

Exploring Differences In-house Human Resource Versus Outsourced Human Resource Small Business Employee Samples in Perceived Organizational Support

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Very little research has focused on comparing in-house human resource (HRI) versus outsourced human resource (HRO) small organization employee samples on perceived organizational support (POS). Using a survey method, the sample sizes of 101 HRI United States (US) employees and 97 HRO US employees were equivalent in terms of company size, company age, gender, years of work experience, work schedule, average HR response time, and POS. Comparisons between HRI versus HRO samples for specific type of organizational support on POS showed that the HRI employee sample perceived higher POS for the Personalized and Collectivist than Monistic type. No differences were found for the HRO sample. In addition, a significant difference in correlations was found between HRI versus HRO employees' average HR response time for resolving an issue to POS, with the relationship more negative for the HRI sample. Collectively these results suggest that HRI employees were more sensitive to the type of perceived organization support, and a slower HR response time negatively affected their POS, versus HRO employees. Study limitations and future research issues are discussed.

Belcourt (2006, p. 269) defined outsourcing as, “a contractual relationship for the provision of business services by an external provider. In other words, a company pays another company to do some work for it.” The top reason behind an organization's decision to outsource human resources is generally cost reduction (Irwin et al., 2018). Other perceived benefits can include concentrating on in-house expertise, shifting the burden of risk, and organizational learning from the specialist provider (Cooke et al., 2005). However, potential negative consequences of outsourcing can include loss of in-house knowledge, and decreased long-term competitiveness (Cooke et al., 2005). An organization needs to create and execute a business strategy that is tailored to work for their company which includes weighing the opportunity cost of the decision to outsource any function including its Human Resources (HR). Prior research has explored the impact of HR outsourcing within a small business, including finding that a high revenue generation capacity for the firm's core activities, can increase the motivation to outsource (Xu et al., 2020). A small business is defined as a business as having fewer than 500 employees by the United States (US) Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy (2021).

Over the past 25 years (from 1997 to 2022), small businesses have created 12.9 million jobs, accounting for 62% of new jobs added to the US economy (US Small Business Administration, 2022). Perceived organizational support has been recognized as being important to employee well-being and successful behavioral outcomes

(Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017). However, to the authors' knowledge there has been no empirical research comparing in-house human resource (HRI) versus outsourced human resource (HRO) small business employee samples for perceived organizational support.

The purpose of this paper is to compare two approximately equal size US employee samples from small organizations, one where HRI is used and the other using HRO, on several company, demographic, and HR response time variables, and the relationship of four distinct types of organizational support to perceived organizational support (POS). Given the exploratory nature of this study, three research questions and not formal hypotheses will be stated. Before describing literature on the specific variables studied, a brief review of HR practices in small businesses will be done.

Literature Review

HR Practices in Small Businesses

Cardon and Stevens (2004) argued there is greater understanding of some HR functions, e.g., hiring, rewarding, than others, e.g., training, managing change, responding to labor relations issues in small organizations. Levels of HRM formalization, e.g., regular policies, written up procedures tend to be lower in smaller and medium enterprises (SME), versus larger companies (Singh & Vohra, 2009). In their analysis of 168 family-owned fast growth SMEs, Carlson et al. (2006) found that recruitment, training and development, formal performance appraisals, and competitive compensation packages were more important

for high sales-growth performing firms than for low sales-growth performing firms. High sales-growth performing firms also used more cash incentives. It is important that SMEs align their HR IT function to fit with their high-performance work system capabilities (L'Écuyer & Raymond, 2023).

Perceived Organizational Support in HRI Versus HRO

POS focuses on employees' perceived well-being and how their contributions are valued (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Chaing and Hsieh (2012) found that employees feel more motivated and are more likely to contribute to their organizations when they receive organizational support. This is based on Gouldner's (1960), norm of reciprocity, using a social exchange interpretation, whereby the organization provides resources (e.g., pay, fair treatment, respect) and the employee reciprocates by giving "inputs" such as a positive work attitude (e.g., job satisfaction), and higher performance (e.g., lower tardiness, absenteeism).

One might assume that HRI employees could perceive higher POS than HRO employees. With HRI professionals as a direct/official part of the small business staff, it could be easier for employees to identify with their HR department, i.e., what Kim et al. (2023) have termed HROE or human resource department organizational embodiment. An on-site in-house HR professional may be able to more easily implement programs and policies to ensure the organization is giving support to employees. However, with HRO employees, the HR professionals are not officially employed by the small business, but instead could work directly as consultants or be part of a professional employer organization enterprise (PEO) as noted by Klaas (2003). Employees may/may not be made aware of this. Thus, POS could be lower in an HRO versus HRI employee sample. However, if the HRO does not provide good service to its clients, which can include POS, it will not be retained by a clients' business. To the authors' knowledge, there has not been a published empirical study of work-related organizational support perceptions comparing samples of HRI versus HRO employees. This leads to the first research question (RQ1):

RQ1 – is there a difference in POS between HRI versus HRO employee samples?

Perceived Organization Support – Different Measures Used in Prior Research

POS has been measured with the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale, although with different scale formats. The original full version of the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale consists of 36 items. Miao (2012) used a four-item version of the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale in her sample of Chinese employees from two state-owned enterprises and found positive relationships of employee POS and job satisfaction to all four dimensions of supervisor-rated OCB, i.e., helping, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and courtesy, as well as a separate measure of task performance. Duffy and Lilly (2013) used a sample of 700 US

employees, and an abbreviated POS scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and found that POS was positively related to OCB, but that for employees with a high need for power, this weakened the relationship, i.e., high power need employees exhibited a weaker POS – OCB relationship. Duffy and Lilly (2013) speculated that higher power need employees will focus on behaviors that enhance their status and not OCBs. Using 3,508 employee survey respondents from a large Canadian bank, and a six-item version of POS (Eisenberger et al., 1990), Wilches-Alzate and Jeffrey (2016), found that POS mediated the relationship of manager recognition of employees to OCB. In a more recent study, Aldabbas et al. (2023) found, using a 10-item POS measure (Eisenberger et al., 1986), that work engagement mediated the relationship between POS and employee creativity.

PCMT Model of Organizational Support

POS has been more recently dissected into four different types, using the Personalized, Collectivistic, Monistic and Teleological (PCMT) Model of Organizational Support (Matusik et al., 2022). There are two general dimensions in this model, with two anchors: i.e., (1) motivated by the interests of others versus self-interest, and (2) targeted at the individual versus not targeted at the individual. This then sets up the four PCMT types of POS with different motives as described below by Matusik et al. (2022).

Personalized (P) organizational support involves the employee's perception that an organization is motivated to help the workforce and cares about the personal well-being of the employee (e.g., providing specific development opportunities). This is characterized as a reciprocal exchange. Collectivistic (C) organizational support is the employee's belief that the organization is motivated to enhance the workforce rather than the individual employee, for example providing widely offered development opportunities to help all employees. This is characterized as a generalized exchange. Monistic (M) organizational support is the employee's perception that such support (e.g., development opportunities) is more motivated by the organization's desire to enhance workforce productivity to benefit the organization, not the individual. This is characterized as a productive exchange. Finally, Teleological (T) organizational support is the employee's belief that such support is motivated by the company and personalized for the individual (e.g., development opportunities for eventual promotion). This is described as a negotiated exchange. Research has not tested for differences in HRI vs HRO samples in the relationship of the PCMT model (Matusik et al., 2022) to POS. Given the lack of prior research, this will be posed as the second research question, i.e.

RQ2 – within the HRI versus HRO samples, are there differences in POS based on the PCMT Model?

The Relationships of POS to HR Practices

In their meta-analysis, Kurtessis et al. (2017) found positive relationships of different favorable HR practices,

e.g., developmental opportunities, job security, family-supportive organizational practices, autonomy, and participation in decision-making to POS. In their follow-up summary of the POS literature, Eisenberg et al. (2020) confirmed these favorable HR practices as an antecedent to POS, adding that this relationship of HR practices to POS seemed stronger when employees viewed the practice to be discretionary, i.e., involving the free choice of the organization. Lambert (2000) argued that if a benefit, such as work-life practices, became commonplace across organizations, employees would be less likely to perceive this as a sign of the organization's personal caring about them, because it was basic given/commonly done, not a more discretionary privilege, i.e., the organization going beyond what was normally done.

HR "responsiveness" to an employee would seem to be an example of a potential discretionary type of organizational practice, and it has not yet been investigated as an antecedent of POS. Chang et al. (2013) found that a more flexibility-oriented HR system, resource-wise, e.g., providing training courses allowing employees to perform multiple jobs, and also coordination-wise, e.g., acting on suggestions and feedback from core knowledge employees to redeploy employees, was positively related to both firm innovativeness and market responsiveness. Building on Chang et al.'s (2013) coordination finding, it could be expected that with HRI, the HR responsiveness – POS relationship might be stronger, because by being housed within the organization an in-house HR professional may be in a better position to respond more quickly to an employee versus an outsourced HR professional. However, an HRO professional might have the specialized expertise needed that an HRI professional does not. Again given the lack of prior research, this will also be posed as a third research question

(RQ3), i.e., will there be a stronger relationship between HR Responsiveness and POS for an HRI employee sample versus an HRO employee sample?

Method

Sample and Data Collection

Cint, a third-party company that specializes in digital survey distribution (www.cint.com), was used to enlist participants. The first author provided a link to a Qualtrics survey. To participate, the following requirements needed to be met - eligible study participants were required to work full-time (at least 35 hours/week) for a small business with between 50-150 employees and to have been employed with that business for at least 12 months. The 12-month employment threshold was necessary so that responses to survey items would be more valid, for example, allowing participants to describe their POS perceptions more accurately, rate the type of POS using the PCMT model, and have more opportunity to interact with HR. The authors were looking to obtain approximately 100 complete responses from two independent sets of employees, those whose organization outsourced HR (HRO) and those whose organization kept the HR func-

tion in-house (HRI). Having approximately 100 employees in each sample would create more statistical power for testing the research questions (Stevens, 1996). Responses were collected over the first two weeks of November 2023. Two hundred and sixty-eight responses were recorded in the database to achieve the approximate number of responses desired. Three participants opted out and did not consent to the survey, 11 participants consented but did not complete the survey and 54 participants did not meet the 12-month requirement. These 68 respondents were not included. Two separate surveys containing identical items, were administered to the HRO versus HRI samples. University IRB approval was given for this study to the first author (Protocol #30972, 10/18/23). Final data samples were $n = 101$ for HRI and $n = 97$ for HRO.

Prior interview-based qualitative work with a mix ($n = 12$) of business owners, HR professionals and managerial employees of small businesses, using HRI ($n = 5$), HRO ($n = 4$), hybrid HR models ($n = 3$), had identified POS as an important HR variable for consideration (NVivo, 2020). The qualitative data highlighted several key themes, including communication, trust in leadership, fostering loyalty boosting culture, and quality standards. Business owners in the study observed that these aspects were impacted by the level of organizational support employees received from the HR professionals or those in charge of the HR functions. From the qualitative data, three owners noted a positive shift once HR operations were internalized within the organization.

Measures

HR Outsourcing. The survey asked "does your company outsource any functions of human resources (not to include payroll)," to which a No versus Yes response was given. Payroll was not included because this is generally the most common outsourced HR function across smaller businesses (Belcourt, 2006), and it was important to create two distinct samples for testing. All $n = 101$ HRI employees said No. When a Yes response was given in the HRO employee sample, the following question asked, "which functions below are outsourced, check all of the following that apply" (number of HRO employees checking this function). The following functions could be checked - recruitment and talent management ($n = 47$), benefits administration ($n = 39$), employee relations ($n = 45$), risk management and compliance ($n = 29$), training and development ($n = 47$), policy development and enforcement ($n = 22$), and other ($n = 4$), fill in - background/drug screening, time management.

Perceived Organizational Support. POS was measured with eight-items based on the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale. All survey items used are listed in the Appendix. Sample items are: "the organization really cares about my well-being" and "the organization cares about my opinions." Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly agree to 7 = strongly disagree. Hutchinson (1997) previously used an eight-item version of the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale, and found an internal consistency

cy reliability estimate, Cronbach's alpha, of .92. For the two samples in this study, the scale reliabilities were, HRI = .87 and HRO = .84. For the combined sample, alpha = .86. These are "good" reliabilities, well exceeding the threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

P, C, M, T Types of Organizational Support. One item asked, "which choice below best describes your current type of perceived organizational support, where 1 = Personalized- motivated by the workforce and personalized for the individual employee; 2 = Collectivistic- motivated by the workforce and generalized to the group not the individual; 3 = Monistic- motivated by the company and generalized to the group not the individual; and 4 = Teleological- motivated by the company and personalized for the individual employee.

Average HR Response Time. Given the lack of prior research, one item asked, "what is the average response time from human resources for resolving an issue", where 1 = within the same business day, 2 = next business day, 3 = one week, 4 = two weeks, 5 = two to four weeks, and 6 = over four weeks.

Company Background Variables. Two variables were measured, company size and company age. Employees indicated their company's size using a slider scale, within the $n = 50$ to 150 predetermined limits. Company age was indicated using the following scale, where

1 = 0 - 5 years, 2 = 6 - 10 years, 3 = 11-15 years, 4 = 16 - 20 years, and 5 = over 21 years.

Employee Background Variables. Four variables were measured gender, years of work experience, work schedule, and job title. Gender was measured (asking which choice best describes your gender) as 1 = male and 2 = female. This operationalization, while limited, allowed for easier analysis. Years of work experience were measured using the following scale, 1 = less than 2 years, 2 = 3 - 5 years, 3 = 6 - 10 years, 4 = 11 - 14 years, 5 = 15 - 19 years, 6 = at least 20 years. For work schedule, employees were asked which choice best described, where 1 = in-person, 2 = hybrid, 3 = remote. Employees also indicated their current job title in an open box text.

Data Analysis

For both HRI and HRO samples, frequencies will be reported for nominal variables, while means and standard deviations will be reported for continuous variables. An independent samples t-test was used for the first research question. To test the second research question, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. If a significant overall F test was found, and the homogeneity of variance assumption was met, then post hoc group comparisons were made using the least squared difference test. Given the smaller size groups being compared, if the significant overall F test and homogeneity of variance assumption was met, the least squared differences test is acceptable (Stevens, 1996). Testing for a difference in correlations was used to test the third research question, using Fisher's r to z transformation (Stevens, 1996). SPSS (SPSS, 2021) was used for all data analyses. With the lack of a priori

predictions in the two research questions, two-tailed significance tests were reported.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 1 shows the nominal demographic and company background variables for the HRI and HRO samples. The employee gender and work schedule breakdowns are approximately equal. For job title, both samples were very heterogeneous, but manager-related was the highest frequency job title listed for both samples (HRI, $n = 13$, HRO, $n = 21$). The breakdowns for the Personalized, Collectivistic, Monistic and Teleological perceptions of organizational support for each sample indicated the same order of frequency, with Personalized being the most frequent, followed by Collectivistic, then Monistic, and Teleological being the least frequent mentioned.

First Research Question

The first research question (RQ1) asked – is there a difference in POS between HRI versus HRO employee samples. An independent samples t-test, showed no difference,

$t(194) = -.82, p = .41$. HRI, Mean (M) = 4.78, HRO, (M) = 4.92.

Second Research Question

The second research question (RQ2) asked - to what extent are there differences in POS using the PCMT model between HRI versus HRO employee samples? Table 2 presents the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) testing for both samples. For the HRI sample, a significant overall $F(3,97) = 3.25, p < .05$ test was initially found, and the homogeneity of variance assumption was met, Levene Statistic (based on the mean) = 1.20, $p = .32$. This allowed for post hoc group testing, and the Personalized and Collectivistic types of organizational support were both found to be significantly higher on POS than the Monistic type, $p < .05$. However, for the HRO sample, the initial F test was not significant, $F(3,88) = .89, p = .45$, so that follow-up post hoc group testing could not be justified. However, the group means for the P, C, M, and T organization support models are still reported for the reader.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Third Research Question

Table 3 presents the continuous variable means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for the HRI and HRO samples. Using listwise deletion across these variables, there was some missing data for the HRO sample which reduced the sample size to HRO, $n = 93$. Looking at the Means, independent sample t-tests showed no significant differences between the samples on Company Size, Company Age, (Employee) Years of Work Experience, Average HR Response Time, or as previously mentioned, POS. A common significant correlation for both samples was the positive relationship between company age and employee years of work experience, i.e., as a small company stays

Table 1*Demographic, Company Background and PCMT Organizational Support Distribution by HRI and HRO Sample*

Variable	HRI (n = 101)	HRO (n = 97)
Employee Gender		
Female	n = 50 (50%)	n = 50 (51%)
Male	n = 51 (50%)	n = 47 (49%)
Work Schedule		
In-office	n = 66 (65%)	n = 61 (63%)
Remote	n = 11 (11%)	n = 9 (9%)
Hybrid	n = 24 (24%)	n = 27 (28%)
Current Job Title (collapsed into broader categories)		
Accounting/Finance-related (e.g., CPA, accountant, tax professional)	n = 6	n = 3
Administrative-related (e.g., assistant, receptionist, secretary)	n = 3	n = 3
Cashier/Customer-service-related	n = 5	n = 1
CEO	n = 2	n = 7
Director (e.g., Operations, Construction, Activities)	n = 5	n = 6
Human Resource-related (e.g., Director, recruitment)	n = 7	n = 3
IT-related (e.g., software)	n = 4	n = 2
Machine Operator	n = 2	n = 1
Manager-related (e.g., project, property, shift, supervisor, foreman)	n = 13	n = 21
Medical-related (e.g., nurse, dietary)	n = 2	n = 4
Sales-related	n = 4	n = 3
Teacher	n = 4	n = 3
Technician-related (e.g., Prepress, HVAC, utility, x-ray)	n = 4, n = 59	n = 1, n = 59
Miscellaneous (e.g., Axe master, bartender, caregiver, cashier, cook, crew, data analyst, data reviewer, delivery driver, dog pound, glazier, hair stylist, law librarian, logistics, mover, physical trainer, production planner, security specialist, cybersecurity, bank teller, traffic flagger, volunteer, legal associate, freelance tutor, engineer, driver, communications operator; real estate; graphic designer, environmental services, forklift operator)	n = 42	n = 38
Which choice below of the four best describes your current type of perceived organizational support		
Personalized - motivated by the workforce and personalized for the individual employee (reciprocal exchange)	n = 39 (39%)	n = 50 (52%)
Collectivistic - motivated by the workforce and generalized to the group not the individual (generalized exchange)	n = 28 (28%)	n = 29 (30%)
Monistic - motivated by the company and generalized to the group not the individual (productive exchange)	n = 24 (24%)	n = 12 (13%)
Teleological - motivated by the company and personalized for the individual employee. (negotiated exchange)	n = 10 (10%)	n = 5 (5%)
Missing	n = 0	n = 1

in business longer, employees can remain employed.

The third research question (RQ3) asked, i.e., will there be a stronger relationship between HR Responsiveness and POS for an HRI employee sample versus an HRO employee sample? A significant correlation was found for

both samples. However, using Fisher's r to z transformation, a significant difference in correlations was also found between the HRI versus HRO samples, i.e., HRI ($r = -.62$) versus HRO ($r = -.37$) Average HR Response Time (for resolving an issue) to POS, $z = -2.31$, $p < .05$.
Insert Table 3 About Here

Table 2

Analysis of Variance and Post Hoc Comparison by PCMT Type of Organizational Support on Generalized Organizational Support – Difference in POS Between HRI and HRO Samples

Outcome—Generalized Organizational Support								
Sample	HRI				HRO			
Differences in PCMT Type of Organizational Support	$F(3,97) = 3.25, p < .05$				$F(3,88) = .89, p = .45$			
Homogeneity of Variance	Levene = .20, $p = .32$				Levene = 1.09, $p = .36$			
Generalized Organizational Support Mean by PCMT Type (sample size N)	P	C	M	T	P	C	M	T
	5.09 ^a	4.91 ^a	4.20 ^b	4.60	5.01	4.85	4.68	5.72
	(39)	(28)	(24)	(10)	(47)	(29)	(12)	(4)
Type of Organizational Support								
P = Personalized								
C = Collectivistic								
M = Monistic								
T = Theological								

Note. With each outcome, cell means that do not share the same superscript, e.g., ^a versus ^b are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level by the Least Squares Difference post hoc group test. Generalized Organizational Support measured on a 7-point scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of Continuous Variables for HRI versus HRO Samples

Variable Name	HRI		HRO		1	2	3	4	5
	M	SD	M	SD					
1. Company Size	108.88	32.83	112.24	28.59	(----) ^f	-.07	.20*	-.21*	.04
2. Company Age	3.59	1.45	3.28	1.35	.31**	(----)	.22*	.18	.06
3. Years of Work Experience	2.49	1.35	2.50	1.18	.18	.30**	(----)	-.03	.05
4. Average HR Response Time	2.15	1.20	2.16	.97	-.01	.07	-.04	(----)	-.37** ^g
5. Perceived Organizational Support	4.78	1.18	4.92	1.19	.01	-.08	-.06	-.62**	(----)

Note. HRI, $n = 101$; HRO, $n = 93$ * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (both two-tailed). Critical value for Correlations to reach significance, $r > .21$ * $p < .05$; $r > .25$, ** $p < .01$ (both two-tailed) ^a *Company Size*, between 50 to 150 employees on slider scale; ^b *Company Age*, 1 = less than 5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = 11-15 years, 4 = 16-20 years, 5 over 21 years; ^c *Years of Work Experience*, 1 = less than 2 years, 2 = 3-5 years, 3 = 6-10 years, 4 = 11-14 years, 5 = 15-19 years, 6 = at least 20 years; ^d *Average HR Response Time*, 1 = within the same day, 2 = next business day, 3 = one week, 4 = two weeks, 5 = two to four weeks, 6 = over four weeks; ^e *Perceived Organizational Support*, 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. ^f Correlations below the diagonal for HRI sample versus above the diagonal for the HRO sample. ^g Significant difference in correlation of HRI ($r = -.62$) versus HRO ($r = -.37$) Average HR Response Time to Perceived. Organizational Support, $z = -2.31, p < .05$

Discussion

To the authors' knowledge, this is the first study testing the differences between HRO versus HRI employee samples on POS and specific types of organizational support. As such, the results found should be regarded as "exploratory" and in need of further study to validate. For the first research question, there was no mean level

difference in POS for the HRI versus HRO samples. For the second research question, not surprisingly, Personalized organizational support was the highest on POS for the HRI sample. Personalized support corresponds most closely with the Eisenberger et al. (1986) POS conceptualization (Matusik et al., 2022). Both the Personalized and Collectivistic types of support were significantly

higher than the Monistic type for the HRI employee sample. The Personalized (generalized exchange) and Collectivistic (reciprocal exchange), are perceived as being motivated for the collective employee welfare versus the Monistic (productive exchange), which is perceived to be more motivated by the organization's self-interest (Matusik et al., 2022).

However, the non-significant results across organizational support types for the HRO sample is also interesting and suggests that it may be more difficult for an HRO employee sample to identify with a more specific type of organizational support. In addition, although there was no perceived difference in average HR response time between samples, a significant difference in correlations was found between HRI versus HRO employees' average HR response time for resolving an issue to POS, with the relationship more negative for the HRI sample. Collectively these results suggest that HRI employees are more sensitive to the type of perceived organization support, and a slower HR response time negatively affects their POS.

More may be expected by non-HR employees for in-house HR professionals than if human resources are outsourced. HR employees are "fellow" employees in the small business, with as much invested as other employees in the success of the small business. Small business success statistics, especially in the early years, are quite sobering, e.g., only one-third of small business startups survive 10 years (Turner & Endres, 2017). This corroborates HROE (Kim et al., 2023) i.e., where it can be easier for employees to identify with their in-house HR department. However, HRO employees may feel more detached from their organization, knowing that their HR is outsourced (Belcourt, 2006). Future research is needed to follow-up on this.

Study Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

Making sure that eligible participants worked full-time and had at least one year with their organization helped to ensure more valid survey responses, i.e., they could more accurately answer the survey items, for example to experience POS, rate the type of POS using the PCMT model, and work with HR. Finding a higher level of POS for both HRI and HRO samples was a positive result. Another study strength was that finding the HRO and HRI employee samples to be approximately the same across employee background variables (gender, work schedule, years of experience), and company background variables (company size and company age), at least partially ruled out these variables as alternative explanations for the study's findings. The most frequent current job title mentioned across both samples was manager related. The recalled average HR response time to an employee concern is a new item available for future research. However, a stronger measure would be to collect actual response time data using records.

Integrating research limitations with future research, the research design was cross-sectional, all data was self-reported, and the HRI and HRO employee sample sizes

were not large. Looking at measurement limitations, gender was limited to two choices, and there were gaps in the work experience measure, e.g., someone with over two years, but less than three years fell in-between the response options. A continuous slider scale should have been used. There was no independent confirmation that participants knew that their HR was outsourced or in-house. It is difficult to interpret the results for smaller specific organizational support sub-sample sizes, especially for Teleological. Teleological involves the respondent perceiving that organizational support is motivated by the company and personalized for the individual employee, for example development opportunities offered to retain the employee (Matusik et al., 2022). Only ten respondents for the HRI sample, and four respondents for the HRO sample selected Teleological for analysis. Thus, larger samples for all four perceived types of organizational support are needed to better test the Matusik et al. (2022) model.

No additional antecedent variables (e.g., leadership, fairness) or outcome variables (e.g., OCB, stress) for perceived organizational support were collected (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Testing the relationships of more specific types of organizational support, i.e., the PCMT model (Matusik et al., 2022), to such antecedent and outcome variables is needed in future research. Increasing the employee sample sizes for the HRO and HRI participants, including type of industry as well as additional US small business employees, could have improved study generalizability. Given the amount of HR outsourcing (L'Ecuyer & Raymond, 2023), it is important to continue comparing HRI versus HRO employee samples in future studies. This includes specifically measuring perceived employees' detachment from their organization (Gurchiek, 2022). It is hoped that this initial study will stimulate future research efforts.

Appendix

Survey items

Measure

Perceived Organizational Support

- The organization strongly considers my goals and values.
- Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.
- The organization really cares about my well-being.
- The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.
- The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor.
- If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me (R).
- The organization shows very little concern for me (R).
- The organization cares about my opinions.

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