

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui hubungan perceived organizational support dan work engagement pada karyawan. Menggunakan metode Systematic literature review dengan panduan PRISMA. Pencarian data literatur review menggunakan database Scopus, Springer, Proquest, dan Cambridge pada tahun 2019 hingga 2023. Melalui hasil screening dan seleksi diperoleh 6 artikel yang memenuhi kriteria inklusi penelitian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perceived organizational support (POS) memiliki hubungan positif dengan work engagement. Karyawan yang merasakan perceived organizational support akan meningkatkan work engagement dan kreativitas karyawan lebih besar dibandingkan karyawan dengan perceived organizational support yang rendah. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa organisasi perlu menerapkan strategi dukungan yang peka terhadap konteks dan disesuaikan dengan karakteristik individu karyawan untuk secara efektif meningkatkan keterikatan serta kesejahteraan karyawan.

Keywords: work engagement; perceived organizational support

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between perceived organizational support and work engagement among employees. Using the Systematic literature review method with PRISMA guidelines. The search for literature review data used the Scopus, Springer, ProQuest, and Cambridge databases from 2019 to 2023. Through screening and selection results, 6 articles were obtained that met the research inclusion criteria. The findings from this study are that perceived organizational support (POS) has a positive relationship with work engagement. Employees who feel perceived organizational support will increase work engagement and employee creativity more than employees with low levels of perceived organizational support. The findings of this study suggest that organizations should implement context-sensitive and individualized support strategies to effectively enhance employee engagement and well-being.

Keywords: work engagement; perceived organizational support

INTRODUCTION

Human resources takes the utmost important role in both organizations and companies; measured not only through the employee performance's productivity, but also from the outcome itself. In a company, employees play a key role in determining its development. A company's quality and acquisition improvement depend highly on its employees. According to Bakker (2011), a high-quality employee is someone capable of reaching their maximum potential, fully participates in every task or assignment, actively contributing to the company, and shows high commitment towards the performance quality standard set by the company.

In human resources management, employees have an inexorably significant role in improving the company's competitiveness and achieving the vision and mission of the

company. Jackson and Schuler (1995) asserted that employees in a company are considered as human resources with a high motivation and potential in working, hence enabling them to contribute significantly to the company's development. Consequently, employee performance becomes the main focus of companies to drive its development in terms of service and contribution.

At present, companies expect employees to possess a satisfactory performance quality and high enthusiasm in improving the competitiveness and quality of the company (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). One particular characteristic of a high-quality employee is engagement. Employee engagement plays a significant role in supporting companies in achieving the set targets. Companies are also responsible in employee development to catalyze their positive engagement towards the companies they work under.

Employee engagement or work engagement refers to a positive psychological state that appears when one is fully engaged in their own work. Which is represented by high levels of energy, intense concentration, and a great sense of gratitude for their work. Work engagement involves high emotional attachment towards labor and organization. Someone who is engaged in their work tends to feel intrinsically motivated, possess relevant skills and knowledge, as well as involved in meaningful and challenging tasks.

The importance of work engagement in an organizational context cannot be overlooked. The outcome for both individuals and organizations are influenced by employee engagement. Employees with high engagement will focus and pay more attention to their job role, as well as feel satisfied towards their performance and organization (Kahn, 1990). Employees that are engaged in their job tend to be more productive, possess high performance, and contribute actively to achieve the organizational goals. They also might feel more satisfied towards their job, have stronger social bond with their co-workers, and experience lower levels of stress. Additionally, a key factor in employee engagement is the perception that workers are playing their parts in accomplishing organizational goals and are being supported by their managers (Saks and Gruman, 2014).

Work engagement is a positive individual psychological state, characterized by a high level of effort—both mentally and physically—in working and concentrated involvement in work. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) defined indicators of work engagement, such as: vigor (strong levels of energy and mental resilience at work), dedication (sense of significance, enthusiasm, challenge, and inspiration), and absorption (state of high concentration and immersion towards a work).

There are several factors that play a role in work engagement, such as job demands, job resources, and personal resources. Job demands as a factor refers to the social, physical, and organizational aspect of a job that requires continuous effort, both physically and psychologically. Job resources refers to how important or resourceful one's job resources are. On the other hand, personal resources deal with positive evaluation related to the individual's resilience and ability to control and give impact to their surroundings. (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). Several factors that might influence work engagements are job characteristics, perceived organizational support, support from supervisor, awards and recognition, as well as procedural justice and distributive justice (Saks, 2006).

Perceived organizational support (POS) focuses on the understanding of how employees' perception of organizational support affects performance, job satisfaction, and commitment

towards the organization. Perceived organizational support refers to individual perception of how far the organization supports and cares for the employees' needs, well-being, and development. Organizational support encompasses many aspects such as social support from co-workers/supervisors, role clarity, rewards and recognition, career development opportunities, and policies that promote work-life balance.

Eisenberger, et al. (1986) argued that POS can be described as the degree to which workers feel how much their supervisor cares about their well-being and the value of their contribution to the organization. POS motivates employees to work harder. When employees receive support from their organization, they feel obliged to reciprocate (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This reciprocity is shown through full commitment to their job as well as devoting more of their physical, emotional, and cognitive power to their work endeavors.

Because of a rise in employee resignation rates, recent research on employee engagement indicates a greater need to examine the potential effects of organizational support on employee engagement in the current labor market (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). Due to the concept of POS, employees will improve their engagement based on the comprehensive support given by their organization and manager. Therefore, POS has become a primary issue for companies to boost their employees' motivation to work (Jin & McDonald, 2017). Hence, it's crucial to fully investigate how organizational support can assist employees in maintaining their engagement towards their work.

In line with this idea, Eisenberger & Stinglhamber (2011) stated that POS positively impacts work engagement, such as by strengthening employees' intrinsic interest towards their duty. A study by Liu, et al. (2017) shows a case study of how POS lowers the resignation intention rate within employees in a restaurant. Support for employees, such as work-life balance policies, might result in conflicting effects when an organization faces an external crisis, depending on the work situation within employees (Lee & Shin, 2023). Based on the explanation above, this raises question on the relationship between POS towards work engagement among employees.

Although the six primary studies reviewed generally report a positive relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and work engagement, the evidence is fragmented across countries, sectors, and methodological choices (e.g., samples of teachers, BPO workers, nurses, IT/banking professionals, federal agency employees). Several studies identify different mediators and moderators (psychological capital, strengths-use, age, gender, dependents, remote vs on-site work) and at least one study finds that conventional support practices (e.g., work-life balance policies) can produce null or even negative effects in crisis contexts. These mixed patterns, together with mostly cross-sectional designs and limited treatment of cultural/organizational boundary conditions, mean practitioners and theorists lack a clear, generalisable picture of *when, for whom, and under what conditions* POS increases engagement, justifying the need for a systematic literature review.

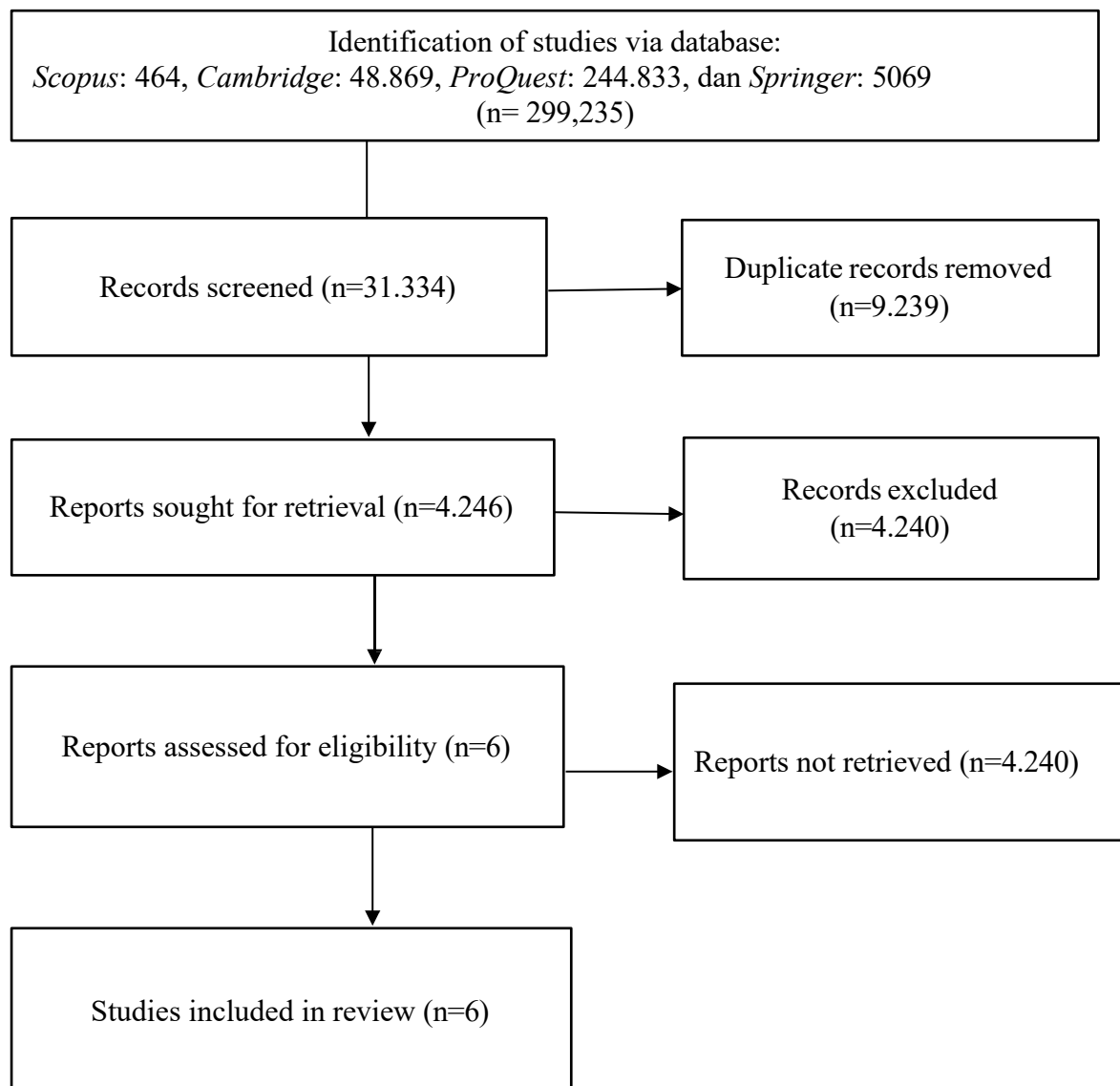
METHOD

This research utilized the systematic literature review (SLR) method which serves to identify, evaluate, and interpret previous research to fulfill certain research inquiries. The design utilized in this research is Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA).

In searching the data, this research utilized citations from four databases namely Scopus, Springer, ProQuest, and Cambridge. The literature review is sourced from publications published within the last five years, between 2019 and 2023. Using keyword combinations and Boolean logic, the keywords used in Scopus, Springer, ProQuest, and Cambridge are as follows; (“Perceived organizational support” AND “Work engagement” AND “employee” OR “employee engagement”).

The search process was held from the 5th until 10th of June 2023. The criteria set for this research are a) articles published within the last five years, between 2019 and 2023, b) articles with full text and open access, c) research articles in English language, d) articles researching the relationship between POS and work engagement among employees. The primary data extracted from each article are the research design, background, objectives, methods, publication year, subject consisting of employees, findings, and conclusion.

PRISMA Procedure



A quality assessment (critical appraisal) was conducted for all six reviewed articles by examining the quality of their publication sources through the Scimago Journal & Country

Rank (SJR) classification system. The evaluation showed that two of the journals were categorized as Q1 (Aldabbas et al., 2023; Lee & Shin, 2023), indicating a high level of scholarly impact and methodological rigor. Two journals were classified as Q2 (Tian et al., 2023; Meyers et al., 2020), reflecting solid academic standards and reliable research quality. One journal was identified as Q4 (Saeed & Hussain, 2021), suggesting relatively lower visibility and citation impact within its field. Meanwhile, one article (Ep, 2022) was published in a journal that is not indexed within any Scimago quartile category. Overall, this critical appraisal process ensured that the reviewed studies represented a balanced range of research quality and provided a credible foundation for the present systematic literature review.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.
Literature Review

Author	Subject	Country	Results	Method
Saeed & Hussain (2021)	935 teachers	Pakistan	There is a positive relationship between POS and teacher work involvement.	Cross-sectional design
Ep (2022)	347 employees	India	POS has a positive and significant relationship with the gender of the respondent and the number of employees' dependents.	Cross-sectional design
Tian et al. (2023)	7479 nurses	China	PsyCap has a partial mediating effect on the impact of POS on ICN work engagement, i.e., personal resources can strengthen the positive relationship between job resources and work engagement.	Self-report measures
Aldabbas et al. (2023)	492 employees	Jordan	POS indirectly enhances employee creativity through work engagement; strong support for JD-R and SET mechanisms.	Self-report measures
Meyers et al. (2020)	753 employees	United Kingdom	POSSU has a positive relationship with work engagement and contextual performance. As well as age, mediates the relationship between POSSU and contextual performance.	Cross-sectional survey
Lee & Shin (2023)	2000 employees	United States	POS has a positive effect on employee engagement, especially for remote workers. The use of work-life balance policies has a negative impact on engagement for on-site workers and has no significant impact on remote workers.	Crisis-specific context

The first article by Saeed and Hussain (2021) discusses how POS affects work engagement of public secondary school teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. Female teachers with higher educational background were reported to have higher work engagement compared to male teachers. The sample of this research are 935 teachers, which consists of 475 and 460 male and female teachers respectively. This study found a positive relationship between POS and work engagement. Work engagement and the principal's instructional leadership are positively moderately correlated. With vigor and determination, recognition has a positive

moderate link, but a weak positive relationship with the absorption component of work engagement. Vigor, dedication, and absorption have a weak but positive association with information. Although there is a small and positive correlation between school climate and absorption, there is a moderately favorable correlation between vigor and dedication. Aside from performing well, engaged teachers are also able to develop their own materials that, over time, further encourage involvement.

The second article is a study by Ep (2022) on the impact of organizational culture and POS towards employee engagement of operational-level employees in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector. In India, BPO is an emerging sector, and often characterized with dispirited efficiency, monotonous tasks, dreadful working hours, and low perceived value, which consequently causes high attrition level. This research involved 347 operational-level employees of BPO organizations as the model. It becomes apparent that POS and respondents' genders and the number of employees' dependents have a significant relationship. The leadership quality of the managers/supervisors, employees' attachment towards the organization and its goals and market culture in growth and acquisition of new skills and achievement are the organizational attributes that contribute significantly to effective employee engagement. The company emphasizes on human resources and employees' high cohesion and morale, which highlights the importance of personal space within the organization for efficient performance and POS, as well as how the organization cares for the employees' well-being at overall and individual level.

The third article by Tian, et al. (2023) focuses on the relationship between POS, psychological capital (PsyCap), and work involvement of Chinese infection control nurses (ICNs). This study hypothesized that POS and PsyCap might be an integral factor that affects the work engagement of ICNs. The study discovered that PsyCap partially mediates the impact of POS on ICN work engagement by reinforcing the positive relationship between job resources and job engagement. This finding is consistent with previous studies on nurses and medical staff. High levels of PsyCap can help ICNs deal with their negative emotions as a result of insufficient organizational support. In other words, ICNs with high PsyCap who perceive poor organizational support may be able to buffer or lessen the effect of organizational support on job engagement due to their capacity to regulate their emotions. On the other hand, even if ICNs feel that the organization strongly supports their job, having a low PsyCap may still cause them to be less engaged at work.

The fourth article is a study done by Aldabbas, et al. (2023). This research aimed to explore the correlation between POS and employee creativity, with work engagement as the mediator. The study developed a stronger theoretical approach by connecting social exchange theory and job demands-resources with relevant employee creativity theories. The sample consisted of 492 professionals working in the IT and banking industry in the UK. The study found that work engagement mediates the relationship between POS and employee creativity. In summary, the study concluded that employees who experience POS are more likely to improve work engagement and employee creativity than those with low levels of POS. The study found a positive relationship between POS and employee creativity mediated by work engagement among employees in the IT and banking industries in the UK. The study supported all four hypotheses, which investigated how POS can promote employee creativity.

The fifth article by Meyers, et al. (2020) looks into the relationship between perceived organizational support for strengths use (POSSU), work engagement, and contextual

performance, as well as how age moderates this relationship. The literature on lifespan (personality) development suggest that people get more aware of themselves, hence it is easier for older workers to self-initiate the utilization of their strengths at work. This study involved 753 respondents with 61% and 49% indicated to work full-time and part-time respectively. This study found that POSSU is positively associated with work engagement and contextual performance, and work engagement mediates the relationship between POSSU and contextual performance. This study also found that age moderates the relationship between POSSU and work engagement, with younger workers experiencing higher positive correlation between POSSU and work engagement. Additionally, it was observed that age influenced the indirect link between POSSU and contextual performance via work engagement, with younger workers having a significantly greater indirect association.

Lastly, a study by Lee & Shin (2023) focuses on the impact of organizational support on employee engagement in US federal agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that supervisory support has a positive impact on employee engagement, especially for remote employees. However, work-life balance policies have a negative effect on employee engagement for on-site employees and do not significantly affect remote employees. This study does not find any significant direct effects of organizational support on employee engagement for both on-site and remote employees. This study shows that conventional employee support might be ineffective during an external crisis, and there is no suitable approach for employee support. This study also found that work-life balance policy usage during the pandemic resulted in direct and indirect negative effects for those required to work on-site. These findings conclude that there is no best way to support federal employees during an external organizational crisis.

Saeed and Hussain (2021) stated that POS positively impacts work engagement, and this association that exhibits organizational support is an integral factor to improve teachers' work engagement. This is in line with Ep's (2022) findings, in which POS has a positive and significant relationship with the gender of respondents and number of dependants of the employees. It is suggested that various training and development programs should be arranged to assist employees in carrying out organizational duties. This dimension can help employees in increasing their work engagement and commitment. Furthermore, Aldabbas, et al. (2023) also found that the relation between POS and EC is mediated by work engagement. Therefore, workers with high levels of POS will have greater enhancements in work engagement and EC than individuals with low levels of POS. The significant correlation between POS and work engagement can also be seen due to the existence of mediating variables, as exemplified in the findings of Tian, et al. (2023) that shows how PsyCap mediates POS and work engagement, where personal resources reinforces the positive association between job resources and individual work engagement. Additionally, another study by Meyers, et al. (2020) shows that contextual performance mediates the connection between POS and work engagement, and age indirectly moderates the connection between POSSU and work engagement, where younger employees tend to experience stronger positive association. Another finding by Lee & Shin (2023) asserted that supervisory support positively affects employee engagement, especially for remote employees.

Across the six studies reviewed, the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and work engagement is predominantly positive, yet the strength, direction, and underlying mechanisms of this association vary substantially across contexts, populations, and research designs. This divergence underscores the complexity of how employees interpret and

respond to organizational support in diverse cultural and organizational environments.

Most of the reviewed studies (e.g., Saeed & Hussain; Aldabbas et al.; Meyers et al.; Tian et al.; Ep) consistently report that higher levels of POS are associated with greater work engagement and, in turn, improved outcomes such as creativity, contextual performance, and job satisfaction. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that employees reciprocate supportive organizational treatment with positive attitudes and behaviors, and with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which views POS as a key job resource enhancing engagement and performance. However, this pattern is not universal. Lee and Shin (2023), who examined U.S. federal employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that traditional support mechanisms such as work–life balance (WLB) policy utilization had no significant direct effect on engagement for remote and on-site workers and even produced negative effects for the latter group. This anomaly indicates that the motivational influence of POS may weaken—or reverse—under crisis conditions where employees’ perceptions of fairness and relevance of organizational practices are disrupted.

The reviewed studies also differ in their explanations of how POS fosters engagement. Tian et al. (2023) demonstrate that psychological capital (PsyCap)—comprising hope, resilience, efficacy, and optimism—partially mediates the relationship, suggesting that organizational support strengthens personal resources that fuel engagement. In contrast, Aldabbas et al. (2023) position engagement itself as a mediator between POS and creativity, implying that support stimulates employees’ psychological energy, which subsequently drives innovative outcomes. Meyers et al. (2020) offer a distinct view, showing that perceived organizational support for strengths use (POSSU) enhances engagement and that this effect is moderated by age, with younger employees benefiting more. These varying models reveal conceptual inconsistency across studies regarding whether engagement is an outcome, mediator, or moderator in the POS process. Such divergence complicates theory-building and suggests that researchers adopt different psychological lenses—ranging from resource gain spirals to motivational reciprocity—when interpreting POS dynamics.

Similarly, the moderators examined across studies reflect heterogeneous boundary conditions. Demographic variables such as gender, dependents, and age emerge as relevant contingencies, with Ep (2022) finding that female employees and those with more dependents perceive higher organizational support and engagement, while Meyers et al. (2020) identify age as a key factor shaping how support translates into engagement. Moreover, contextual moderators—such as work arrangements (remote vs. on-site) and crisis environments—further differentiate findings. The contrasting results of Lee and Shin’s study during COVID-19 illustrate that support practices effective under normal circumstances may lose their motivational value or even provoke dissatisfaction during periods of uncertainty or structural change.

The diversity of cultural and organizational contexts across the reviewed literature is notable but not adequately theorized. The studies originate from varied national settings—such as Pakistan, India, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States—providing broad geographical coverage. However, few explicitly test for cross-cultural equivalence or integrate national culture into their models. Contextual factors such as industry type (education, healthcare, IT/banking, public administration) are acknowledged descriptively but rarely operationalized as analytical moderators. Consequently, while the dataset offers global representation, the generalizability of conclusions remains limited by the lack of direct cross-cultural or cross-sector comparisons. The observed inconsistencies in results may therefore partly stem from unmeasured cultural and institutional differences that shape employees’ interpretations of

organizational support.

The limitations of this research lies reviewing journal-based data on organizations outside Indonesia, hence the obtained result may not be relevant to the organizational climate in Indonesia. Moreover, majority of the existing research has a relatively broad discussion on POS and work engagement, thus many databases were invalid and inaccessible when filtered based on the criteria.

CONCLUSION

Systematic literature review is a process of identifying, evaluating, and interpreting previous research to answer certain research inquiries. Based on the result of systematic literature review that has been conducted on the six journal articles, POS has a positive relationship with work engagement. Employees who have a high level of perceived organizational support (POS) tend to have better work engagement and creativity compared to those who have a low level of POS.

The results of this review strengthen the core assumptions of Social Exchange Theory and the Job Demands–Resources model by confirming that POS is an essential job resource that enhances employee engagement through reciprocity and motivational processes. Nevertheless, variations in mediating factors such as psychological capital and engagement, along with moderating influences of age, gender, and work context, indicate that theoretical models need refinement to include contextual and individual boundaries. Integrating positive psychology constructs like psychological capital and strengths use into the JD-R framework may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational and personal resources interact. Practically, organizations should apply tailored support strategies that reflect employee characteristics and situational demands. Strengthening supportive leadership, fostering personal resource development, and ensuring that work-life balance policies are sensitive to context, particularly during crises, can sustain engagement and improve organizational effectiveness.

For future research, it is important to address several gaps identified in this review. Scholars should conduct cross-cultural comparative studies to examine whether the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and work engagement is universal or influenced by cultural values and contextual factors. Longitudinal and experimental designs are needed to establish causal relationships and capture how engagement evolves over time. Future studies are also encouraged to adopt multi-level approaches that include team and organizational variables to distinguish individual experiences from broader contextual effects. Moreover, qualitative and mixed-method approaches could provide deeper insight into why certain forms of support lose their effectiveness during crises and how employees across different cultural and organizational settings construct and interpret the meaning of support.

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