use the term transactional trust because trust is reciprocal in nature. That is, you have to give it to get it. We argue that trust is important as both an antecedent and consequence of both POS and PCS. Specifically, to the extent that employees trust the organizations, they will likely expect greater support. At the same time, the actual receipt of such support will likely reinforce that trust.

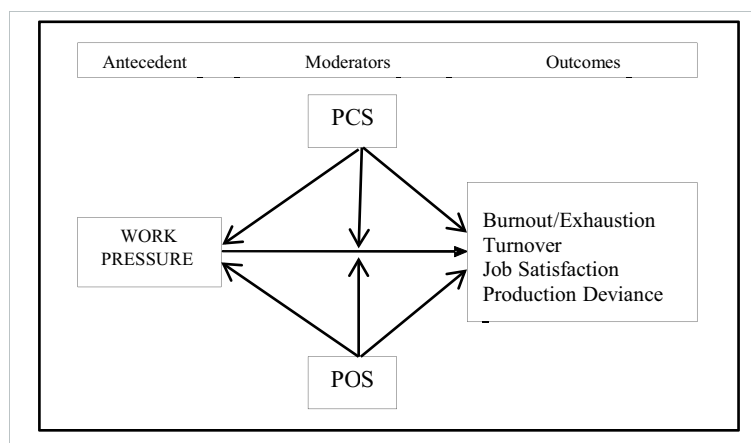
Reciprocity is thus a critical component to workers' relationship with the organization and may be important in the POS relationship. Reciprocity may also be critical in terms of PCS. According to social exchange theory, consistent exposure, repeated reliance, trust and favorable treatment will result in a beneficial reciprocal relationship among coworkers. When one person treats another well, the reciprocity norm obliges the return of favorable treatment (Gouldner, 1960). Regarding the norm of reciprocity, Gouldner (1960) asserts that a significant cause of an employee's helping behavior is how much organizational citizenship behavior (helping behavior) the employee has received from coworkers.

Applied to coworker relationships, the reciprocity norm dictates that each employee reciprocates favorable treatment. This behavior results in mutually advantageous outcomes. For instance, coworker A staying late to help coworker B with a work project, because coworker B had previously switched days off with coworker A, so that coworker A could attend their child's school play; or an employee offering a ride home to a fellow employee who has in the past been supportive of their ideas, are examples of reciprocity. In these instances the employees feel a sense of gratitude and responsibility toward one another; further, they each reap the rewards of the favorable treatment shown them. This environment should enhance employees' attitudes and behaviors directly. In addition, it should help them deal with work conditions and thus reduce the costly results of stress, namely, burnout, deviance and turnover.

### Work Pressure and Burnout

External pressure is derived from an outward source which weighs heavily on one's mental or physical state causing stress. In the case of work pressure, an employee's tasks, work environment, and work relationships are all sources of work pressure. For example, deadlines, difficult bosses, dissatisfied customers, or the conforming of a project to exacting specifications, can be difficult and draining aspects of a job. Dealing with these pressures requires exerting energy, both mental and physical. If an individual is constantly facing these pressures alone this can lead to mental burnout and physical exhaustion. According to Toppinen-Tanner et al. (2002), the most often used definition of burnout, "is a severe syndrome which develops as a consequence of a prolonged stress situation at work [in addition] exhaustion is one dimension of burnout." Further, their study found that a lack of resources and high job demands, such as time pressure, was positively related to exhaustion. However, POS and PCS can provide resources that help employees deal with the pressure. When POS and PCS are high the employees does not have to face the pressure alone.

**Figure 1: Direct and Moderating Effects of PCS and POS**



## Hypotheses

Figure 1 above depicts the relationships between work pressure, PCS, POS, and related outcomes. As shown in the figure, we expect both PCS and POS to affect employees' experienced work pressure (H1), to directly affect the dependent variables of burnout, turnover, job satisfaction, and deviance (H2), and to moderate the relationship between work pressure and these dependent variables (H3).

Organizational and coworker can provide resources that help employees deal with the demands of their job. When support is high, employees do not have to tackle the demands of the job alone. As a result, they are likely to experience less work pressure and stress than employees who do not have such support. Consequently, we predict:

**Hypothesis 1a:** Perceived Organizational Support will be negatively related to employees' experienced work pressure.

**Hypothesis 1b:** Perceived Coworker Support will be negatively related to employees' experienced work pressure.

PCs and POS may also affect other important attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. It is human nature to want to fit in or feel that you belong. People feel the need for an affiliation (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; McClelland, 1961). For example, as teenagers we form social clicks. These relationships offer a supportive and safe environment in which to deal with issues and pressures that arise in high school. Support during these formative years, in the social setting of a high school, moderates the effects of these pressures on our behavior in this same setting. In addition, we feel those who are supportive of us are in fact treating us fairly. This concept is continued into adulthood, where in the social settings provided by employers, workers gravitate toward those that offer them a supportive foundation on both an emotional and professional level.

The relational model of Tyler & Lind (1992) suggests that social/psychological needs are likely to be satisfied when people interact with others who are procedurally fair. Support from the individuals around us contributes to our sense of well-being and fairness. Further, when others treat us favorably we feel the need to reciprocate (Gouldner, 1960); thus, the norm of reciprocity takes effect. The continued effects of reciprocity offer security. Workers feel secure in the knowledge that others will be there to help them with work-related needs. In addition to coworker relationships based on reciprocity and quid-pro-quo helping behavior, high POS and PCS may also satisfy employee needs for affiliation and belonging in more loosely defined organizational relationships. Both mechanisms lead to the same results. Specifically, we predict that PCS and POS directly affect the relationships between satisfaction, burnout, deviance, and turnover. Thus, we predict:

**Hypothesis 2a:** Perceived Organizational Support will be positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to deviant behavior, burnout, and intentions to quit.

**Hypothesis 2b:** Perceived Coworker Support will be positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to deviant behavior, burnout, and intentions to quit.

Support from coworkers affects both individual and group performance, and is fueled by the norm of reciprocity. In addition, there is an established link between POS and how employees negotiate their relationship with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Thus, it can be said that there are two moderators: POS and PCS; each moderates the relationship between work pressure and attitudinal outcomes. Essentially, we hypothesize that when POS and PCS are high the relationship between job stress/pressure and negative outcomes will be lower than when POS and PCS are low, indicating POS and PCS help employees deal with pressure, therefore we further predict:

**Hypothesis 3a:** Perceived Organizational Support moderates the negative effects of work pressure such that high perceived organizational support reduces the relationship between a high degree of work pressure and job satisfaction, deviant behavior, burnout, and intentions to quit.

**Hypothesis 3b:** Perceived Coworker Support moderates the negative effects of work pressure such that high perceived coworker support reduces the relationship between a high degree of work pressure and job satisfaction, deviant behavior, burnout, and intentions to quit.

## Methods

We examined surveys administered to 224 dispatchers in over forty law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. The surveys examined the employees' relationships with coworkers, supervisors and their perception

of, and role in, the organization. This study focused primarily on the employee and coworker interactions. All participants were assured of anonymity. Of the respondents, 76% were women. The average age was 40 years ( $SD = 10.75$ ) and the average tenure with their agency was 8.36 years ( $SD = 7.38$ ).

## Measures

The respondents were asked to measure the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement as it was presented on the survey. A 7-point Likert-type scale was used, with 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree. Appendix 1 illustrates the seven scales as they appeared on the survey.

**Work Pressure/Stress.** Six statements assessed the extent to which respondents felt they were under a high degree of work-related pressure ( $\alpha = .79$ ).

**Perceived Organizational Support.** Seven statements adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986) evaluated employees' perceptions of the support they received from their organization ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

**Perceived Coworker Support.** Five-item measure that assessed respondents' perceptions of coworker support ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

**Burnout/exhaustion.** Four statements measured the degree to which the employees felt their jobs left them burned-out and exhausted ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

**Job satisfaction.** Five items from Brayfield & Rother (1951) evaluated the degree to which the employees felt satisfaction with their jobs ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

**Production deviance.** Five items were adapted from Bennett & Robinson (2000) to assess the extent to which dispatchers engaged in production deviance.

**Turnover Intentions.** Four items from Chalykoff & Kochan (1989) assessed respondents' intentions to leave their agency ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

## Results

**Table 1: Presents Scale Reliabilities, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations for All Dependent and Independent Variables in the Study**

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Variables									
Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Work Pressure	3.23	1.24	(.79)						
2. POS	3.98	1.24	-.26**	(.88)					
3. PCS	4.89	1.20	-.26**	.44**	(.82)				
4. Burnout	3.74	1.48	.58**	-.36**	-.35**	(.88)			
5. Job Satisfaction	5.49	1.13	-.33**	.40**	.54**	-.37**	(.78)		
6. Deviance	2.31	1.06	.16*	-.16*	-.21**	.13	-.20**	(.67)	
7. Turnover Intentions	2.83	1.52	.23**	-.48**	-.39**	.27**	-.67**	.19**	(.83)

Note: Scale reliabilities are shown in parentheses on the diagonal; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$

We tested our hypotheses with a series of step-wise multiple regression analyses. In all analyses we controlled for respondents' gender, tenure with the agency, and type of shift (standard 8 hour, compressed work week etc.) as these have been shown to be related to work pressure and burnout. For our test of Hypothesis 1, we entered our control variables first. We then entered PCS and POS as a block. Finally, we entered the PCS X Work Pressure and POS X Work Pressure interactions. In our analyses of Hypotheses 2 and 3, we entered our control variables first followed by work pressure, PCS and POS as a block and then the PCS X Stress and PCS X POS interactions. In testing our hypotheses we used one-tail tests for our hypothesized main effects and two-tailed tests for the interaction effects.

Table 2 below depicts the effects of POS and PCS on dispatchers' experienced work pressure and stress. As predicted, both PCS and POS significantly affect the extent to which employees experience work pressure and stress. As a result, the data support our first hypothesis.

Table 2 Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Effects of PCS and POS on Work Pressure/Stress			Table 3 Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Work Pressure, PCS, POS, and Deviance		
Dependent Variable:	Work Pressure/Stress		Dependent Variable:	Deviance	
Independent Variables	B	beta	Independent Variables	B	beta
<b>Step 1: Controls</b>			<b>Step 1: Controls</b>		
Type of Shift	-.07	-.062	Type of Shift	-.050	-.052
Gender	.057	.02	Gender	-.342+	-.143+
Tenure	.027*	.166*	Tenure	.024*	.167*
<b>Step 2: Main Effects</b>			<b>Step 2: Main Effects</b>		
POS	-.156*	-.158*	Work Pressure/Stress	.055	-.126
PCS	-.208**	-.207**	POS	-.069	-.082
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.125***		PCS	-.161*	-.188*
*** = p< .001			<b>Step 3: Interactions</b>		
** = p< .01			Pressure/Stress X POS	.059	.099
			Pressure/Stress X PCS	-.096+	-.149+
			Total R <sup>2</sup>	.127**	
			** = p< .01		
			* = p< .05		
			+ = p< .10		

Table 3 depicts the results for deviance. Contrary to our expectations, job-related stress was not significantly associated with deviance in step 1. As shown in Table 3, the results support Hypotheses 2b and 3b. PCS exerts a significant direct effect on production deviation such that employees who believed they received more support from coworkers engaged in less deviance than did those who received less support. In addition, PCS also interacts with work pressure and stress to influence the extent to which respondents engage in production deviance. However, Hypotheses 2a and 3a were not supported as there was no significant main effect or interaction effect for POS.

Table 4 presents our results for burnout. The results here support our first hypothesis, but not our second. As shown in the Table, PCS added explanatory power above and beyond the effects of POS. Both PCS and POS significantly influence the extent to which employees experience burnout. However, the results did not support our third hypothesis as related to burnout, as neither PCS nor POS interacted with work pressure/stress to affect burnout.

Table 4 Results Of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Work Pressure, PCS, POS, and Burnout			Table 5 Results Of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Work Pressure, PCS, POS and Job Satisfaction		
Dependent Variable:	Burnout		Dependent Variable:	Job Satisfaction	
Independent Variables	B	beta	Independent Variables	B	beta
<b>Step 1: Controls</b>			<b>Step 1: Controls</b>		
Type of Shift	.081	.063	Type of Shift	.184**	.188**
Gender	.273	.084	Gender	.341+	.137+
Tenure	.046**	.248**	Tenure	-.007	-.047
<b>Step 2: Main Effects</b>			<b>Step 2: Main Effects</b>		
Work Pressure/Stress	.576***	-.499***	Work Pressure/Stress	-.153**	-.175**
POS	-.293***	-.257***	POS	.178***	.208***
PCS	-.11+	-.095+	PCS	.383***	.437***
<b>Step 3: Interactions</b>			<b>Step 3: Interactions</b>		
Pressure/Stress X POS	-.001	-.001	Pressure/Stress X POS	.059	.097
Pressure/Stress X PCS	-.013	-.015	Pressure/Stress X PCS	-.067	-.102
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.493***		Total R <sup>2</sup>	.454***	
*** = p< .001			*** = p< .001		
** = p< .01			** = p< .01		
+ = p< .10			+ = p< .10		

Table 5 depicts the results for job satisfaction. As related to satisfaction, the results supported Hypothesis 2. As shown in the Table, PCS added explanatory power above and beyond the effects of POS. However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported in regards to satisfaction as there was no significant PCS or POS X Work Pressure interaction effect on satisfaction.

Table 6 below depicts the results for respondents' intentions to leave their agency. Our first hypothesis was not supported as related to turnover intentions as there was no direct relationship between work pressure and dispatchers' intentions to quit. In contrast, both hypotheses 2 and 3 were supported in terms of turnover intentions.

As shown in the Table, the direct effects for both PCS and POS were significant. In addition, both PCS and POS interacted with job-related pressure and stress to affect employees' turnover intentions.

Table 6 Results Of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Work Pressure, PCS, POS, and Turnover Intentions		
Dependent Variable:	Turnover Intentions	
Independent Variables	B	Beta
<b>Step 1: Controls</b>		
Type of Shift	-.194+	-.142+
Gender0	-.482+	-.140+
Tenure	-.014	-.071
<b>Step 2: Main Effects</b>		
Work Pressure/Stress	.074	.061
POS	-.494***	-.412***
PCS	-.272**	-.208**
<b>Step 3: Interactions</b>		
Pressure/Stress X POS	-.134*	-.158*
Pressure/Stress X PCS	.153*	.160*
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.369***	
*** = p<.001		
** = p<.01		
* = p<.05		
+ = p<.10		

## Conclusion

Our research extended theory and research on POS to include PCS. We administered a survey to police dispatchers throughout the United States. As predicted by Hypothesis 1, both POS and PCS are significantly related to respondents' experienced work pressure. Results further indicated that job-related stress directly affects burnout and job satisfaction. Consistent with our second set of hypotheses, both PCS and POS were positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to burnout and turnover intentions. PCS was also negatively related to production deviance. In contrast, the results indicate no significant direct effect for POS on deviance. In addition, as predicted in our third hypothesis, PCS moderated the relationship between job-related stress and deviance and turnover intentions while POS moderated the relationship between job-related stress and turnover intentions. However, our further predictions in hypothesis three were not supported. Our research found that PCS and job-related stress did not interact to affect burnout or job satisfaction. Our results indicate that both job-related stress and PCS influence burnout and job satisfaction. However, their effects on these outcomes are direct and not interdependent. Although PCS significantly influences burnout and satisfaction, it does not appear to diminish the effects of job-related stress on burnout and satisfaction.

## Research Implications

These results of this survey have important implications for both research and practice. For over twenty years perceived organizational support has received a great deal of attention, and has proven to be a concept worthy of study. Our results indicate POS significantly and directly affects employees' felt work pressure and stress, satisfaction, turnover intentions and experienced burnout. POS also interacts with work pressure to affect employees' turnover intentions.

In contrast, relatively little research attention has been paid to perceived coworker support. However, our results indicate that PCS is also of vital importance to organizations and thus should receive greater research attention. Our results indicate that PCS significantly and directly affects the extent to which employees feel pressure and stress at work as well as their burnout, job satisfaction, deviance behavior, and turnover intentions. In addition, PCS blunted the effects of work pressure and stress on all four dependent variables.

Indeed, PCS may be a more important predictor than POS for some outcomes. In our study, the direct effects of PCS on employee work pressure and deviant behavior were stronger than the direct effects of POS on those same variables. In addition, PCS moderated the effects of stress on employee deviance whereas POS did not. The relationship between PCS and deviance is particular noteworthy. Our results indicate that neither POS nor work pressure directly affects employee deviance. Additionally, the data indicate no significant interaction of POS and work pressure on employee deviance. In contrast, the results indicate PCS directly affects deviance and interacts

with work pressure to influence employee deviant behavior. Thus, it appears that PCS may be a central driver and determinant of the extent to which employees engage in deviant behavior.

Our research also suggests some avenues for future research. First, given the importance of PCS and POS, more research could examine the potential antecedents of POS and PCS. Our survey methodology also does not permit us to determine causality. Additional research could seek to confirm our proposed casual relationships. For example, PCS and POS may be highly correlated with workplace effectiveness. Specifically, an ineffective worker may receive negative feedback and perceive that as a lack of organizational support. Similarly, an employee who does not meet expectations may receive less coworker support.

Future research could also explore the parameters under which the relationships observed here generalize to other contexts and populations. For example, it is plausible that industries and businesses characterized by higher levels of pressure and stress enhance the determinants and consequences of POS and PCS relative to less stressful industries and businesses. Similarly, the effects of PCS and POS might be amplified or diminished among different cultural groups. Gender might also be an important determinant of the antecedents, consequences, and moderating effects of both POS and PCS. This may be particularly important because women tend to have more social connections at work and tend to be in jobs that are socially connected. This is an important consideration as 76% of our sample was female.

### Organizational Implications

We live in difficult and stressful economic times. Changes in the way of doing business are furthering increasing the pressure and stress workers face. Our research shows a significant association between work-related stress and employee burnout, decreased job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions, and increased deviant behavior of employees. Whether the deviant behavior is used as a coping mechanism or retaliation, it is counter-productive. However, our results indicate POS and PCS mitigate the effects of stress on employee attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, POS moderated the relationships between stress and turnover and satisfaction while PCS moderated the relationship between stress and the outcomes of deviance and turnover. When POS and PCS are high, stress has less of an effect on turnover, satisfaction and deviant behavior. In addition, POS and PCS both directly affected deviance, turnover, satisfaction, and burnout. In short, in today's uncertain and stressful economic environment, organizational effectiveness may hinge on providing workers organizational support and on creating an environment in which employees can get by with a little help from their coworkers.

Organizations can help to foster a supportive environment in several ways. First, they may provide training courses which include such topics as: interpersonal relationships, dealing with stress, and ways to assist your coworkers. Second, they may wish to consider the implementation of work groups and teams. However, there may be a paradox here. On the one hand, based on our results, we suggest that perceived coworker support likely influences group effectiveness. At the same time, the formation of work teams may also enhance perceived coworker support. As such, this may become a self-reinforcing cycle. Given these possibilities, the relationship between PCS and work groups and teams appears to be a promising avenue for future research.

Additionally, organizations may need to they can modify their reward system to give additional valuable rewards for supportive interpersonal behaviors. Kerr's classic article on the folly of rewarding A when organizations want B, indicates that organizations that wish to enhance perceived coworker support need to reward supportive and helpful behavior rather than competitive, individual oriented behaviors.

Finally, it may prove valuable to facilitate offsite bonding opportunities through company sponsored social events. In difficult economic times company social events are often among the first things cut. However, in the midst of difficulty and turmoil, it may be more important than ever for companies to provide these opportunities as a means of facilitating workplace cohesiveness which may then lead to greater coworker support. In turn, this support from coworkers may enable workers to avoid burnout and maintain job satisfaction despite the current stressful conditions of the economy generally and their organization specifically. As a result, such support may be what motivates employees to stick with the company and to refrain from organizational deviance behaviors.

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Antecedent	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
<b>Work pressure</b>		
I have no problems with my coworkers.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I have to work too fast	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My agency provides adequate staffing levels.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I work under considerable time pressure.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I have problems with the pace of work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I wish I could work at an easier pace.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
<b>Moderators</b>		
<b>PCS</b>		
My coworkers care about my well being.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
If necessary, I can ask my coworkers for help.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My coworkers are a source of frustration for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I can rely on my coworkers when things get tough at work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My coworkers show very little concern for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
<b>POS</b>		
My agency strongly considers my goals and value.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My agency cares about my opinions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My agency shows very little concern for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My agency really cares about my well being.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My agency would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
My agency is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Help is available from my company when I have a problem.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
<b>Outcomes</b>		
<b>Turnover</b>		
I often follow up on job leads I have heard about.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I view this job as something I would like to continue doing for the foreseeable future.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Before long I will be leaving this company.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I view this job as something to do until I can find a better job elsewhere.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
<b>Burnout/exhaustion</b>		
After a working day, I frequently feel too fatigued to engage in any other activity.		
At the end of a working day, I feel really fatigued.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Due to my job, I feel rather exhausted at the end of a working day.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
During the last stage of a working shift, I frequently feel too fatigued to perform well.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>		
My job is pretty uninteresting.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I find real enjoyment in my work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I consider my job rather unpleasant.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I am disappointed I ever took this job.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
<b>Production Deviance</b>		
I sometimes intentionally work slower than I am capable of working.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I occasionally take an additional or a longer break than is acceptable at my agency.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
In the past year, I have violated formal call taking and subsequent dispatching procedures and guidelines at least once.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
I sometimes go against my boss's decisions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	