

[Click for updates](#)

## European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/pewo20>

### Beyond social exchange: Collectivism's moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour

Daan van Knippenberg<sup>a</sup>, Jan-Willem van Prooijen<sup>b</sup> & Ed Sleebos<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

<sup>b</sup> Department of Social and Organizational Psychology, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

<sup>c</sup> Department of Organization Sciences, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Published online: 21 Nov 2013.

To cite this article: Daan van Knippenberg, Jan-Willem van Prooijen & Ed Sleebos (2015) Beyond social exchange: Collectivism's moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 24:1, 152-160, DOI: [10.1080/1359432X.2013.858699](https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2013.858699)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2013.858699>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## Beyond social exchange: Collectivism's moderating role in the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour

Daan van Knippenberg<sup>1</sup>, Jan-Willem van Prooijen<sup>2</sup>, and Ed Sleebos<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

<sup>2</sup>Department of Social and Organizational Psychology, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

<sup>3</sup>Department of Organization Sciences, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Perceived organizational support plays an important role in the social exchange relationship between the employee and the organization. We propose that individual differences in collectivism affect the extent to which employee–organization relationships are based on social exchange, and that therefore collectivism moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour. Results of a survey ( $N = 293$ ) assessing perceived organizational support, collectivism, and supervisor ratings of organizational citizenship behaviour supported this hypothesis. We conclude that organizational citizenship behaviour originates from social exchange processes only among employees who construe the self in relatively individualistic terms.

**Keywords:** Organizational citizenship behaviour; Perceived organizational support; Collectivism; Interdependent self; Self-construal; Social exchange processes.

Social exchange processes in the relationship between employees and the organization have extensively shown their importance in explaining the occurrence of important employee attitudes and behaviours (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, Chen, & Tetrick, 2009). Central to the social exchange perspective is the assumption that the relationship between employees and their employer is built on the trade of effort and loyalty for benefits like pay, support, and recognition (Blau, 1964; Gould, 1979; Levinson, 1965; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rousseau & Parks, 1993; Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, et al., 2009). Most research efforts in the social exchange tradition have focused on demonstrating that the basic tenets of this approach hold (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009). Far less attention has been paid to the possibility that there may be individual differences in the extent to which employees' relationships with the organization is shaped by social exchange processes (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Farh, Hackett, & Liang, 2007; Kamdar, McAllister, & Turban, 2006; Shore, Bommer, Rao, & Seo, 2009; Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, et al., 2009). Attention for such

differences is important because it increases scientists' and practitioners' ability to predict which employees are particularly motivated by social exchange, and allows us to examine when social exchange plays less of a role (cf. van Knippenberg, van Dick, & Tavares, 2007).

We argue that of particular interest here are influences that lead individuals to understand their relationship with their employing organization less in social exchange terms, and identify individual differences in *collectivism* as such an influence. Collectivism captures the extent to which individuals construe the self as intertwined with others rather than as independent and to emphasize the collective interest over the self-interest (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002; Triandis, 1995; Wagner & Moch, 1986). We develop and test the hypothesis that individual differences in collectivism moderate the extent to which the relationship between *perceived organizational support* (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998), probably the key social exchange concept in capturing the perception of the organization's contributions in the social exchange relationship between individual and organization, and

Correspondence should be addressed to Daan van Knippenberg, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam, PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands. E-mail: [dvanknippenberg@rsm.nl](mailto:dvanknippenberg@rsm.nl)

*organizational citizenship behaviour*—discretionary actions not captured by formal job requirements that benefit the organization and its members (Organ, 1988) that are understood as a common currency to repay organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Specifically, we propose that the perceived organizational support–citizenship behaviour relationship is stronger for individuals lower on collectivism, because collectivism leads individuals to see their relationship with the organization less in social exchange terms.

## PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR

A core assumption in the social exchange approach to organizational behaviour is that the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which holds that favours received should be repaid, plays a key role in the relationship between employee and organization. On the basis of this norm, employees are expected to repay benefits received from the organization with loyalty, effort, and performance. In the same vein, the organization is expected to reward loyalty and performance with pay, recognition, and support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). As a result, the extent to which the organization is perceived to recognize and reward the employee's efforts and to support the employee should be positively related to the employee's efforts on behalf of the organization and attitudes towards the organization (Moorman et al., 1998; Piercy, Cravens, Lane, & Vorhies, 2006). Such perceptions of the extent to which the organization lives up to its part of the exchange relationship are reflected by the concept of perceived organizational support as proposed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). Perceived organizational support reflects a general perception of the extent to which the organization values the employee's contributions and cares about the employee's well-being. Eisenberger et al. propose that perceived organizational support elicits the expectation that effort on behalf of the organization will be rewarded by the organization and engenders a sense of obligation to repay the organization for the support received. Thus, higher perceived organizational support should be associated with greater commitment to and greater effort on behalf of the organization (Riggle et al., 2009).

Perceived organizational support represents the organization's role in the social exchange process and should not be equated with the social exchange process itself. In that sense, strictly speaking, evidence for the influence of perceived organizational support in and of itself is not evidence of social exchange processes. Even so, research on perceived organizational support has documented evidence that seems to overwhelmingly argue in favour of such a social exchange interpretation. First, social exchange theory proposes that the core of social exchange is the norm of reciprocity. Accordingly, if the influence of perceived organizational support reflects

social exchange processes, it should be stronger for individuals that more strongly adhere to the norm of reciprocity. This is exactly what Eisenberger et al. (1986) found (i.e., these individuals' differences were captured under the label exchange ideology). Second, if the influence of perceived organizational support derives from the norm of reciprocity in social exchange, its influence should be mediated by the felt obligation to reciprocate. This is exactly what Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, and Rhoades (2001) found.

In further support of this social exchange analysis, studies of the relationship of perceived organizational support with organizational attitudes and behaviour showed that perceived organizational support is indeed positively related to various employee attitudes and behaviours supportive of the organization (e.g., Armeli et al., 1998; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Guzzo, Noonan, & Elron, 1994; Moorman et al., 1998; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009; Piercy et al., 2006; Riggle et al., 2009; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), and negatively related to employee attitudes and behaviours that are detrimental to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 1990; Guzzo et al., 1994; Riggle et al., 2009; Wayne et al., 1997). These studies add to the growing body of research in support of the social exchange approach to the employee–organization relationship in general, and the importance of perceived organizational support in this relationship in particular.

Almost without exception, however, these studies have focused on variables that can be seen as inputs in the exchange process between employee and organization or on moderators of the weight placed on these inputs (e.g., Armeli et al., 1998). Far less attention has been paid to the possibility that the way individuals subjectively construe the relationship between the self and social collectives may affect the extent to which an employee's relationship with the organization is rooted in principles of social exchange. Such differences would moderate the impact of perceived organizational support, not because they affect the weight placed on organizational or employee inputs in the relationship, but rather because they affect the extent to which the relationship is evaluated on the basis of benefits given and received in the first place. As we have already noted, attention for such differences is important for two reasons. First, testing such hypotheses adds to our understanding of social exchange processes in organizations and the employee–organization relationship more in general. Second, insight into how individuals' understanding of their relationship with the organization affects the strength of the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee outcomes may help to identify the limitations of the social exchange perspective as an applied framework (e.g., interventions focused at changing the organization's inputs in the employee–employer relationship are less effective if employee behaviour is less contingent on social exchange).

## COLLECTIVISM AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE ORGANIZATION

First evidence that there may be individual differences in the extent to which the relationship between the employee and the organization is based on social exchange comes from the work of Eisenberger et al. (1986). Eisenberger et al. proposed that there are individual differences in endorsement of the norm of reciprocity and showed that perceived organizational support is more strongly related to attitudes and behaviour for employees that more strongly endorse the norm of reciprocity. Because the norm of reciprocity is assumed to be the driving force behind social exchange processes, these findings may be interpreted as saying that there are individual differences in the extent to which the relationship with the organization is based on social exchange, and that these individual differences moderate the impact of perceived organizational support.

Although these findings are important as first evidence that employees may differ in the extent to which their relationship with the organization is based on social exchange, they do not tell the whole story. In the present study, we extend this individual difference approach by focusing on employee differences in collectivism (Oyserman et al., 2002; Wagner & Moch, 1986) and theoretical notions about the differences in self-construal associated with differences in collectivism (Kolstad & Yorpestad, 2009; Leong & Leong, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). This linkage with the self-concept provides a basis for further development of social exchange theory that is not present in the study of perceived organizational support and individual differences in the endorsement of the norm of reciprocity.

Collectivism has primarily been studied as a cultural variable (e.g., Earley, 1989; Hofstede, 1980; Oyserman et al., 2002), but it may also be used to distinguish between individuals within the same culture (Oyserman et al., 2002; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Wagner, 1995; Wagner & Moch, 1986). Collectivism as an individual difference variable refers to a continuum that ranges from a disposition to see the self in collective, interdependent terms (i.e., “we”) and to prioritize collective interest, to a disposition to see the self in individualizing, independent terms (i.e., “I”) and to prioritize individual interests.

On the individualistic end of the spectrum, individuals are predisposed to conceive of the self in personalized, idiosyncratic terms, and have a desire to operate independently of others (the personal self; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). On the collectivistic end of the spectrum, on the other hand, individuals tend to conceive of the self in terms of their relationships with significant others (the relational self; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989) and membership groups (the collective

self; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Triandis, 1989). As Wagner (1995, p. 154) put it: “[A]n individualist acts as though he or she defines self as an entity consisting of a single person, bounded by his or her skin, but a collectivist acts as though he or she defines self as an entity extending beyond the individual to include a particular group of others, bounded by the social perimeter of that group” (see also Erez & Somech, 1996). This collective self-conception leads collectivists to experience the group’s interest as the self-interest (i.e., the *collective self-interest*) and thus predisposes collectivists to pursue the collective interest more than individualist, who are more prone to perceive (personal) self-interest and group interest as distinct (cf. van Knippenberg, 2000).

It should, however, be noted that collectivists do not indiscriminately identify with groups and take the interest of groups to heart (Triandis et al., 1988). Rather, the group has to be experienced as an ingroup to elicit the proposed difference between individualists and collectivists (Earley, 1993). Collectivism should thus be conceived of as a *disposition* to construe the self in personal or collective terms, not as fixed in its self-construal and focus on personal or collective interest. Indeed, evidence for a direct relationship between collectivism and cooperation or other contributions to the collective interest is mixed. Consistent with the notion that individuals higher on collectivism are more likely to take the organizational interest to heart, Moorman and Blakely (1995) found that individual differences in collectivism were positively related to interpersonal helping, and Eby and Dobbins (1997) found that teams with a more collectivist composition displayed greater cooperation. In contrast, however, Wagner (1995) found little evidence of direct relationships between individual differences in collectivism and cooperation in groups. Rather, collectivism moderated the impact of group size and individual identifiability on cooperation—factors that were proposed to primarily appeal to low collectivistic motives. This research suggests that more collectivistic employees do not necessarily engage in more cooperative behaviour (e.g., extrarole behaviour) than less collectivistic employees, but rather that whether or not differences between employees low or high on collectivism are observed may be a function of other factors (e.g., perceived organizational support).

## COLLECTIVISM AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Two related considerations suggest that these differences in collectivism also affect the extent to which the employee’s relationship with groups and organizations will be based on social exchange. First, the social exchange approach conceptualizes the relationship between the employee and the organization as a relationship in which the employee and the organization are *separate entities* psychologically (Levinson, 1965; cf.



Rousseau & Parks, 1993). This aligns well with the way in which individualists are prone to conceive of the self and their relationship with others, but not with the way that collectivists are disposed to see their relationship with other parties. Indeed, when the collective is experienced as part of the self (i.e., the collective self), exchange with the collective would amount to exchange with the self. The very nature of collectivists' dispositional understanding of relationships should thus render them less likely to evaluate their relationship with the organization in terms of benefits given and received. The issue thus is not so much the kind of reciprocity that is at stake, as in Sparrowe and Liden's (1997) discussion of "generalized reciprocity" in contrast to more relationship-specific reciprocity (i.e., the former puts more emphasis on the interests of the other party, and is more contingent on reciprocity within the broader social network than within the specific interpersonal relationship, than the latter). Rather, this issue is the extent to which reciprocity is at stake at all: Greater collectivism would be associated with understanding relationships less in terms of reciprocity.

A similar conclusion may be reached based on the differences in the weight placed on personal and collective interest that are assumed to be the consequence of these differences in the understanding of interpersonal and individual-group relationships. At the core of social exchange relationships lies self-interest (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Even though the process of social exchange may lead a relationship to evolve into one where the parties care for each other's well-being and are committed to each other, at the root of a viable, long-term social exchange relationship lie benefits to self that are perceived to be congruent with the benefits given to the other party. The assumption that self-interest lies at the basis of social exchange relationships suggests that employees that are relatively less concerned with their personal self-interests and more concerned with the other's or the collective's interest may be less sensitive to the balance between the benefits given and received in the relationship. This too suggests that individualists should be more prone to base their relationship with the organization on social exchange, and to let their attitudes and behaviour towards the collective be contingent on the quality of the exchange relationship, than collectivists.

Taking the discussion back to perceived organizational support, we thus propose that individual differences in collectivism moderate the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational attitudes and behaviour, because the relationship between the employee and the organization is less likely to be based on social exchange the more collectivistic the employee is. Therefore, perceived organizational support should be more strongly related to organizational attitudes and behaviour for less collectivistic employees.

In the present study, we tested this hypothesis for the relationship between perceived organizational support

and organizational citizenship behaviour (Katz, 1964; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000; Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995). Organizational citizenship behaviour refers to discretionary actions not prescribed by formal job requirements that may benefit the organization, such as helping coworkers or extra effort on the job such as unpaid overtime (Organ, 1988). Because citizenship behaviour—regardless of whether it targets the own job, individual coworkers, or the organization as a whole—is not enforced by formal job requirements, it is particularly contingent on motivational influences. It thus is particularly suited to test predictions regarding perceived organizational support, and the motivation to reciprocate it, at the level of individual employee behaviour. On the basis of the social exchange approach, perceived organizational support can be expected to be positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour. A meta-analysis by Podsakoff et al. (2000) showed that perceived organizational support has indeed been reliably linked to organizational citizenship behaviour. On the basis of these earlier findings and the reasoning presented in the previous, we thus predicted that:

*Hypothesis 1:* Perceived organizational support is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour.

*Hypothesis 2:* The relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour is stronger for employees lower on collectivism.

Note that, obviously, the contribution of the current study lies in the test of Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 1 is included for consistency with previous research, but essentially predicts replication of a well-established finding. Hypothesis 2, in contrast, breaks new ground in the social exchange perspective on the employee–organization relationship.

## METHOD

### Participants and procedure

Data regarding perceived organizational support and collectivism were assessed in a postal survey of all 562 employees of two departments of a governmental administrative organization in The Netherlands. Employees' jobs ranged from administrative work (e.g., registering newborns) to policy-making jobs (e.g., concerning community services) and included all hierarchical levels within the organization. Employees were mailed at their home address. We obtained a total of 401 usable questionnaires (a 71.4% response). Forty-nine per cent of the respondents were male, mean age of the respondents was 42.36 years ( $SD = 7.88$ ), and mean contracted hours per week 33.49 hours ( $SD = 7.44$ ).

To prevent the problems associated with assessing criterion and predictor variables from the same source (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), organizational citizenship behaviour ratings were solicited from the employees' supervisors. Thirty-seven out of 44 supervisors (84%) supplied ratings of 451 employees (80.2% of the total). The combination of these 451 ratings of employees and the 401 employee questionnaires resulted in  $N = 291$  matches of employee questionnaire with supervisor citizenship ratings. A comparison of individuals for which employee and supervisor questionnaires could versus could not be matched on the study variables yielded no differences.

## Measures

*Perceived organizational support.* We assessed perceived organizational support with six of the highest loading items of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), with resulting excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .88$ ). Responses were made on a 5-point scales ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Sample items of this scale are "The organization really cares about my well-being" and "the organization cares about my opinions".

*Collectivism.* Because we strongly build on Wagner's analysis of collectivism at work, we relied on a four-item measure proposed by Wagner (1995; Wagner & Moch, 1986). This measure captures "collectivism at work" rather than the more abstracted notion of "self-definition" (also see Eby & Dobbins, 1997; Moorman & Blakely, 1995; cf. Hofstede, 1980). Responses were made on 5-point scales ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Sample items of this scale are "I prefer to work with others in my work group rather than working alone" and "Working with a group is better than working alone". Reliability was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

*Organizational citizenship behaviour.* Ratings of organizational citizenship behaviour were provided by the employee's supervisors, using seven items from Konovsky and Organ (1996; Van Dyne et al., 1995),

including "Helps make other workers productive" and "Always does more than he/she is required to do". Responses were made on a 5-point scales ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Reliability was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .71$ ).

## RESULTS

### Validity test of perceived organizational support and collectivism scales

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EQS 6.1 for Windows; Bentler & Wu, 2004) supported the distinctiveness of perceived organizational support and collectivism. We used ML Robust to correct for multivariate kurtosis (Mardia's coefficient = 24.21, normalized estimate = 13.33). Fit indexes showed a good fit,  $\chi^2(34) = 68.599$ ,  $p < .001$ , RMSEA = .059, NNFI = .96, CFI = .97. This two-factor fit was superior to the fit of the one-factor model  $\chi^2(35) = 257.775$ ,  $p < .001$ , RMSEA = .148, NNFI = .75, CFI = .80,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 189.177$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### Test of hypotheses

The hypothesized relationships were tested using correlations and hierarchical regression analyses. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of study variables are displayed in Table 1. We controlled for three variables that could potentially relate to either perceived organizational support or collectivism: age, gender, and the amount of contracted working hours (cf. Amason & Allen, 1997; Hellman, Fuqua, & Worley, 2006). We entered these variables on Step 1. On Step 2 we entered perceived organizational support and collectivism, and on Step 3 the interaction between perceived organizational support and collectivism (see Table 2). Following Aiken and West (1991), perceived organizational support and collectivism were standardized before computing the product term of these variables to represent the interaction, and standardized scores were entered in the regression analysis.

Perceived organizational support was positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour (Hypothesis 1). Of

TABLE 1  
Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for study variables<sup>a</sup>

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	42.38	7.89	—				
2. Gender	0.52	0.50	-.28**	—			
3. Contracted hours per week	33.46	7.45	.14*	-.48**	—		
4. Perceived organizational support	2.89	0.84	.02	-.08	.09	—	
5. Collectivism	3.54	0.74	-.21**	-.01	-.01	.18**	—
6. Organizational citizenship behaviour	3.55	0.62	-.13*	-.06	-.01	.14*	.14*

<sup>a</sup> $N = 291$  (listwise). \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

TABLE 2  
Hierarchical multiple regression results<sup>a</sup> for organizational citizenship behaviour:  $\beta$  coefficients, standard errors,  $R^2$ (adjusted), and  $\Delta R^2$  values

Variable	Organizational citizenship behaviour			
	$\beta$	SE	$R^2$ (adjusted)	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1			.02	.03*
Gender	-.08	0.042		
Age	-.10**	0.037		
Contracted hours per week	-.03	0.041		
Step 2			.04	.03*
Gender	-.08	0.042		
Age	-.09*	0.038		
Contracted hours per week	-.04	0.041		
Perceived organizational support (POS)	.08*	0.036		
Collectivism	.05	0.037		
Step 3			.07	.03*
Gender	-.07	0.042		
Age	-.08*	0.037		
Contracted hours per week	-.03	0.040		
Perceived organizational support (POS)	.10**	0.037		
Collectivism	.05	0.037		
POS $\times$ Collectivism	-.11**	0.035		

<sup>a</sup> $N = 291$  (listwise). \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

most importance to the present discussion, the interaction of perceived organizational support and collectivism was significant (Hypothesis 2). Following Aiken and West (1991), we tested the simple slopes for respondents with more collectivist values (one standard deviation above the mean) and respondents with more individualist values (one standard deviation below the mean) to determine the nature of the Perceived organizational support  $\times$  Collectivism interaction. In line with Hypothesis 2, perceived organizational support was positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour for respondents with less collectivistic values,  $\beta = .21$ ,  $t = 3.74$ ,  $p < .001$ , whereas perceived organizational support and citizenship behaviour were unrelated for respondents with more collectivist values,  $\beta = -.01$ ,  $t = -0.13$ , *ns* (see Figure 1).

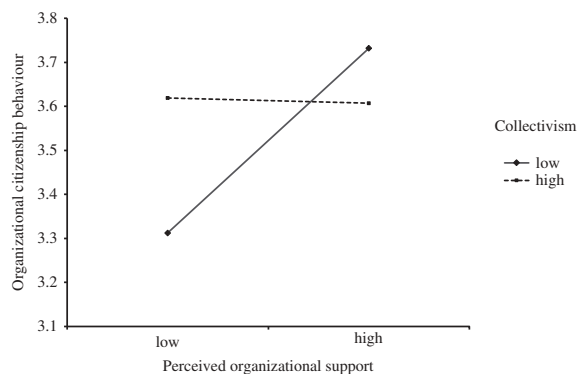


Figure 1. Interaction between perceived organizational support and collectivism in predicting organizational citizenship behaviour.

## DISCUSSION

We proposed that individual differences in collectivism are associated with differences in the extent to which employees' relationship with the organization is based on social exchange, and that therefore collectivism moderates the relationship of perceived organizational support with organizational citizenship behaviour. Results support this proposition. In line with the social exchange analysis of the relationship between the employee and the organization, perceived organizational support was positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour (Hypothesis 1). Importantly, however, this relationship did not obtain for more collectivistic employees (Hypothesis 2). This corroborates our proposition that employees who are more prone to construe the self in collective terms are less likely to base their relationship with the organization on social exchange than employees who are disposed towards a more independent sense of self.

## Theoretical implications

The main contribution of the present study is that it establishes a link between theories of social exchange and the self. The fundamental proposition driving our analysis is that social exchange processes are associated more with personal self-construal than with collective (or relational) self-construal. The support for hypotheses derived from this proposition in the present study opens the way for a broader application of these insights to social exchange processes in organizations. This potential for broader application holds for the dependent

variables studied as well as for the organization-based relationships studied.

To our understanding, this means that our conclusions should hold for a broader range of organizational attitudes (e.g., commitment) and behaviours (e.g., other cooperative behaviours, task performance) that have been proposed to be contingent on processes of social exchange. For each of these outcome variables, the basic logic why they would be influenced by perceived organizational support is the same (cf. Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002): Driven by the norm of reciprocity, individuals would feel obliged to repay the organization for its support. This exchange can take the form of proorganizational attitudes such as commitment to the organization as well as proorganizational behaviours such as retention and effort on the job. The current analysis may thus be extended to all these relationships with essentially the same proposition as conclusion: such outcomes will be less contingent on perceived organizational support the more strongly the individual holds collectivistic values. More specifically, as in the present study (cf. Figure 1) and consistent with earlier work by Moorman and Blakely (1995), more collectivistic individuals can be expected to show relatively high levels of positive attitudes and behaviours regardless of social exchange processes.

Additionally, we argue that social exchange processes in organizations are not limited to the relationship with the organization as a whole, but can also entail leader-member relationships (e.g., Graen & Scandura, 1987; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and team-member relationships (e.g., Haynie, 2012; Seers, 1989). Here too the basic underlying social exchange logic is that relationships characterized by high-quality social exchange lead to more favourable outcomes. Accordingly, the present analysis may be extended to the proposition that collectivism moderates relationships between leader-member and team-member exchange quality and outcomes. It should be noted, however, that whereas this proposition is consistent with current theory in social exchange at work, there is no guarantee that the present findings generalize to these other kinds of relationships. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and exploring these possibilities would further our understanding of social exchange as well as of collectivism at work.

The present study also provides a nice complement to earlier work by Eisenberger et al. (1986). Eisenberger et al. studied individual differences in endorsement of the norm of reciprocity as moderator of the influence of perceived organizational support. This study too suggested that social exchange may be a stronger driving force for some than for others. Importantly, however, the extent to which one subscribes to the norm of reciprocity is conceptually distinct from the extent to which one construes the self in collective terms (e.g., low endorsement of the norm of reciprocity does not mean that one is disposed to take the collective interest to heart; it could

also mean the exact opposite). The current study and the earlier work by Eisenberger et al. thus in combination suggests that there may be more than one reason why individuals would be more or less exchange driven at work. Future research exploring these and other potential individual difference drivers of the strength on such exchange processes in integrative ways could make yet further steps in the development of the social exchange analysis of the employment relationship.

## Implications for practice

The present findings provide further evidence for Moorman and Blakely's (1995) and Wagner's (1995) conclusion that collectivists may require other management than individualists. A lot of managerial actions to influence subordinates seem to be explicitly (e.g., incentive pay) or implicitly based on the expectation that they will have the desired effect through an exchange process. The present findings suggest that there are limitations to the effectiveness of such exchanged-based management. Even within the individualist cultures of Northern America and North-Western Europe, there are collectivistic employees for whom such management practice is likely to hold less appeal. Moreover, as organizations are becoming increasingly diverse and the number of employees with a collectivist cultural background is growing, the number of employees for which management that is targeted purely at individualist motivations will yield suboptimal results is also likely to grow. Effective management most likely needs to cater to both individualist and collectivist perspectives, for instance by complementing individual reward systems with leadership that mobilizes collectivist motivations through an emphasis on the collective identity (cf. Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998).

In considering the present findings, one might note that this might not be a major point given that citizenship behaviour was high for collectivists across the board. Two additional considerations suggest that the issue is more complex here, however. First, whereas the issue may seem moot at the level of the outcome variable, it most likely is not in terms of inputs—managerial interventions to build employee citizenship may take time, effort, and financial costs and these investments are less optimal the higher the employee citizenship. Second, as noted in the introduction, collectivism does not necessarily lead to higher contributions to the collective than individualism, and the conclusion here should be in terms of the influence of organizational support and not in terms of absolute levels of citizenship observed (indeed, there was no “main effect” of collectivism). For collectivist too, then, it may pay off to invest in efforts to raise their contributions—but not through social exchange efforts.



## Strengths, limitations, and future research

Strength of the current design is the use of supervisor ratings for OCB to address common source concerns (cf. Podsakoff et al., 2003). Even so, an obvious limitation is that the cross-sectional nature of our design does not allow us to establish causality. Future research with experimental designs would greatly strengthen the basis for the conclusions advanced here. In that respect, it would also be valuable to assess process variables in future research.

First, even though there is strong evidence in support of the an interpretation of the influence of perceived organizational support in social exchange terms (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 2001), strictly speaking evidence of the influence of perceived organizational support holds no direct evidence that social exchange processes took place. To further bolster the conclusions regarding the influence of collectivism, it would thus be valuable when future research would assess more process evidence such as Eisenberger et al. (2001) obtained in their study of the felt obligation to reciprocate.

Second, consistent with the broader body of theory in collectivism, our theory builds on insights regarding the self-construal implications of collectivism—collectivism implies self-construal in relational and collective rather than individualizing terms. The measure we used was developed to capture this perspective (Wagner, 1995), but does not capture self-construal directly. Rather, it captures collectivism as it expresses itself in how people experience collective work. This has its merits in bringing the operationalization closer to the work context, but has the disadvantage of not capturing in full the underlying concept it is understood to reflect. Future research that would include a measure with clearer self-construal aspects would in that sense also build the evidence for the current analysis.

It would also be worthwhile to replicate our findings in other countries. Research by Triandis et al. (1988) demonstrated that the effects of individual differences in collectivism replicate across individualist and collectivist cultures, and the Dutch culture seems representative of North-Western European/Northern American individualist cultures. We would thus expect our results to generalize to other countries, but firmer conclusions should await an empirical test.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study constitutes a modest yet potentially important step towards the integration of the social exchange perspective on the employee–organization relationship with other perspectives on the psychology of group and organizational membership. Further developments of the insights advanced in the current study could help build an integrative understanding of the employee–organization relationship that enriches

the social exchange perspectives as well as other perspectives, such as that provided by a focus on collectivism. Given how core the psychological linkage between individual and organization is to behaviour at work, these would seem efforts well worth undertaking.

## REFERENCES

- Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. New York, NY: Sage.
- Amason, P., & Allen, M. W. (1997). Intraorganizational communication, perceived organizational support, and gender. *Sex Roles, 37*, 955–977.
- Armeli, S., Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P., & Lynch, P. (1998). Perceived organizational support and police performance: The moderating influence of socioemotional needs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*, 288–297.
- Bentler, P. M., & Wu, E. J. W. (2004). *EQS 6.1 for windows*. Encino, CA: Multivariate Software.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. (1996). Who is this “we”? Levels of collective identity and self representations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 83–93.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management, 31*, 874–900.
- Earley, P. C. (1989). Social loafing and collectivism: A comparison of the United States and the People's Republic of China. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 34*, 565–581.
- Earley, P. C. (1993). East meets West meets Mideast: Further explorations of collectivistic and individualistic workgroups. *Academy of Management Journal, 36*, 319–348.
- Eby, L. T., & Dobbins, G. H. (1997). Collectivistic orientation in teams: An individual and group-level analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 18*, 275–295.
- Eisenberger, R., Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, B., Lynch, P. D., & Rhoades, L. (2001). Reciprocation of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 42–51.
- Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P., & Davis-LaMastro, V. (1990). Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 75*, 51–59.
- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 71*, 500–507.
- Erez, M., & Somech, A. (1996). Is group productivity loss the rule or the exception? Effects of culture and group-based motivation. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*, 1513–1537.
- Farh, J. L., Hackett, R. D., & Liang, J. (2007). Individual-level cultural values as moderators of perceived organizational support–employee outcomes relationships: Comparing the effects of power distance and traditionality. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*, 715–729.
- Gould, S. (1979). An equity-exchange model of organizational involvement. *Academy of Management Review, 4*, 53–62.
- Gouldner, A. W. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review, 25*, 161–178.
- Graen, G. B., & Scandura, T. A. (1987). Toward a psychology of dyadic organizing. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 9, pp. 175–208). The Netherlands: JAI Press.
- Guzzo, R. A., Noonan, K. A., & Elron, E. (1994). Expatriate managers and the psychological contract. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 617–626.
- Haynie, J. (2012). Core-self evaluations and team performance: The role of team-member exchange. *Small Group Research, 43*, 315–329.

- Hellman, C. M., Fuqua, D. R., & Worley, J. (2006). A reliability generalization study on the survey of perceived organizational support — The effects of mean age and number of items on score reliability. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66, 631–642.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Kamdar, D., McAllister, D. J., & Turban, D. B. (2006). All in a day's work: How follower individual differences and justice perceptions predict OCB role definitions and behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, 841–855.
- Katz, D. (1964). The motivational basis of organizational behavior. *Behavioral Science*, 9, 131–146.
- Kolstad, A., & Yorpestad, S. (2009). Self-construal in Chile and Norway: Implications for cultural differences in individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 40, 275–281.
- Konovsky, M. A., & Organ, D. W. (1996). Dispositional and contextual determinants of organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17, 253–266.
- Leong, F. T. L., & Leong, J. (2004). Locus of control, individualism-collectivism, and self-construal as predictors of career indecision in Singapore. *International Journal of Psychology*, 39, 5–6.
- Levinson, H. (1965). Reciprocity: The relationship between man and organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 9, 370–390.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224–253.
- Moorman, R. H., & Blakely, G. L. (1995). Collectivism as an individual difference predictor of organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 16, 127–142.
- Moorman, R. H., Blakely, G. L., & Niehoff, B. P. (1998). Does perceived organizational support mediate the relationship between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behavior? *Academy of Management Journal*, 41, 351–357.
- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Oyserman, D., Coon, H. M., & Kemmelmeier, M. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism: Evaluation of theoretical assumptions and meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128, 3–72.
- Panaccio, A., & Vandenberghe, C. (2009). Perceived organizational support, organizational commitment and psychological well-being: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75, 224–236.
- Piercy, N. F., Cravens, D. W., Lane, N., & Vorhies, D. W. (2006). Driving organizational citizenship behaviors and salesperson in-role behavior performance: The role of management control and perceived organizational support. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34, 244–262.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *Journal of Management*, 26, 513–563.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. M., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method variance in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 879–903.
- Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 698–714.
- Riggle, R. J., Edmondson, D. R., & Hansen, J. D. (2009). A meta-analysis of the relationship between perceived organizational support and job outcomes: 20 years of research. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 1027–1030.
- Rousseau, D. M., & Parks, J. M. (1993). The contracts of individuals and organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 15, 1–43.
- Seers, A. (1989). Team-member exchange quality — A new construct for role-making research. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 43, 118–135.
- Settoon, R. P., Bennett, N., & Liden, R. C. (1996). Social exchange in organizations: Perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and employee reciprocity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 219–227.
- Shamir, B., Zakay, E., Breinin, E., & Popper, M. (1998). Correlates of charismatic leadership behavior in military units: Subordinates' attitudes, unit characteristics, and superiors' appraisals of leader performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41, 387–409.
- Shore, L. M., Bommer, W. H., Rao, A. N., & Seo, J. (2009). Social and economic exchange in the employee-organization relationship: The moderating role of reciprocity wariness. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24, 701–721.
- Shore, L. M., Coyle-Shapiro, J. A.-M., Chen, X.-P., & Tetrick, L. E. (2009). Social exchange in work settings: Content, process, and mixed models. *Management and Organization Review*, 5, 289–302.
- Shore, L. M., & Tetrick, L. E. (1991). A construct validity study of the survey of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 637–643.
- Shore, L. M., & Wayne, S. J. (1993). Commitment and employee behavior: Comparison of affective commitment and continuance commitment with perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 774–780.
- Sparrowe, R. T., & Liden, R. C. (1997). Process and structure in leader-member exchange. *Academy of Management Review*, 22, 522–552.
- Thibaut, J., & Kelley, H. H. (1959). *The social psychology of groups*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological Review*, 96, 506–520.
- Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Triandis, H. C., Bontempo, R., Villareal, M. J., Asai, M., & Lucca, N. (1988). Individualism and collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 323–338.
- Van Dyne, L., Cummings, L. L., & Parks, J. M. (1995). Extra-role behaviors — In pursuit of construct and definition clarity (a bridge over muddied waters). *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 17, 215–285.
- van Knippenberg, D. (2000). Work motivation and performance: A social identity perspective. *Applied Psychology*, 49, 357–371.
- van Knippenberg, D., van Dick, R., & Tavares, S. (2007). Social identity and social exchange: Identification, support, and withdrawal from the job. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 37, 457–477.
- Wagner, J. A. (1995). Studies of collectivism: Effects on cooperation in groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 152–172.
- Wagner, J. A., & Moch, M. K. (1986). Collectivism: Concept and measure. *Group and Organization Studies*, 11, 280–304.
- Wayne, S. J., Shore, L. M., & Liden, R. C. (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 82–111.

Original manuscript received October 2012

Revised manuscript received October 2013

Revised manuscript accepted October 2013

First published online November 2013