



**EMPLOYEE PERCEIVED SUPERVISOR SUPPORT, NARCISSISTIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Although supportive leadership produces a genuine relationship between leaders and employees, resulting in higher employee job satisfaction and lower employee turnover intention (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015), employees may perceive that many factors contribute to negative attitudes at work that increase turnover intention. Many researchers have established that uncivil behavior, toxic leadership, bullying and mobbing increases disengagement and absenteeism and negatively influence the leader-follower dyad and organizational performance. Narcissistic leaders have both positive and negative behavioral traits associated with them, which can be both prominent and damaging to the employees' perceptions of their relationship with their managers, ultimately influencing their intent to stay or leave their job. Retaining skilled employees is essential for an organization's success, but research has been mainly conducted through the lens of the supervisor instead of the employee. Based on the theoretical foundation of the leader-member exchange theory (LMX), the purpose of this literature review was to examine the relationship between the employees' perceptions of supervisor support [PSS] and narcissistic leadership [NL] on employee turnover intention [TI]. Managers and employees may use the information to improve employee professional development, promote safe and healthy workplaces, improve employee retention, and improve the collaboration of the leader-employee relationships, thus contributing to positive social change.*

**Keywords:** *Supervisor Support, Narcissistic Leadership, Turnover Intention*

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## INTRODUCTION

The causes of an employee to think about potentially leaving their job have been researched over several decades in an attempt to retain skilled employees. Turnover intention has been defined by Dwivedi (2015) as the intent of an employee to search for alternative jobs or leave the organization at some future time. An employee having the intent to leave has been a direct factor to the employee taking action and leaving their job (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Due to the intention being a direct factor, researchers have studied the causes behind turnover intention. Celik (2018) discovered many different factors influencing employee turnover intention, such as anxiety, stress, and bullying, which resulted in the employees being less engaged in their work. Hadadian and Zarei (2016) assessed stress as the cause of further employee negativity, finding that stress results in the reduction of employees' trust in leadership, which lowered employee productivity. Although Hadadian and Zarei (2016) determined negative leaders to be one of the factors negatively affecting employees' stress and turnover intention, other researchers determined that the opposite is sometimes true. Supportive leadership produces a genuine relationship between leaders and employees, resulting in higher employee job satisfaction and lower employee turnover intention (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). However, the research to date has been conducted primarily through the lens of the supervisor.

The current literature review consists of critical analysis and synthesis of the relevant literature, guided by the primary theoretical framework for the study (LMX), which was evident throughout the literature on the topic of leadership and employee turnover intention. The intent of this literature review was to use the LMX theory to analyze how the relationship between a supervisor and employees in

positive and negative work situations may influence employees' perception of supervisory support, including leaders' potential narcissistic behaviors, and the possible influence that each of these variables may have on the employees' decision to stay or leave the job or organization.

### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the influential relationship between perceived supervisor support and/or narcissistic leadership and employee turnover intention among U.S. organizations. The findings may provide information on ways to improve employee turnover intention in U.S. organizations by bridging the gap in the literature on the impact of perceived supervisor support and narcissistic leadership on employee turnover intention.

Employee turnover costs organizations an average of \$4,000 to \$7,000, depending on the employees' role (Bauman, 2017). The general management problem is the high level of employee turnover in U.S. organizations, which has negative effects on remaining employees (Scanlan & Still, 2019). Many factors contribute to employee turnover intention. One factor is organization leaders not investing in the training, development, and support that employees need or seek to improve their career (Glazer, Mahoney, & Randall, 2019; Nerstad, Dysvik, Kuvaas, & Buch, 2018). Another factor is employees who report to narcissistic leaders (Maccoby, 2000) who are unethical (Babalola, Stouten, & Euwema, 2016) or leaders who create a toxic environment costing the company billions of dollars in claims and lost productivity (Winn & Dykes, 2019). When employees do not believe there is opportunity to grow, their career and workplace are full of anxiety, stress, and bullying, and the employees are less engaged in their work (Celik, 2018), which contributes to increases in employee turnover intention.

The specific management problem addressed in my study is that organizational leaders do not know the impact of perceived supervisor support and narcissistic leadership on employee turnover intention. Employees may have negative perceptions of leadership support for career growth opportunities within the organization, or they may believe they are threatened due to working under negative leadership. Both of these negative perceptions may influence employee turnover intention, costing the organization a significant amount of money. Given the 16 million workers in the United States as of July 2019 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019) and the challenges of retention, a study on the impact of perceived supervisor support and narcissistic leaders on employee turnover intention could contribute to the literature and extend the body of knowledge.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

Originally known as the vertical dyad linkage model (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975), Dansereau et al.'s (1975) LMX theory has emerged as one of the most successful organizational leadership models because of the benefits resulting from positive relationships between organizational leaders and followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The model does not represent a traditional corporate one-way hierarchy, which Lenski (1954) had determined was inadequate to describe the complexities of group structures within organizations. Instead, LMX is a two-way, dyadic model including organizational leaders and employees because employees give their supervisors trust, respect, and opinions and the supervisors give employees trust, respect, and opinions likewise (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

Because managerial style influences turnover (Iverson & Roy, 1994), the quality of the LMX dyadic exchange

contributes to employees' performance and turnover intention (Linden & Graen, 1980). Supervisors who listened to employees' needs established strong relationships with their employees, fostering a high-quality LMX (Lloyd, Boer, & Voelpel, 2017). Fulmer and Ostroff (2017) evaluated LMX and found that a trickle-up model could provide trust among organizational leaders and employees. This employee and supervisor trust, cultivated across levels of the organization through positive interactions, may exert a positive effect on employees' performance.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) assessed the relationship between leaders and follower as a three-stage concept, which Li, Furst-Holloway, Masterson, Gales, and Blume (2018) justified as (a) the leader first tries to influence the followers by explaining to the followers their roles and duties, (b) the leaders prove themselves to their followers, and (c) the relationship either improves or weakens the followers' evaluations of the relationship. Herman and Dasborough (2016) also conducted research on the LMX theory and assessed the theory as a three-step approach: (a) routinization, (b) role taking, and (c) role making. *Routinization* occurs when the leader designs the routines, standards, and opportunities for the followers, allowing the team to remain united. Through the *role taking* process, the leader assesses the skills and abilities of new followers. Finally, in *role making*, the leader creates and assigns roles to the followers. By contrast, Al-Shammari and Ebrahim (2015) considered Herman and Dasborough's three-step approach as describing an average leadership style and determined that leaders need to go beyond role making and build stronger relationships with employees. The many concepts of the LMX theory within current organizations should be utilized to foster a dyadic relationship that supports employees and builds trust.

Chen, Wen, Peng, and Liu (2016) and Dienesch and Liden (1986) divided employees' roles into two basic categories: the in-group (categorized by high trust, interaction, and rewards) and the out-group (categorized by low trust, interaction, and support). The in-group employees are those whom the leader trusts, who take work associated with high risk, but whom the leader gives opportunities to develop skills and abilities. These employees are also more likely to have additional career opportunities (Huyghebaert, Gillet, Audusseau, & Fouquereau, 2019). Out-group employees are those who receive work of less importance and risk (Estel, Schulte, Spurk, & Kauffeld, 2019) because the leader feels they cannot trust the employees with complex work. With this limitation, the supervisor does not present out-group employees with supervisor support, diminishing the opportunities to develop skills and abilities and providing fewer career opportunities.

Good leaders make efforts to ensure that all followers get equal treatment so no employees feel isolated (Saari & Melin, 2018). Ellis, Bauer, Erdogan, and Truxillo (2018) determined that employees who reported a higher sense of belongingness to the work group also perceived a higher-quality LMX relationship with their leader. To provide a higher-level LMX relationship, employees need the mutual exchange of trust and encouragement (Rong, Li, & Xie, 2019) and leaders must eliminate the segregation of in-groups and out-groups.

Developing trust between organizational leaders and employees may improve employee and organizational health (Thompson, 2018). Improving employees' well-being is a psychological, sociological, and managerial issue that impacts productivity, employee commitment, and organizational profitability (Thomason & Brownlee, 2018). Leaders should consider social, material, and psychological benefits in their relationships with employees, and

the LMX relationship is necessary to build loyalty and affection between the teams (Gu et al., 2015). Analysis of the LMX theory offers substantial insights into key attributes of working relationships between leaders and employees, along with essential ways to increase positive work behaviors (Haynie, Baur, Harris, Harris, & Moates, 2019). Researchers should evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of the LMX theory (Gooty, Thomas, Yammarino, Kim, & Medaugh, 2019).

Positive aspects of the LMX theory include more favorable employee job attitudes, fewer employee conflicts, better employee performance, more frequent organizational citizenship behaviors, higher creativity, and lower employee turnover (Cropanzano, Dasborough, & Weiss, 2017). The LMX theory is a structured procedure that explains the association between organizational leaders and their employee subordinates (i.e., followers; Pundt & Hermann, 2015). The benefits from the lens of the leader are that leaders could identify whether their actions were unfair or fair toward employees, which could help to prevent job insecurities that employees may have (Nikolova, Van der Heijden, Lastad, & Notelaers, 2018). With a strong LMX, the leader could increase the confidence of the followers and enhance the communication process of the team (Kuvaas & Buch, 2018).

Researchers have also identified negative aspects of the leader-follower relationship in the LMX theory; unsupportive leaders could cause decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees (Birtch, Chiang, & Van Esch, 2016). A narcissistic leader could fail to be supportive of the employees' personal development, which may prove to be damaging for the team (Nerstad et al., 2018). Narcissistic leaders may treat employees without fairness or justice (Yang et al., 2018) and only the leader may get the attention, creating an issue within

the employees' and team's performance (Unger-Aviram, Zeigler-Hill, Barina, & Besser, 2018).

When leaders exemplify positive behaviors, employees mirror the positive attitudes, which benefits the employees' performance outcomes (W. Lin, Ma, Zhang, Li, & Jiang, 2016). However, when leaders exemplify negative behaviors, the negativity impacts employees' well-being and behavior (Pan & Lin, 2018). Embracing positive and supportive leadership could foster a higher-level LMX relationship, which may benefit leadership, employees, and the workplace environment.

The quality of the LMX dyadic exchange contributes to employees' performance and turnover intention; therefore, both leaders and employees should build strong relationships to be beneficial to the leader, employees, and organization (Osman & Nahar, 2015). Researchers have factored both leader and employee contributions into the LMX relationship and the reciprocation of contributions (Liao, Li, Liu, & Song, 2019). Supportive and positive leadership builds trust, improves performance, and reduces employee turnover intention (Byun, Dai, Lee, & Kang, 2017). Negative leadership breaks the trusting relationship between leaders and employees, damaging the employees' well-being and increasing employee turnover intention (Chen & Liu, 2019). Understanding the different dynamics of LMX and assessing potential factors associated with employee turnover intention was the purpose of the current literature review.

### **Turnover and Turnover Intention**

Employee turnover is a behavior of interest for organizational leaders in different industries and countries because it affects other employees' morale, reduces the level of in-house expertise, and lowers the organizations' bottom line (Shah, 2014). Although involuntary turnover could eliminate poorly performing employees, voluntary turnover is a decision that employees make (Mobley, Griffeth,

Hand, & Meglino, 1979). Both voluntary and involuntary turnover indicates a weakness of overall organizational effectiveness and performance (Chen, Wang, & Tang, 2016), costing organizations an average of \$4,000 and \$7,000 annually, depending on the employees' role (Bauman, 2017). However, there is a difference between the behavior of turnover and employee turnover intention.

The intent to act is the closest variable to real behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). With employee turnover intention being the best predictor of the turnover behavior (Kraut, 1975; Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978), researchers continue to investigate additional underlying causes of employee turnover intentions (Ahmed & Riaz, 2011; Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016; Hausknecht, Trevor, & Howard, 2009; Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017; Jarupathirun, & De Gennaro, 2018; Shahnawaz, & Jafri, 2009). The evaluation of both the definition of turnover and turnover intention are provided in the next section to understand the difference between the intention and action of employees.

### **Definition of turnover intention**

Specified by Mauldon (1928), turnover is the frequency of employees changing their working status at an organization. Jackofsky and Peters (1983) assessed turnover as both job and organizational turnover, where employees leave the current position for another one within the organization or where employees leave the job for another job outside the organization. McMann (2018) evaluated organizational turnover as the rate at which employees leave an organization. With researchers (Cohen et al., 2016; Hom et al., 2017) determining that turnover intention predicted the action of turnover, understanding the influences of voluntary turnover stems from understanding employee turnover intentions.

The definition of turnover intention is the aim of employees to search for alternative jobs or leave the organization in the future (Dwivedi, 2015). Turnover intention is present in unsatisfied employees whose thoughts and behaviors characterize the objective of quitting their job or starting a job search (Kartono & Hilmiana, 2018). As evaluated by Schyns, Torka, and Gossling (2006), turnover intention measures whether employees plan to change or leave their job voluntarily. Measurement methods exist to analyze an employee's perceived negative workplaces, which can vary each employee's degree of job satisfaction and present turnover intention (Herzberg et al., 1959). Researchers of turnover intention have frequently examined factors such as the influences of individual or organizational characteristics, because these factors may cause elevated stress, burnout, and psychological instability, which tend to increase turnover intention (Harden, Boakye, & Ryan, 2018; Kim, 2015; Mullen, Malone, Denney, & Santa Dietz, 2018). The research results are different for different industries and countries, but most revolve around employees' stress level. For example, Nerstad et al. (2018) posited that stressful work environments may moderate turnover intention and the search for alternative job options in a Norwegian financial company. Na, Choo, and Klingfuss (2018) determined that increased supervisor support provided a coping mechanism for work stress, lessening the turnover intention among U.S. lawyers. Liu, Zhu, Wu, and Mao (2019) noted that work stress was a key predictor of turnover intention, specifically in the healthcare industry.

#### **Employee turnover intention and supervisor support**

When leaders support an employee's career growth, the efforts may signal a long-term investment plan in the employees, who are likely to feel valued by their contributions and feel the supervisor cares for their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, &

Sowa, 1986; Jung & Takeuchi, 2018; Levinson, 1965). The employees' higher perception of supervisor support has decreased turnover in Belgium university participants (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002), in technology participants from Delhi (Shahnawaz & Jafri, 2009), in retail employees in India (Rathi & Lee, 2017), in restaurant employees in the United States, South Korea, and India (Guchait & Back, 2016), and in hotel employees in the United Kingdom (Gordon, Tang, Day, & Adler, 2019). There was an apparent need to review supervisor support through the lens of employees who work in U.S. organizations as well.

Organizational leaders influence whether employees intend to stay at their job or leave (Seo, Nahrgang, Carter, & Hom, 2018) by establishing mutual trust, respect, and obligation to the relationship between themselves and their employees (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982). Organizational politics may result in a negative work environment when dominating coalitions of leaders and subordinates (the in-group) get access to privileges while protecting the self-interest of the group (Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979), whereas others in the out-group face punishment and alienation (Bryson & Kelley, 1977). Directly related to politics, stress is a potential turnover intention factor. A variety of factors contribute to employees' work stress, which negatively affect their health and well-being (Kurniawaty, Mansyur, R., & Ramlawati, 2019). A lack of supervisor support or negative leadership may lead to stress; lack of appreciation and respect, such as being given unnecessary tasks, may lead to turnover intention (Apostel, Syrek, & Antoni, 2018).

There are contradictory results from researchers on the topic of stress and employee turnover intention among different industries and countries because of the varying factors that could attribute to turnover

intention. While Mullen et al. (2018) determined the positive association that turnover intention had on higher levels of job stress and burnout in student affair professionals, Lu et al. (2017) determined that work stress was a direct impact on turnover intention in physicians in China. Al Hashmi, Jabeen, and Papastathopoulos (2019) concluded that although the intention to resign decreases with the employees' strong leader-member relationship, the mediating effects of stress had no direct impact on turnover intention with police personnel of United Arab Emirates (UAE). Researchers should study additional industries to provide generalizability to the topic of employee turnover intention.

Scanlan and Still (2019) determined that negative perceptions of organizational leadership support produced higher levels of turnover intention among employees. Employees who perceived positive supervisor support were less likely to leave their organizations (Gordon, Tang et al., 2019). Garg and Dhar (2017) evaluated supervisor support as organizational leaders who listened to employees' disputes and resolved work-related problems. Additional researchers, such as Rathi and Lee (2017) and Ng and Sorensen (2008) agreed, explaining that supervisor support entailed guiding career development and listening to employees' concerns and complaints. Other researchers added to the definition specifying that leaders provide support by (a) preparing employees of organizational and department decisions and information (Karatepe & Kaviti, 2016), (b) adapting employee-focused practices (Dominguez-Falcon, Martin-Santana, & Saa-Perez, 2016), and (c) encouraging employees in career development and advancement (Agrusa, Spears, Agrusa, & Tanner, 2006). Ibrahim, Suan, and Karatepe (2018) assessed supportive supervision as enhancing employees' job engagement while reducing the proclivity to quit. With researchers

assessing that highly supportive supervisors promote employees' productivity and less supportive supervisors were an obstacle to employees' success, possibly diverting employees towards deviant behavior (Khan, Mahmood, Kanwal, & Latif, 2015), researchers in the field specified that supervisor support is an essential job resource (Suan & Nasuridin, 2016).

With research by Ferreira, da Costa, Cooper, and Oliveira (2019) determining turnover intention as hindering employees' productivity, researchers should study methods of reversing employees' inclination to quit through proactive retention measures. Rothausen, Henderson, Arnold, and Malshe (2017) determined that focusing on employees' perspectives of the supervisory support they are receiving could provide effective management of employees' retention. Past researchers comparing perceived supervisor support to potential turnover intention produced mixed results on the relationship between the variables, possibly because researchers conducted the studies in different countries outside the United States or they focused on one specific industry. For example, Nichols, Swanberg, and Bright (2016) determined significant negative relationships between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention in hospital workers, Naidoo (2018) determined that increased supervisor support in information technology workers decreased turnover intention, and Choi (2018) determined that supervisory support of telework employees decreased turnover intention.

Other researchers had contradictory findings. Fan (2018) examined no mediation between supervisor support and turnover intention with Chinese technology. Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursiere, and Raymond (2016) determined only an indirect relationship between perceived supervisor support and turnover intention using different factors. Elci, Yildiz, and



Karabay (2018) examined the lack of supervisory support on employees, where exhaustion due to burnout had a statistically significant impact on employee turnover intention within the health care industry in Turkey. There are U.S. studies in the mental-health industry (Fukui, Wu, & Salyers, 2019) and the restaurant industry (Guchait & Back, 2016) evaluating the influence of supervisory support on employees turnover intention, but limited studies exist in the past 5 years specific to the employees' perception of supervisor support and the influence on turnover intention within U.S. organizations.

### **Turnover intention of employees of narcissistic leaders**

Given the vast array of negative behaviors that are characteristic of narcissistic leaders, subordinates of such leaders may have higher rates of turnover intention. Researchers have determined that negative narcissistic behaviors can lead to workplace incivility (Foult et al., 2018), lowered organizational commitment (Youngkeun, 2019), increased turnover rates (Wang, Zhang, et al., 2018), and a bullying atmosphere (Porath, 2017) in the work environment that are cumulatively counter-productive. Narcissistic leaders on the malevolent side tend to engage in hurtful workplace behaviors that depress performance and increase employee turnover levels (Porath, 2017). The self-interest of narcissistic leaders does not typically align with ethics and the organizations' values (Kim, Kang, Lee, & McLean, 2016; Yurtkoru, Eusari, & Karabay, 2018), resulting in higher turnover intention rates (Lin et al., 2018). Sguera, Bagozzi, Huy, Boss, and Boss (2018) determined that supervisors could influence the employees' own ethical or unethical behavior by engaging in the same ethical or unethical behavioral standards. Ethical leadership could reduce employee turnover intention and sustain loyalty (Babalola et al., 2016). It is reasonable to posit that many employees

with negative or unethical leaders may consider leaving their jobs if their ethical values differ from leadership.

Negative leadership may have a severe impact on employees' morale, job satisfaction levels, and organizational loyalty that may combine to further accentuate employee turnover levels, posing direct and indirect costs to the organization (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). An employee's attitude about their job may stem from many variables and affect their work commitment and performance (Bin Shmailan, 2016). The right job fit could be satisfying for an employee, creating enthusiasm and creative thinking (Hudson, Bryson, & Michelotti, 2017). When the workplace is full of anxiety, stress, and bullying, employee turnover intention naturally increases, and their job satisfaction decreases, making employees less engaged in their work while they ponder their future with the organization (Celik, 2018). By contrast, the stronger the positive leadership and employees' relationship, the healthier the employees' perception is of support at work, which may result in less stress, more job satisfaction, and less turnover intention (Ellis et al., 2018).

### **Perceived Supervisor Support**

Perceived supervisor support (PSS) is the extent to which employees within an organization believe their supervisors value their respective contributions within the workplace (Arici, 2018). With such a broad definition, researchers have defined PSS as a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a dynamic assemblage of factors understood by organizational employees (Mylona & Mihail, 2018). PSS could include how employees perceive how their supervisor values their contributions within the workplace culture (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015), cares about respective employees as human beings, including the values held by employees (Li, Shaffer, & Bagger, 2015), and how well the values of the

employees align with the supervisor's values (Probst, Petitta, Barbaranelli, & Austin, 2018). The concept of PSS includes the employees' perceptions of how well supervisors provide them with the array of tools and knowledge needed to be successful within their role and for potential growth within the organization (Tremblay & Gibson, 2016).

As PSS is so multidimensional, the facilitation of PSS is a function of repeated interactions between employees and their respective supervisors (Guchait, Cho, & Meurs, 2015). Through the dyadic relationships, employees gain insight regarding to what degree the supervisor values employees' contributions and shares in the organizational values (Probst et al., 2018). When interactions between supervisors and employees are primarily positive, levels of PSS often increase (Gordon, Tang et al., 2019). Conversely, repeated negative or indifferent interactions between employees and supervisors may reduce levels of PSS (Cheng, Jiang, Cheng, Riley, & Jen, 2015). As employees determine PSS through interactions with superiors in the workplace, researchers have linked PSS to employees' well-being, employees' satisfaction, and overall organizational success (Park & Jang, 2017).

### **PSS and employee well-being**

Researchers have linked perceived supervisor support to the mental well-being of employees within the workplace (Pramudita & Sukoco, 2018). Within many organizations, the diverse set of challenges within the workplace may facilitate feelings of stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout within the employees (Jose & Mampilly, 2015). When employees experience excessive workloads and intra-organizational conflicts with supervisors or coworkers, employees experience an exacerbation of negative symptoms (Gok, Karatuna, & Karaca, 2015). With the potential of employees to experience such a diverse collection of negative mental health symptoms within the

workplace, often successful navigation of these workplace challenges depends primarily on whether supervisors give the employees the resources and direction needed to succeed within their respective positions (Jin, McDonald, & Park, 2016). The PSS experienced by employees becomes essential to alleviating many workplace stressors.

Park and Jang (2017) examined the relationship between PSS and the experience of employee stress within a variety of U.S. workplaces. In the broad representation of American workplaces studied, researchers have found a significant positive relationship between PSS employees' mental health and overall job satisfaction. Researchers have also found that employees felt a rise in workplace autonomy with elevated levels of PSS, showed higher job engagement, and reported higher levels of job satisfaction.

Although there are positive correlations between PSS and employee mental health outcomes and employee job satisfaction, adverse outcomes for employees may occur, such as stress, anxiety or depression, if managers do not adequately mitigate situations or levels of PSS remain low (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017). When stressful workplace conditions persist, especially with the absence of PSS, employees may be more likely to experience burnout (Smit, Stanz, & Bussin, 2015).

### **PSS, burnout, and employee outcomes**

Employee burnout occurs when an employee becomes emotionally exhausted within their respective workplace position (Kim, Ra, Park, & Kwon, 2017). When employees become emotionally fatigued within their organizational roles, often their job performance suffers (Khan et al., 2015). Employees are often less engaged when they experience burnout within the organization, especially regarding workplace responsibilities (Pohl & Galletta, 2017). These employees are less likely to

work with urgency, are less likely to exceed expectations, and are more likely to become cynical within their respective positions (Wei Tian, Cordery, & Gamble, 2016). Employees who are experiencing burnout are less likely to take the initiative, acquire innovative skills, or seek promotion (Buch, Dysvik, Kuvaas, & Nerstad, 2015). Low levels of supervisor support or narcissistic leadership who overburden employees could cause burnout. Employee burnout decreases both job satisfaction and job performance (Zacher & Schulz, 2015). Charoensukmongkol, Moqbel, and Gutierrez-Wirsching (2016) measured the influence of supervisor support on job satisfaction and workplace performance with 76 personnel from a Southern Texas University. Through analysis of the self-report surveys, these researchers determined a significant negative relationship between PSS and the rates of employee burnout. Specifically, higher levels of PSS aided in mitigating employee burnout and increasing overall job satisfaction. Conversely, with results from the same study, the researchers indicated that when employees perceived levels of support from supervisors as low or neutral, PSS lowered levels of employee job satisfaction and increases in employee burnout.

Employee burnout may further exacerbate issues of stress experienced within the workplace, creating increasingly poor workplace environments for the respective employees (Gkorezis, 2015). With poor workplace environments, employees may be more likely to be absent from work. Employees experiencing burnout are more likely to report turnover intention (Shi & Gordon, 2019). Employees who express turnover intention are more likely to seek new employment actively or leave the organization (Dysvik, Kuvaas, & Buch, 2016).

### **PSS, turnover intention, and organizational outcomes**

Increased turnover intention is prevalent in workplace cultures where PSS is low; however, when PSS is higher within an organization, there may be a reduction of turnover intention and burnout (Wong, Long, Ismail, & Kowang, 2016). When PSS is high, employees experiencing burnout or expressing turnover intention may feel comfortable voicing concerns to supervisors; voicing concerns may mitigate many of the issues contributing to negative feelings (Workman, 2017). In many organizations where PSS is high, levels of training and employee support were greater (Lee, Yun, & Kim, 2019). With the increased opportunity for training, employees may be more likely to feel valued by the organizational investment and often refrain from high turnover intentions (Afzal, Arshad, Saleem, & Farooq, 2019). Conversely, in organizations where PSS was low, Liu and Lo (2018) determined employees felt disconnected from supervisors and were more likely to experience burnout. As stated earlier, organizations with low PSS were more likely to possess employees who did not adequately perform job tasks and reported lower levels of job satisfaction (Pasamehmetoglu, Guchait, Tracey, Cunningham, & Lei, 2017). Although troublesome to the employees, incidences of burnout created a multitude of issues for others within the organization (Jin & McDonald, 2017). As burnout hindered job performance within respective employees, coworkers experienced increased occupational burdens (Fazio et al., 2017). With increased workloads, other employees experienced burnout, who in turn, were more likely to express turnover intention themselves (Kang & Kang, 2016). Leadership personality traits such as narcissism could have a relationship with low employee PSS, as discussed in the next section.

## **Narcissistic Behaviors of Leaders Within Organizations**

When leaders exhibit negative traits in the workplace, their effects on employees could lead to negative outcomes, such as disengagement (Saraswati, 2019), poor performance, and high employee turnover rates (Lin et al., 2018). Herzberg (1974) created the theory of motivation-hygiene, where he suggested that employees relate their unhappiness factor to how the employees feels they are being treated. Negative outcomes could lead to unnecessary costs in labor acquisition and training of new employees and managers (Dowling et al., 2013; Linton & Power, 2013). These costs do not include the loss of productivity and the diminished morale of the employees that remains following the departure of one of their peers, nor does that take into account a number of other indirect costs such as opportunity costs, retraining costs, and reselection cost that organizational managers frequently overlook in the turnover cost equation (Saraih, Aris, Sakdan, & Razli, 2017).

Negative leadership traits may have severe and long-lasting negative effects on employees and the organization (Wang, Zhang et al., 2018). Fan (2018) determined that narcissistic leaders deceive, belittle, or oppress their followers, and may not care about the subordinate demands; these behaviors will destroy their leader-follower relationship. Negative workplace situations may leave the follower more likely to consider seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, developing a better understanding of leadership behaviors and traits, such as narcissism, in U.S. organizations is essential to understanding the potential connection to employees' performance and satisfaction.

### **Definition of narcissism**

Narcissism refers to a complexity of personality traits, such as grandiosity (Marquez-Illescas, Zebedee, &

Zhou, 2019), arrogance (Sadler-Smith, Akstinaite, Robinson, & Wray, 2017), self-love (Liu, Chiang, Fehr, Xu, & Wang, 2017), entitlement (Nevicka et al., 2018), and hostility (Hart, Richardson, & Breeden, 2019). There are three main elements: a positive self-view, the use of self-enhancement strategies, and a lack of concern about others (Cote, 2018). Braun (2017) evaluated narcissistic leaders as having relatively stable and inter-individual differences in self views, with low empathy, little concern for others in both work and interpersonal relationships, and few self-regulatory strategies applied to maintain inflated self-views. Braun (2017) and Eski (2016) assessed narcissism as the association of self-promotion and aggrandizement, emotional aloofness, and aggressiveness.

### **Characteristics of narcissistic leadership**

Originally adapted by Mooney (1956), narcissistic leadership describes persons in a supervisory position with various personality and behavioral traits. Narcissistic leaders (a) demonstrate ruthless behaviors, (b) perceive themselves to be larger than life, (c) self-promote grandiose ideas to attract followers at any expense, (d) lack the ability to listen to others, and (e) lack empathy towards others (Maccoby, 2000). Rosenthan and Pittinsky (2006) critiqued narcissistic leader as one who has grandiose beliefs and motivated by power and admiration of subordinates. Narcissism is one negative dark trait of leadership, according to Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka (2009). Although Nevicka et al. (2018) determined that narcissists often emerged as leaders, the researchers noted an inconsistent conclusion concerning the relationship between leader narcissism and leader effectiveness from the followers' perspective. Many of the characteristics of narcissistic leadership organizational managers have been considered negative, with a simultaneous adverse impact on subordinates. For example, Chen,

Wen et al. (2016) concluded that narcissistic leaders were multi-faceted and not exploitive, entitled, or arrogant, and thus affected organizational employees' attitudes and turnover intention. Xiao, Fengzhong, and Zhou (2018) examined that employees perceive themselves as being a member of an organization and have a sense of belonging. However, in contrast to the employees' sense of belonging, a narcissistic leaders' tendency to belittle their subordinates to sustain their sense of superiority may harm the employees' self-esteem (Wang, & Guang-Lei, 2018).

One of the overarching characteristics of narcissistic leaders is adversely affecting psychological motives, thereby severely diminishing employee morale, organizational loyalty, and the employees' sense of belonging to their organization (Babalola et al., 2016).

There are other characteristics of narcissistic leaders, who can have a profoundly negative effect on subordinates, thus exacerbating unplanned turnover intention and actual turnover. Narcissistic leaders have the unethical tendency to feel entitled and may take the credit for all successes, including when subordinates made the most significant contributions (Thomason & Brownlee, 2018).

These exploitive characteristics could create a toxic work environment that may compel even the most loyal and tenured subordinates to search for better work opportunities elsewhere (Mead, Baumeister, Stuppy, & Vohs, 2018). Organizational leaders should identify narcissistic leaders and take steps to mitigate the negative impact that their behaviors may have on their subordinates. For example, based on their important research in the area, Fan (2018) concluded that the identification and control of narcissistic leaders in the organization is imperative, as narcissistic leaders create a negative workplace environment, driving loyal employees away. Similarly, Braun (2017) determined that narcissistic leaders'

actions were similar to a small child, principally motivated by their own interests to the detriment of their subordinates, putting their own needs and self-interests first and blaming others for their shortcomings. Refusal to take responsibility and be accountable displays destructive behavior, which no organization can afford.

### **Influence of narcissistic leaders in organizations and on employees**

Office politics has existed for centuries and contributes to relationships among senior leaders; the highest levels of corporate leaderships may not notice if politicking is a common behavior (Bryson & Kelley, 1977). Organizational politics includes (a) blaming others in negative situations to avoid failure, (b) withholding information from others to ensure failure, (c) taking credit for others' work, or (d) promoting self-interests above the organizations' or teams' best interest (Allen et al., 1979). Narcissistic leaders may use office politics to their advantage to get ahead and degrade others. Narcissistic leaders who tend to exploit their subordinates for their own benefit will not receive the same level of reciprocity as those who do not exploit subordinates (Emerson, 1962). Because there is a level of reciprocal exchange that occurs between leaders and employees in their working relationship, the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory served as the theoretical framework of the study. The leader-member exchange theory is the optimal choice because it provided a framework for evaluating the impact of the leader-follower working relationships. The belief that there are differences in the quality of relationships between leaders and their followers is what grounds LMX theory (Linden & Graen, 1980).

### **Positive influence**

Narcissism does not always have a negative impact on organizational structures (Braun, 2017; Judge et al., 2009), if the extraverted personality of the narcissist

emerges as a positive trait (Grijalva & Zhang, 2015). There are four areas that could be beneficial to management for incorporating narcissism as a determining factor of their respective organizational interest outcomes: (a) international management, (b) social issues in management/corporate social responsibility, (c) entrepreneurship, and (d) negotiation (Grijalva & Harms, 2013). However, Anninos (2018) stated that while narcissism can have a positive effect such as minimizing deviant employee behavior, the effect is short-term for the individual and the organization. Employees perceive narcissistic leaders who have high levels of charisma as having more strategic and operational behaviors (Vergauwe et al., 2018) while also having a strong influence on employee behavior and organizational performance (McClellan & Collins, 2018).

Max Weber (Weber, 1947) first discussed the topic of charismatic leadership in a published essay about the leader keeping order within an organization through both legal authority and charismatic authority. House (1976) considered charismatic leaders as those who helped followers accomplish amazing feats because of the charismatic leaders' high level of self-confidence, dominance, and moral virtue. Tucker (1968) assessed the relationship between such leaders and their followers as one of love and devotion rather than fear. Winter (1973) determined that followers allowed leaders to exercise power over them. Similarly, Oberg (1972) determined that charismatic leaders' behaviors included building their image and influencing others, but followers perceived them favorably and followers were more devoted to charismatic leaders due to a high level of trust.

### **Negative influence**

Researchers have concluded that narcissistic leaders can have a wide range of adverse effects on followers' emotions and behaviors in organizations (Braun, 2017). In cases where the self-interest of the

narcissistic leaders did not align with ethics and organizational values, the intensified negative outcomes resulted in higher rates of turnover intention (Lin et al., 2018). While Babalola et al. (2016) determined that ethical leaders reduced turnover intention and increased self-esteem in employees, which was beneficial to the dyadic relationship, the employees, and the organization, Wang, Zhang et al. (2018) linked unethical leadership to negative workplace behaviors and the quality of interaction between leaders and subordinates.

The research in the second decade of the 21st century has consistently linked narcissism to be a destructive leadership trait and linked narcissistic leadership with several negative workplace behaviors, including an increased reluctance for knowledge sharing (Xiao et al., 2018). Because narcissistic leaders continually seek admiration and are adamant about not receiving criticism, there is an inhibition of the intellectual stimulation of subordinates of narcissistic leaders (Wang, Cheng et al., 2018). There is an inverted relationship between varying work-related factors and an employee turnover intention (Porath, 2017). Braun (2017) determined narcissistic leaders increased experiences of malicious envy and decreased experiences of benign envy in followers, and that malicious envy fueled followers' counterproductive work behaviors directed toward narcissistic leaders. Wang, Cheng et al. (2018) assessed the negative job and satisfaction and performance aspects of leader-member exchange (LMX) between narcissistic leaders and employees. The more opportunities followers have of observing narcissistic leaders, the more likely they are to experience these leaders' toxic behaviors, and consequently, the less they perceive the leader as being effective (Nevicka et al., 2018).

Leary and Ashman (2018) noted that dysfunctional dispositions demonstrated by narcissistic leaders

disrupted effective team-building initiatives, devastated employee engagement, and accelerated employee burnout. Chen, Wen et al. (2016) stated that the self-interest of narcissistic leaders results in a workplace full of anxiety, stress, and bullying, which Bauman (2017) determined to result in employee turnover intention increasing and employees' engagement decreasing as they remain on the job, costing the organization an annual average of \$4,000 to replace an average employee and \$7,000 for a management-level employee. Additional narcissistic behaviors and traits on the parts of leaders in organizations have been studied by researchers to lead to negative worker indicators and organizational outcomes, such as an uncivil workplace, absenteeism, or withdrawal from work engagement (Muldoon et al., 2018), poor performance, and high employee turnover rate (Smith, 2017).

#### **Coexistence of other traits in narcissistic leaders**

Braun (2017) posited that narcissism has two discrete sides: a bright and a dark, each of which can coexist in leadership and have their respective merits. Leaders should not elevate or condone any behaviors or traits that could potentially be harmful to employees (Mills & Boardley, 2017). The coexistence of traits such as humility could moderate deleterious outcomes brought about by narcissistic leaders and could contribute to leadership success (Leary & Ashman, 2018). The coexistence of other traits in narcissistic leaders may help reduce the negative effects that their extreme workplace behaviors may cause and may act as a prelude to leadership success. Organizational leaders may have some level of narcissism that helped them achieve their current leadership position. Sy, Horton, and Riggio (2018) determined that too little narcissism in a leader resulted in a lack of confidence to get elected or appointed; however, too much narcissism resulted in

their believing they are better than others or above the law.

#### **Relationships and Interrelationships**

The general problem of employee turnover intention and actual turnover may have contagious effects on remaining employees (Scanlan & Still, 2019). As indicated in previous sections of this literature review, many factors could contribute to employee turnover intention such as anxiety (Bauman, 2017; Celik, 2018; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017; Jose & Mampilly, 2015), stress (Bauman, 2017; Hadadian & Zarei, 2016; Hakanen & Bakker, 2017), and bullying (Celik, 2018; Porath, 2017), resulting in the employees being less engaged in their work. Such stress can cause further employee negativity, reduce trust in leadership, and lower employee productivity (Hadadian & Zarei, 2016). By contrast, supportive leaders tend to produce higher employee job satisfaction and lower employee turnover intention (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). If employees perceive a high level of support from their supervisor, they may have a higher level of jobs satisfaction, as the supervisor is striving to help the employees advance their career (Glazer et al., 2019; Nerstad et al., 2018).

Managers should find ways to avoid negative leadership, such as those found in narcissistic leaders, and promote supportive leadership behaviors to counter the negative consequences and, thereby, improve employees' well-being (Erickson, Shaw, Murray, & Branch, 2017). A lack of perceived supervisor support may cause stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression with the employees' job, thus potentially leading to turnover intention either to another department or outside the organization (Kraft, Maity, & Porter, 2019). If employees report to leaders who behave unethically or negatively or subject the employees to an out-group where they are given jobs that do not challenge them or are demeaning, a toxic environment could form, causing

employee turnover intention. If employees work for narcissistic leaders who take credit for their contributions and create a bullying atmosphere, employees may have negative perceptions of leaders or the employee may feel threatened because of working under negative leadership (Khalique, Arif, Siddiqui, & Kazmi, 2018).

Managers may address challenges of employee retention from several perspectives. Mitigating negative leadership behaviors, such as those found in narcissistic leaders, can ensure the promotion of a positive workplace environment and improving employees' well-being (Matos, O'Neill, & Lei, 2018) while lowering the toxic and potentially unethical element (Cote, 2018). Ethical leadership serves as a basis of respect, trust, and integrity, and is an integral part of the leader-member relationship (Neamtu & Bejinaru, 2018). As supervisors directly influence the employees' performance (Chammus & da Costa Hernandez, 2019), when leaders demonstrate a propensity toward ethical and trustworthy behaviors, employees may be more likely to follow (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2015), which will reduce turnover intention (Shareef & Atan, 2018).

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Research on organizational leadership is complex and encompasses many variables such as personality traits and behaviors (Wille, Wiernik, Vergauwe, Vrijdags, & Trbovic, 2018), technical and soft skills (Beydler, 2017), industry knowledge and success (Khoshhal & Guraya, 2016), education (Watkins et al., 2017), and ethics (Moore, Mayer, Chiang, Crossley, Karlesky, & Birtch, 2019). Any one of these factors could change the phenomenon within the workplace, presenting differing results of a research study. Different variables may have positive or negative aspects that affect the relationship between the employees and leaders involved. Researchers have suggested areas for future research on differing

variables that could potentially influence employee turnover intention. Saraih et al. (2017) posited the need for research in academia. Schneider, González-Romá, Ostroff, and West (2017) posited the need for research on leadership styles within varying cultural and climate contexts outside Germany and the Netherlands where they conducted research. Spurk and Hirschi (2018) posited the need for additional research on narcissistic leadership from the subordinates' perspective in relation to the potential for employee turnover intention. Additional research is needed on any variables that could potentially contribute to an increase in employees' turnover intention within U.S. organizations. Combining already studied variables while adding new variables could lessen the gap of knowledge for the exact combination of variables that account for the majority of the turnover intention. Research within specific industries would be most helpful to focus the retention efforts within the specific industries.

### **CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS**

The relationship between employees and their leaders is essential to the employees' job satisfaction, career success, commitment, and productivity (Carlson, et al., 2017). Fostering a positive leader-member relationship could reduce turnover intention, as the employees may be happy with their job and see career advancement potential (Jung & Takeuchi, 2018). Provided in this literature review was the theoretical framework of LMX, revealing that researchers have measured the different configurations of the leader-membership exchange within workplaces (Seo, et al., 2018) to assess further the influence leadership and work relationships had on employees' commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention.

This literature review represents a comprehensive summary of the LMX theory, perceived supervisor support, and narcissistic leadership within



organizations that may increase or decrease the employees' turnover intention. Future studies within specific industries and corporations within the United States should be studied to assess if a specific industry has higher or lower employee turnover intention based on the employees' perception of supervisor support or narcissistic leadership. A mixed

method study would generate useful data to get the statistical significance of the variables and a better understanding from the lens of the employee. Such data could help foster positive change for the employee, managers, and the organization as a whole if better training or policies were put in place based on the results of the study.

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