

Perceived organizational support and employee performance: The mediating role of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior

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Abstract 176**

Current sport management literature shows that perceived organizational support (POS) influences some important employee attitudes and behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), organizational commitment (OC), job satisfaction, and turnover intention, among other attitudinal variables (e.g., Wayne, Shore, Boomer, & Tetrick, 2002; Pack, 2005). These employee attitudes and reactions, in turn, are said to influence employee performance. While the investigation of employee attitudes, reactions, and performance have been studied extensively in mainstream management, sport management researchers have not paid much attention to investigating the relationship between POS and an ultimate outcome such as performance. This paper extends the sport management literature by proposing a conceptual framework wherein OC and OCB are said to be mediators of the relationship between POS and performance. More specifically, the proposed framework postulates that three antecedents (perceived procedural justice, perceived distributive justice, and perceived supervisor support) are indicators of POS, which influences employee OC and OCB, which, in turn, influence employee performance. The model also allows for partial mediation whereby POS will have some direct effect on employee performance.

Organizational justice has been shown to be an important antecedent of POS (Fasolo, 1995; Loi, Hang-yue, & Foley, 2006; Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998; Pack, 2005; Wayne, Shore, Boomer, & Tetrick, 2002). In fact, justice perceptions may be one aspect of an employee's assessment of discretionary action taken by the organization or its agents (Rahim, Magner, & Shapiro, 2000). Perception of such discretionary justice-oriented action plays an axiomatic role in the degree of POS (Moorman et al., 1998; Wayne et al., 2002).

The framework includes distributive justice and procedural justice, the two major components of organizational justice (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005). Distributive justice focuses on the allocation of resources to individuals and their units or groups. In the case of intercollegiate athletics, for example, the resources may include salary, bonuses, facilities, support services, and the budgets for the teams. Procedural justice refers to the extent to which the distribution of resources is based on fair methods and guidelines. Fasolo (1995) found that both procedural and distributive justice explained unique variances in POS.

Organizational scholars have also found positive and significant relationships between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and POS (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Hutchison, 1997; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Yoon & Lim, 1999). In so far as the supervisor is the immediate link between an employee and the organization, supervisor's support would contribute to POS. An aerobic instructor in a large fitness club would be influenced by the support provided by the supervisor and is likely to perceive such supervisory support to be part of organizational support. It must be noted however that PSS and POS are two distinct constructs (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006), and that PSS has been shown to lead to POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

Existing literature reports that POS is positively related to OC (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne et al., 2002; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997) and OCB (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Moorman et al., 1998; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne et al., 2002). Moorman et al. (1998) found that POS mediated the relationship between procedural justice and OCB. Rhoades et al. (2001) observed that POS mediated positive relations of procedural justice, supervisor support, and organizational rewards with commitment. Similarly, Loi et al. (2006) showed that both procedural and distributive justice affected POS, which in turn mediates justice effects on commitment. Inside sport settings, Pack (2005) highlighted the importance of POS as mediator between justice and commitment among college athletic directors.

What is unique about the proposed framework is that POS (constituted by perceived distributive justice, procedural justice, and supervisory support) is shown to influence employee performance and that the POS-performance relationship is said to be mediated by employee OC and OCB. That OC and OCB are shown to be the mediators of the relationship between POS and employee performance is consistent with the notion that OC and OCB are not ultimate dependent variables in an organizational context. That is, OC and OCB that are individual employee reactions have utility for the organization only if they are reflected in employee performance. In the proposed framework, performance is viewed as both contribution to achieving program goals and being consistent with organizational philosophies (MacLean & Zakrajsek, 1996).

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The proposed framework is applicable to different organizational contexts within the purview of sport management. Such contexts include professional sport franchises, intercollegiate/interscholastic athletic departments, university/city recreation departments, sport governing bodies, fitness centers, tennis clubs, golf courses, etc. Future research would test the proposed model in one or more of these organizational contexts.

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