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Article in *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* · April 2017

DOI: 10.1080/1359432X.2017.1319817

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In press in *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*

Perceived Organizational Support and Employees' Well-Being:
The Mediating Role of Organizational Dehumanization

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Acknowledgments

Gaëtane Caesens is a (Aspirant (ASP) = Research Fellow) of the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique-FNRS.

Abstract

Perceived organizational support (POS) has been found to predict important organizational outcomes such as increasing employees' well-being. In this research, we examine a new underlying mechanism of the relationship between POS and employees' well-being, i.e. employees' perceptions that their organization dehumanizes them. This proposition was tested across two studies. Using an experimental design manipulating POS in a laboratory setting, Study 1 indicated that in the high POS condition the subsequent feelings of being dehumanized by the organization were lower than in the low POS condition. More importantly, organizational dehumanization perceptions were found to mediate the POS condition and satisfaction link. Furthermore, using a sample of 1209 employees, results of Study 2 indicated that organizational dehumanization mediates the relationship between POS and three indicators of employees' well-being (i.e., job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and psychosomatic strains). Implications for research on both organizational support theory and dehumanization theory are discussed.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support; organizational dehumanization; job satisfaction; emotional exhaustion; psychosomatic strains.

Perceived Organizational Support and Employees' Well-Being:

The Mediating Role of Organizational Dehumanization

Understanding the way employees perceive their relationship with their organization has emerged as a major concern for organizational behavior scholars during the last decades (e.g., Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, & Tetrick, 2012). In exploring the employee-organization relationship, numerous studies have focused their attention on the construct of perceived organizational support (POS) defined as employees' general perception regarding "the extent to which their organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986, p. 501). Rooted in the social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, organizational support theory (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002) suggests that employees reciprocate for the positive treatments received by the organization by developing more favorable attitudes and behaviors toward this organization. Research in this domain has indeed shown that employees respond to high levels of POS by developing many positive work attitudes, behaviors, and by experiencing higher levels of subjective well-being (e.g., Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Aside from the well-developed concept of POS, scholars interested in employee-organization relationships have also recently started to examine the construct of organizational dehumanization. Drawn from the social psychology literature (e.g., Haslam, 2006; Leyens et al., 2000, 2001), organizational dehumanization refers to "the experience of an employee who feels objectified by his or her organization, denied personal subjectivity, and made to feel like a tool or instrument for the organization's ends" (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p. 170). According to this recent literature, the perception of being dehumanized by one's organization has detrimental effects on employees' attitudes towards the organization (e.g.,

increasing their intentions to quit), and on their well-being (Bell & Khoury, 2011, 2016) because it thwarts individuals' fundamental needs (Christoff, 2014).

Despite the obvious relevance of both POS and organizational dehumanization in the employee-organization relationship, these two literatures have largely developed independently from one another. The present research aims to link these two constructs in a single integrative model depicting the employee-organization relationship. More precisely, in the present research, we argue that high levels of POS will reduce organizational dehumanization perceptions among employees by conveying that their organization values them as a unique individual and considers their individual needs. Furthermore, drawing on the proposition that organizational dehumanization is detrimental for employees' well-being (Bell & Khoury, 2011), we postulate that organizational dehumanization will mediate the well-demonstrated positive relationship between POS and employees' subjective well-being. By doing so, the present work will contribute to the organizational and management literature in several ways.

First and foremost, it contributes to an enrichment of organizational support theory (e.g., Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Indeed, while organizational support theory mainly explains the positive consequences of POS through a social exchange perspective, this theory also suggests that POS leads to beneficial outcomes by fulfilling employees' socioemotional needs, contributing to self-enhancement processes (e.g., Kurtessis et al., 2015). Even if this mechanism has been proposed in the early development of organizational support theory, the "emphasis on need fulfillment is often omitted" in the literature (Vardaman et al., 2016, p. 1484). Interestingly, the literature on dehumanization (Christoff, 2014) suggests that people experiencing dehumanization treatments have their fundamental needs thwarted which harm self-enhancement processes and therefore leads to foster individuals' unwell-being. By showing

the mediating role of organizational dehumanization in the POS-well-being relationship, we thus contribute to a better understanding of self-enhancement processes described in organizational support theory.

Second, the present research adds to the burgeoning literature on dehumanization applied to work settings (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2011, 2016; Christoff, 2014) by providing first evidence of its nomological network. Practically, organizational dehumanization is in need of research as this phenomenon has been described as a frequent experience for workers in modern organizational settings (e.g., Christoff, 2014). As recently stated by Rochford, Jack, Boyatzis, and French (2016), there “appears to be a growing tendency for organizations and leaders to see humans as “means” rather than “ends in themselves”” (p. 9). As a matter of fact, organizational discourse encourages and facilitates the dehumanization of its people when it refers to persons only “as a means to accomplishing organizational ends (e.g., ‘people are an asset to be allocated’), or “as commodities, products, or resources of monetary value (e.g., ‘human capital’)” (Rochford et al., 2016, p. 9). More generally, characterized by an ever-advancing technological development, repeated restructurations reducing the size of the workforce while the workload remains stable, and impersonal organizations where personal agency is frustrated by formal bureaucratic procedures, today’s workplace often considers the employee as a robot or tool that is the property of and is used by the organization for its own purposes (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2011; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Despite its relevance, the construct of organizational dehumanization has been underdeveloped both in the organizational psychology and management literatures. Below, we present the theoretical arguments underlying each hypothesis included in our theoretical model (see Figure 1).

Perceived Organizational Support

Since the introduction of the POS construct in the organizational literature, several studies have shown that POS is positively related to numerous positive outcomes (e.g., Baran

et al., 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Specifically, Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011) proposed in their literature review that POS outcomes can be categorized in three main categories: increased (1) favorable attitudes toward organization and work (e.g., affective commitment, work engagement), (2) beneficial behavioral outcomes (e.g., performance), and (3) employees' subjective well-being (e.g., job satisfaction and health).

Organizational support theory (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) also provided a theoretical framework to describe how POS operates to generate each of its three categories of positive consequences. As summarized by Baran et al. (2012), three main processes have been identified to explain the relationship between POS and its consequences. First, rooted in the social exchange perspective (Blau, 1964), organizational support theory holds that because POS provides tangible and intangible resources to employees, the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) produces a felt obligation among employees to care about organizational welfare and help the organization to reach its goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This fundamental mechanism mainly explains how POS leads to positive employees' attitudes and behaviors. Second, organizational support theory states that POS conveys to employees that increased efforts will be rewarded (e.g., Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). In other words, POS provides an assurance that investments that employees put into their organization will be reciprocated and thus rewarded (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011), which contributes to increase employees' positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. Finally, POS is assumed to fulfill several socioemotional needs in the workplace, such as the need for esteem, affiliation, emotional support, and approval (e.g., Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Such fulfillment of employees' socioemotional needs contributes to a self-enhancement process leading to positive attitudes and to greater employees' subjective well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2015). The fundamental processes underlying the links between POS and employees' *attitudes* and *behaviors* have been extensively studied in organizational support theory (e.g., Armeli et al., 1998; Baran et al., 2012; Caesens, Marique, & Stinglhamber, 2014; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). In contrast, underlying mechanisms of the relationship between POS and employees' *subjective well-being* have received rather limited research attention (Baran et al., 2012). Such imbalance has led scholars to call for more research on underlying processes that might help to better understand the link between POS and employees' well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2015). In the present research, we propose that organizational dehumanization perceptions may act as one of these mechanisms.

Organizational Dehumanization

Drawn from the social psychology literature (Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Leyens et al., 2000, 2001), the term dehumanization refers to “a psychological phenomenon whereby people perceive of other human beings as something lesser than, or profoundly different from, themselves; in other words, their human characteristics are being denied” (Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2015, p. 2). It is a pervasive phenomenon which not only applies to extremely stigmatized groups in our societies (e.g., homeless people or criminals) but that also affects (in a more subtle way) members of relatively less stigmatized social categories such as medical patients (e.g., Vaes & Muratore 2013), woman (Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011), and occupational groups (Loughnan & Haslam, 2007).

Haslam (2006) proposed a convenient theoretical model of dehumanization which suggests that humanity can be denied at two levels leading to two forms of dehumanization: *animalistic* dehumanization and *mechanistic* dehumanization. First, *animalistic*

dehumanization refers to the tendency to deny features that distinguish humans from animals (i.e., uniquely human features) such as civility, refinement, moral sensibility, rationality, and maturity. An animalistic form of dehumanization leads to the perceptions that the target is lacking culture, that he or she is coarse, amoral, irrational, and childlike. This type of dehumanization has been frequently examined in relation with immigration, war, and genocide (e.g., Kelman, 1973; Staub, 1989).

Second, *mechanistic dehumanization* occurs when others are being compared or associated with non-human objects (object or automata; Haslam, 2006). When others are being dehumanized this way, they are perceived as lacking features that define human nature: individuality, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness, and agency/depth. Thus, mechanistic dehumanization leads to the perception that the target is superficial, rigid, passive, cold, fungible, and is replaceable/interchangeable. Mechanistic dehumanization has been evidenced in many domains and affects a series of very different targets. For instance, mechanistic dehumanization has been related to patient's treatment in modern medicine (in which the increased reliance on technology can lead to the treatment of human patients as defective machines; Haque & Waytz, 2012), or to side-effects of computer uses (i.e., "the robotic pursuit of efficiency and regularity, automaton-like rigidity and conformity, and an approach of life that is unemotional, apathetic and lacking in spontaneity"; Haslam, 2006, pp. 253-254; see also Beckers & Schmidt, 2001).

Interestingly, if both forms of dehumanization should exist in the context of work, the second form of dehumanization, i.e. mechanistic dehumanization, has been suggested to be more prone to occur in organizational settings and is more frequently discussed in the context of work (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2011; Christoff, 2014). Only a scarce number of studies have recently started to examine empirically this phenomenon in the workplace (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2016; Christoff, 2014; Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2015). Yet, such a perception that

one is being treated by the organization -or by its representatives- as a mere object is not void of important consequences. Indeed, “dehumanization is a negative experience that diminishes the individual and is therefore likely to motivate the individual to dissociate from the organization” (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p. 184). More importantly, according to several scholars (e.g., Christoff, 2014) dehumanizing treatments might impair employees well-being by enhancing, for instance, their level of anxiety or depression as it thwarts basic individual needs such as the needs for competence or relatedness. In accordance with this view, Baldissarri, Andrighetto, and Volpato (2014) found that employees who felt treated like an instrument by their supervisor, reported higher level of job burnout (in terms of emotional exhaustion and cynicism) which, in turn, led to an internalization of these objectifying perceptions (i.e., “self-perception of lacking human mental capacities”, Baldissarri et al., 2014, p. 5). Lately, Andrighetto, Baldissarri, and Volpato (2016) showed that several key objective characteristics of the work, i.e. repetitiveness of movements, fragmentation of activities, and dependence on the machine, enhance people’ view of a target employee as an instrument, less able to experience human mental states. Finally, results of Bell and Khoury’s (2016) research indicated that procedural justice reduced employees’ organizational dehumanization perceptions, which in turn increased employees’ turnover intentions among women.

POS and Organizational Dehumanization

In the present work, we argue that POS should decrease employees’ perceptions that they are dehumanized by their organization. Several theoretical reasons support this prediction. First, according to Kelman (1976), rejecting or excluding individuals from their community’ membership is one key component of treating others as less than humans. In line with this argument, Bastian and Haslam (2010) have shown experimentally that social ostracism enhances feeling of mechanistic dehumanization. Thus, it can be argued, on the

contrary, that, by conveying “employees that the organization is committed to them and accepts them as welcomed members” (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011, p. 58) and by satisfying their socioemotional needs (more particularly, their need for affiliation; Baran et al., 2012), POS might help to reduce the feelings of being treated as less than human or as an object.

Second, dehumanization feelings have been shown to rise from the perception that one has been treated by others with disrespected, arrogance, neglect, humiliation, and thoughtlessness, or when one is not being recognized as having an existence that is socially valuable (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). Indeed, maltreatments that involve “exploitation, betrayal or conditional regard” (Bastian & Haslam, 2011, p. 296), lead targets to feel considered as a means to an end or an object (i.e., the mechanistic form of dehumanization). In the same line, Renger, Mommert, Renger, and Simon (2016) have proposed that equality recognition, in terms of social self-esteem and care, can help individuals to protect against humiliation or dehumanization. These authors showed that high equality-based (dis)respect received from group members enhances the feeling of being treated as a (non)human being. POS by definition implies that the organization treats its employees respectfully. Indeed, POS implies a positive regard toward employees through which the organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Therefore, we can postulate that POS will convey employees that they are valued and respected as full human beings of both value and worth which should, in turn, reduces organizational dehumanization perceptions.

In sum, a workplace environment that helps employees fulfill their fundamental needs such as need for belonging, relatedness or respect should reduce organizational dehumanization perceptions (Bell & Khoury, 2016). As a matter of fact, some scholars (Väyrynen & Laari-Salmela, 2015) have already proposed that employee’ perceptions that

“the employer is concerned with their welfare” and “takes interest in their needs” (p. 4) should be linked to organizational dehumanization. However, to the best of our knowledge, this theoretical proposition has never been tested at the empirical level. In the present paper, we take this endeavor and hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: POS is negatively related to organizational dehumanization perceptions.

Organizational Dehumanization as a Mediator of the Relationship Between POS and Well-Being

As indicated earlier, organizational support theory (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2015) early suggested that POS is related to employees' subjective well-being. How their organization values and cares about them must indeed have a substantial influence on employees' welfare at work by making the workplace more pleasant (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). In agreement with this view, several studies reported that POS is positively related to a wide number of indicators of employees' subjective well-being such as increased levels of job satisfaction (e.g., Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997), decreased levels of burnout (e.g., Kang, Twigg, & Hertzman, 2010), psychological strains (e.g., Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014), and psychosomatic complaints (e.g., Karonglar, Eisenberger, & Aselage, 2016).

In addition, several authors have suggested that mechanistic dehumanizing experiences might be detrimental for individuals' psychological well-being (e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2011; Christoff, 2014). For instance, Christoff (2014), based on Bastian and Haslam's (2011), work stated that “when people are mechanistically dehumanized by being treated as objects, as means to an end, or as lacking the capacity for feeling, they tend to enter into “cognitive deconstructive” states that are characterized by reduced clarity of thought, emotional numbing, cognitive inflexibility, and an absence of meaningful thought” (p. 2). Interestingly, in the organizational psychology literature, Shore and Coyle-Shapiro (2012) also suggested

that “being in a relationship with an organization that is destructive and demeaning is likely to invoke perceptions of relational devaluation, unfairness and is also likely to thwart an individual’s basic needs” (p. 155). Prior scholars (Gillet, Fouquereau, Forest, Brunault, & Colombat, 2012; Shore & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012) similarly suggested that the violation of employees’ basic needs, such as the need of self-esteem or belonging, has a detrimental effect on employees’ health and subjective well-being. More generally, need fulfillment was found to be consistently associated with subjective well-being across world regions (Tay & Diener, 2011).

The above arguments and evidence led us to consider that dependent variables capturing employees’ subjective well-being were particularly relevant in the present research to the extent that the relationship between lack of POS and dehumanization thwarts socio-emotional needs of employees. More precisely, we proposed that organizational dehumanization will act as an important underlying mechanism in the positive relationship between POS and employees’ subjective well-being (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). In the present research, we operationalized employees’ well-being as the manifestation of a high level of job satisfaction, low levels of emotional exhaustion, and psychosomatic strains. More precisely, we refer to the common conceptualization of well-being proposed by Diener, Scollon, and Lucas (2004) and characterized as employees’ emotional responses, moods, and assessment of their satisfaction. More importantly, as the affective dimension of well-being is considered as the most central aspect of occupational well-being (e.g., van Horn, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2004), we included job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion which are frequently used in the literature to reflect this dimension of employees’ well-being (e.g., Audenaert, Vanderstraeten, & Buyens, 2016). In addition, because psychosomatic strains (e.g., complaining about headaches) and the affective dimension of well-being are commonly strongly interrelated (e.g., Kinunnen, Parkatti, & Rasku, 1994) and “constitutes an important

dimension of a broad conceptualization of well-being” (van Horn et al., 2004, p. 369), we also measured employee’ psychosomatic strains. Thus, we posited that:

Hypothesis 2: Organizational dehumanization mediates the relationship between POS and employees’ (a) satisfaction, (b) emotional exhaustion, and (c) psychosomatic strains.

Studies Overview

Our hypotheses were tested using two different research methodologies: (1) one laboratory experimental study using vignettes manipulating POS among a population of students (Study 1) and (2) a field cross-sectional survey using an online questionnaire among a diverse sample of workers originating from a variety of organizations (Study 2). The use of complementary methodologies allowed us to provide strong evidence of causality (Study 1) and to assess the external validity of our hypotheses in real work settings (Study 2). The combination of these two methods is thus complementary in a way that it allows to take benefits from each method and to compensate for the weaknesses of one method by the strengths of the other (e.g., De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002). The first study was designed to test our Hypotheses 1 and 2a. The second study tested all our Hypotheses (i.e., Hypotheses 1, 2a, 2b, and 2c) among workers of real organizations.

Study 1

Method

Participants and design.

One hundred and ninety-four undergraduate psychology students of a University in Belgium participated in the experiment for course credits (172 women, 22 men; mean age = 21.20 years, $SD = 3.94$ years).

Procedure and experimental manipulation.

Upon arriving in the laboratory, participants were welcomed by the experimenter. They were invited to complete a task on a computer. All further instructions were provided on

the computer screen. POS was manipulated by the use of two vignettes (i.e., high versus low POS) and participants were randomly assigned to one of these two conditions. General instructions explained participants that the Faculty of Psychology aimed at testing first-year bachelor students' level of reading comprehension. Participants were then exposed to a report supposedly written by the student representatives of the prior year and based on a quantitative survey conducted within the faculty. In the high POS condition, the text reported that the majority of the students perceived the faculty as providing high organizational support (i.e., students feel supported by their faculty). In the low POS condition, the report yielded that the majority of the students perceived the faculty as providing low organizational support (i.e., students do not feel supported by their faculty). To reinforce the effect of the manipulation and to enhance the realism of our cover story, students were further asked to respond to several questions related to the level of reading comprehension. All the students reported correctly what they had read. A manipulation check was included immediately after the reading comprehension items in order to check the effectiveness of our manipulation. After the manipulation check, we assessed among other things our variables of interest, namely organizational dehumanization and students' overall satisfaction with their studies. In this student context, we reasoned that satisfaction with the studies would be the variable what most closely matches with the construct of job satisfaction in a work context.

Measures.

All items were assessed using a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 7 ("Strongly agree").

Manipulation check. We measured our manipulation check with 8 items adapted from the SPOS (Eisenberger et al., 1986) (Cronbach's alpha = .85). A sample item is "*My faculty really cares about my well-being*".

Organizational dehumanization. Immediately after the manipulation check, we measured organizational dehumanization perceptions. In order to assess these perceptions, we developed an original pool of 22 items reflecting the different facets of mechanistic dehumanization: inertness/coldness/rigidity, fungibility/interchangeability, and instrumentality. Following the recommendations for scale development by DeVellis (1991), these items were developed after a literature review on the dehumanization construct both from the social (e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2011; Haslam, 2006; Nussbaum, 1995) and the organizational psychology literatures (Bell & Khoury, 2011). After a careful screening of these extant measures, we constructed items that would best suit the workplace context and refer to an organizational target. To assist in the refinement and culling of our pool of items that might be spurious or overlapping, we asked an expert in the field of dehumanization to rate each item and to highlight those that appeared redundant, irrelevant or unclear. We also assessed the validity of our items by collecting data through questionnaires and by conducting statistical analyses (see Study 2, for more details). Finally, we also consulted a colleague in management who conducted interviews on a related topic to better identify which key components of the organizational dehumanization construct should be comprised in the items. This was done in order to meet face validity. Finally, based on the above process, we selected 11 final items (see full scale in Table 1). These 11 items were then slightly adapted in order to fit the experimental context. A sample item is: “*My faculty considers me as a number*” (11 items; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$). We performed exploratory factor analyses using SPSS.23 on the 11 items measuring organizational dehumanization. The results of a first EFA indicated a two-factor structure. Nevertheless, a close examination of the scree plot and eigenvalue (the second factor accounting for 9.30 % of variance; eigenvalue = 1.02) as well as the factor loadings, led to the conclusion that only one factor was relevant. We therefore performed an EFA imposing a one-factor solution. Results of this EFA are presented in Table 1 and

indicated that the variance extracted from this one-factor solution was 48.17 %. All factor loadings were greater than .50. Finally, we also conducted confirmatory factor analyses which confirmed the one-factor structure (see Table 1 for more details).

Studies satisfaction. We measured university studies satisfaction using 4 adapted items from Eisenberger et al.'s (1997) scale of job satisfaction. A sample item is: "*All in all, I am very satisfied with my studies*" (Cronbach's alpha = .81).

 INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Results

POS-Manipulation check. We conducted a regression analysis on the POS measure (low POS condition coded 0 and high POS condition coded 1). As expected, results showed that our manipulation was effective in inducing different perceptions of organizational support ($\beta = .33, p < .001$). Participants in the high POS condition reported significantly higher levels of POS ($M = 4.73; SD = .09$) than participants in the low POS condition ($M = 4.06; SD = .11$).

Main analyses. We first assess the impact of our manipulation of POS on organizational dehumanization by means of a regression analysis. Supporting Hypothesis 1, results confirmed that the POS manipulation had a negative effect on organizational dehumanization ($\beta = -.19, p < .01$). Participants in the high POS condition reported lower levels of organization dehumanization ($M = 3.28; SD = 1.03$) than participants in the low POS condition ($M = 3.68; SD = 1.06$).

In order to test Hypothesis 2a, suggesting a mediating role of organizational dehumanization in the relationship between POS and satisfaction, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted following the recommendation of Baron and Kenny (1986). First, replicating previous findings in the literature, results indicated that POS positively predicted

students' satisfaction with their studies ($\beta = .22, p < .01$). Second, we entered organizational dehumanization in the prediction of students' satisfaction. Results showed that, when organizational dehumanization is controlled for, the effect of POS on satisfaction was reduced though it remained significant ($\beta = .13, p < .05$). At the same time, the effect of organizational dehumanization on students' satisfaction proved to be highly significant. The more students perceived to be dehumanized by their faculty, the less satisfaction they reported with their studies ($\beta = -.47, p < .001$). Finally, a bootstrap analysis (Hayes, 2013; macro PROCESS, model 4; 5000 iterations) further indicated that the unstandardized indirect effect of POS on satisfaction via organizational dehumanization was significant (indirect effect = .18, BCa 95% CI = [.05; .36]). In sum, and in line with Hypothesis 2a, our results confirmed that organizational dehumanization partially mediates the effect of POS on satisfaction.

Discussion

Study 1 provides first experimental evidence that POS has a negative effect on individuals' perceptions of organizational dehumanization (Hypothesis 1). Furthermore, our findings indicate that these organizational dehumanization perceptions mediate the positive relationship between POS and satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis 2a. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first research that examines the relationship between POS and organizational dehumanization and, more particularly, their causal relationship. Despite its important contributions, this first study was conducted in a laboratory setting and the scenario was adapted to a convenient sample of students rather than a real population of workers. Van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg (2005) stressed that using a student sample "should not be considered problematic for experimental studies that are aimed at establishing causality in relationships with high internal validity, and there is no reason to expect students to behave differently from other populations" (p. 35). However, it raises the question whether the same findings would be observed in real organizational settings and among real employees. Our

second study was designed to address these limitations. It is based on an online questionnaire distributed to employees working in a broad variety of organizations. In addition to the replication of our results in a more ecological context, Study 2 aims at testing a broader variety of outcomes related to employees' well-being (i.e., job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and psychosomatic strains).

Study 2

Method

Sample and procedure.

We decided to collect data from a diverse sample of workers for two main reasons. First, having a sample composed of workers coming from a variety of organizations and jobs was a necessary requirement for external validity and increases the potential generalizability of the findings. Second, because we assessed organizational dehumanization with a new scale for the first time, we aimed at getting sufficient variability in the perceptions of organizational dehumanization. More precisely, we used a convenience sample of alumni from a Belgian University. These prospective participants were approached via email and were invited to take part in an online questionnaire as part of a larger survey on the topic "recognition at work". Participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and kept confidential. In order to encourage individuals to complete our questionnaire, participants were offered the chance to win one of five different prizes (as part of a lottery). A total of 1407 workers participated in the study. Among this sample, 1209 participants fully completed our questionnaire on our variables of interest or were eligible to be part of our final sample (i.e., not reporting being self-employed). Among these participants, 48.97% were females, 48.14% males, and 2.89% omitted to indicate their gender. The final sample of employees had an average age of 38.93 years ($SD = 11.27$) and had been employed by their organization for an average of 8.78 years ($SD = 8.98$). Participants worked in a variety of jobs, the most of

common of which were health and social services (18.28%), teaching and education (13.56%), public sector (13.32%), science and pharmaceuticals industry (7.11%), and engineering and manufacturing (6.62%). The major part of participants (71.38%) held a master degree. In addition, 7.44% worked in small enterprises (1 to 10 employees), 16.87% in organizations between 11 and 49 employees, 20.02 % in organizations between 50 and 249 employees, 7.53 % in organizations between 250 and 500 employees, and 45.33% worked in large organizations (> 500 employees) (2.81% omitted to indicate the size of their organization). Finally, a total of 82.30% participants were full-time workers.

Measures. The response scale for all items ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*), unless otherwise specified.

POS. Organizational support perceptions were assessed using 8 items of the Survey of POS from Eisenberger and his colleagues (1986). A sample item is “*My organization really cares about my well-being*”.

Organizational dehumanization. Organizational dehumanization perceptions were assessed with the same 11 items (see Table 1 for the full scale) used in Study 1. Sample items are “*My organization considers me as a tool to use for its own ends*”, and “*If my job could be done by a machine or a robot, my organisation would not hesitate to replace me by this new technology*”. As indicated in Table 1, results of both EFA and CFA performed on these 11 items indicated a clear one-factor structure of this scale with satisfactory factor loadings.

Job Satisfaction. Employees’ job satisfaction was assessed using the 4 items from Eisenberger et al. (1997). A sample item is “*All in all, I am very satisfied with my current job*”.

Emotional exhaustion. Employees’ emotional exhaustion was measured using the 9 items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). An item used to measure emotional exhaustion is “*I feel emotionally drained from my work*”.

Responses to these items were provided using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (“*Never*”) to 7 (“*Every day*”).

Psychosomatic strains. Psychosomatic strains were measured using 7 items from the Physical Strains Inventory (PSI) developed by Spector and Jex (1998). These seven items or symptoms were selected because of their relevance to our sample which included a large diversity of workers. This selection procedure was already used by prior scholars (e.g., Jennings, Sinclair, & Mohr, 2016; Karonglar et al., 2016). Participants indicated the frequency by which they felt each type of symptoms during the last month on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“*Never*”) to 7 (“*Always*”). Symptoms are trouble sleeping, headache, acid indigestion or heartburn, eye strain, loss of appetite, dizziness, and fatigue.

Control variables. As recommended by Becker et al. (2005), we examined the empirical relationships between our socio-demographic variables and the dependent variables of our model (i.e., organizational dehumanization, job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and psychosomatic strains). As indicated in Table 2, several socio-demographic variables displayed significant correlations with the dependent variables of our model (i.e., age, organizational tenure, and organizational size correlated with organizational dehumanization; organizational tenure correlated with job satisfaction; gender correlated with both emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic strains). Following Becker et al.’s (2005; 2015) recommendations, we then performed¹ our analyses with and without these control variables. The results were essentially identical so that controlling or not for these variables did not alter the interpretation of our findings. Thus, in order to lessen the complexity of our model (Becker et al., 2005), the results without control variables are reported in this article.

¹ Missing values on the socio-demographic variables were computed using the multiple imputation method in Lisrel.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Results

Discriminant validity. Because organizational dehumanization was assessed with a new measure, we performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA; with oblimin rotation) using SPSS.23 on the items measuring our five constructs (i.e., POS, organizational dehumanization, job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic strains). The results of this first EFA indicated a six-factor structure, where two items of emotional exhaustion seemed to contribute to an (unexpected) sixth factor. Nevertheless, a close examination of the scree plot and eigenvalues (the sixth factor accounting for 2.70 % of variance; eigenvalue = 1.05), led to the conclusion that only five factors were theoretically relevant. We thus conducted an EFA (with oblimin rotation) imposing a five-factor solution. Results of this EFA indicated that the variance extracted from this five-factor solution was 60.92%. All factor loadings were greater than .40 (Costello & Osborne, 2005) (i.e., ranging from .59 to .78 for POS, from .57 to .84 for organizational dehumanization, from .53 to .78 for job satisfaction, from .42 to .74 for emotional exhaustion, and from .50 to .74 for psychosomatic strains) and only two items from pre-existing scales appeared to cross-load a bit on another factor (e.g., one item from the psychosomatic strains scale [“being tired”] logically cross-loaded on the emotional exhaustion factor).

Then, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses using Lisrel 8.8 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993) in order to assess the distinctiveness of the five constructs included our model. The hypothesized five-factor model that treats these five constructs as separate was compared based on the χ^2 difference test (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) to several four-factor models, three-factor model, a two-factor model, and a one-factor model. Results indicated that the

hypothesized model achieved a very good fit ($\chi^2(692) = 4692.38$, CFI = .97, NNFI = .97, RMSEA = .07, and SRMR = .05) and fitted the data significantly better than every other more constrained model. In addition, results of the Harman's one-factor test indicated a very poor fit of the one-factor model ($\chi^2(702) = 25042.51$, CFI = .91, NNFI = .90, RMSEA = .17, and SRMR = .11). Further, all items loaded reliably on their respective latent factors with standardized loadings ranging from .46 to .83 for POS, from .69 to .82 for organizational dehumanization, from .78 to .90 for job satisfaction, from .51 to .85 for emotional exhaustion, and from .56 to .73 for psychosomatic strains. As a consequence of the above evidence, we considered our five variables as distinct constructs in the following statistical analyses.

Relationships among variables. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and inter-correlations are displayed in Table 2. As evidenced in this table, POS and organizational dehumanization are negatively correlated. In addition, POS is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic strains. In contrast, organizational dehumanization is associated negatively with job satisfaction, whereas it positively correlates with emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic strains.

Tests of hypotheses. In order to test our hypotheses, the hypothesized structural relationships were tested using structural equation modeling (Lisrel 8.8). We then compared the fit of this hypothesized model with three alternative models based on the χ^2 difference test (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). As displayed in Table 3, results showed that the hypothesized model accurately fitted the data. Nevertheless, the χ^2 difference test indicated that the alternative model 3, which adds direct paths between POS and (a) job satisfaction, (b) emotional exhaustion, and (c) psychosomatic strains was superior to the hypothesized model and the alternative models 1 and 2 (see Table 2 for more details). Therefore, this alternative model 3 was retained as the best depiction of the data.

Standardized parameter estimates of the retained model are displayed in Figure 1. As showed in this figure, results indicated that POS was negatively associated with organizational dehumanization ($\gamma = -.76, p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. In addition, results showed that organizational dehumanization had, in turn, a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = -.24, p < .001$), and a significant and positive impact on emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .26, p < .001$) and psychosomatic strains ($\beta = .25, p < .001$)². The indirect effects were assessed with bootstrapping analyses using the PROCESS macro (model 4, 5000 iterations; Hayes, 2013). Results of these bootstrapping analyses showed that the unstandardized indirect effects of POS on each of our three dependent variables via organizational dehumanization were significant (indirect effect = .24, BCa 95% CI = [.19; .29], for job satisfaction; indirect effect = -.21, BCa 95% CI = [-.26; -.16], for emotional exhaustion; indirect effect = -.15, BCa 95% CI = [-.19; -.11], for psychosomatic strains), supporting our Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c. Finally, POS was found to be directly related to job satisfaction ($\gamma = .58, p < .001$), emotional exhaustion ($\gamma = -.34, p < .001$), and psychosomatic strains ($\gamma = -.27, p < .001$).

 INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

INSERT FIGURE1 ABOUT HERE

General Discussion

² As suggested by an anonymous reviewer, we test the robustness of our model by randomly dividing our sample in two sub-samples and testing our final model in each sub-sample. Results remained essentially the same in the two sub-samples.

The main aim of the present research was to propose an integrative model which includes two constructs that have been developed independently from each other, i.e. POS and organizational dehumanization. In two studies, we tested the assumption that POS would attenuate organizational dehumanization perceptions. In addition, we aimed to examine the mediating role of organizational dehumanization perceptions in the positive relationship between POS and employees' subjective well-being. In a first experimental study manipulating POS, we showed that one's level of POS negatively predicts organizational dehumanization. In addition, organizational dehumanization was shown to act as a partial mediator in the relationship between POS and one's job satisfaction (operationalized as students' satisfaction with their studies). The second study confirmed these results through a field study conducted in real organizational contexts. This second study also extends the findings of the first one by exploring the effects of the POS-organizational dehumanization relationship on broader indicators of well-being, namely job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and psychosomatic strains.

Overall, our findings contribute to the organizational psychology literature and, more particularly, to the employee-organization relationship framework. Indeed, by showing that POS acts as an antecedent of organizational dehumanization, our work is the first to link both positive and negative aspects of the employee-organization relationship into one single integrative model. As a matter of fact, research on the negative aspects of the employee-organization relationship is rather scarce in the literature (Shore & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012). Research efforts on this topic have so far focused on very specific negative treatments employees receive from the supervisor target rather than the organizational target, such as abusive supervision (e.g., Tepper, 2000), and destructive leadership (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007). The present paper extends these research efforts on negative relational aspects in organizations by focusing on the concept of organizational dehumanization, a rather

neglected construct in organizational psychology and management literature. In contrast to the large amount of research on dehumanization that can be found in the domain of social psychology, interest for the construct of dehumanization in organizational settings is rather recent even if it is described as a frequent and common experience by workers (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2016). In this domain, empirical research is still scarce and more efforts should be devoted to explore both the antecedents and consequences of such phenomenon. The two studies presented in the present paper clearly contribute to this burgeoning literature on organizational dehumanization applied to the work setting (e.g., Bell & Khoury, 2011, 2016; Christoff, 2014; Väuryven & Larri-Salmel, 2015).

In addition, the present research proposes a new scale in order to assess organizational dehumanization perceptions. To the best of our knowledge, the only available scale that assesses organizational dehumanization is the one developed by Bell and Khoury (2011). However, a close examination of this existing scale suggests that some of its items tap into the POS construct (e.g., “Do you think [organization members] feel valued and respected by the [target organization] or do [organization members] feel undervalued and disrespected”). Yet, as developed above, there is theoretical support for distinguishing these two constructs at the conceptual level. Therefore, it was clearly important to use scales that discriminate between the positive (POS) and the negative (organizational dehumanization) aspects of the employee-organization relationship. We thus chose to develop our own scale based on a careful review of the literature in both social and organizational psychology literature. On top of proposing an organizational dehumanization scale including items that do not theoretically overlap with those of the POS scale, we tested discriminant validity of the two scales in our second study. In particular, we assessed whether POS and organizational dehumanization should be considered as two distinct constructs or whether they represent two sides of the same coin. Using both exploratory and confirmatory analysis, Study 2 provides first evidence that, even

if POS and organizational dehumanization are strongly negatively related, they should be considered as two distinct constructs. Both theory and empirical evidence suggest that POS is different from organizational dehumanization.

More importantly, results of our research indicate that organizational dehumanization perceptions predict additional variance above and beyond POS in order to predict well-being outcomes. Specifically, organizational dehumanization was shown to partially mediate the positive relationship between POS and well-being. Overall, these findings are consistent with Vääryven and Larri-Salmela's (2015) proposition that organizational benevolence should be related to organizational dehumanization perceptions and with Shore and Coyle-Shapiro's (2012) argument that destructive or demanding relationships with the organization violate employees' basic needs which have damaging impact on their health and well-being. Our results also extend prior work from Bell and Khoury (2016) which found that organizational dehumanization mediates the negative relationship between procedural justice and employees' turnover intentions among women. Interestingly, these authors argued in their paper that procedural justice should be negatively related to organizational dehumanization because procedural justice is closely associated with the POS construct. However, in their study, they did not assess empirically this theoretical proposition. In the present research, we therefore extend Bell and Khoury's (2016) results by showing that POS is indeed an important antecedent of organizational dehumanization.

Last but not least, in shedding light on the mediating role of organizational dehumanization in the relationship between POS and employees' subjective well-being, our research also adds to organizational support theory (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Indeed, this research contributes to a better understanding of the processes related to self-enhancement as described in the organizational support theory and which explain the positive consequences of

POS (e.g., Kurtessis et al., 2015; Vardaman et al., 2016). As previously mentioned by several scholars, these self-enhancement processes have been less empirically examined as compared to social exchange (e.g., Vardaman et al., 2016). It also responds to the call of scholars to empirically investigate underlying processes of the POS-subjective well-being link (e.g., Baran et al., 2012). Yet, it is interesting to note that while we investigated employees' organizational dehumanization as one important mechanism of the relationship between POS and employees' health and well-being, our results indicated that this mediation is only partial. Therefore, future research should consider other relevant mechanisms of this relationship such as employees' choice of coping strategy (e.g., Baran et al., 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2015).

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, the present research has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, our field study relied exclusively on data collected from self-reported measures. Using self-reported measures may have reduced the validity of our results by having artificially inflated the correlations among the variables included in our study due to the common method variance bias (e.g., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). With this in mind, we took several necessary precautions both at the methodological and statistical levels in order to overcome this bias. At the methodological level, we took great care to follow several scholars' recommendations (e.g., Conway & Lance, 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2003) such as assuring participants of the anonymity or confidentiality of their responses, and by stressing that there was no right or wrong answers to the questions. At the statistical level and even though scholars (e.g., Conway & Lance, 2010) challenge the effectiveness of currently available post hoc statistical procedures to detect common method variance bias, we performed the Harman's one-factor test which indicated a very poor-fit (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Furthermore, we tested for a model adding a common method factor. Results showed that the average variance explained in the items by the common method factor was under the

value of 25% median that Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989) refer to for self-reported studies. Overall, applying these different recommendations and conducting these post-hoc, albeit controversial tests, lessened our concerns regarding this potential bias in our data.

Second, samples used in this research are composed of Belgian participants. Thus, it is possible that the findings and implications of our research might not be generalizable to other populations. Yet, "considering cross-cultural and international issues is crucial within the organizational sciences to keep pace with the globalization of organizations" (Baran et al., 2012, p. 134). In line with the above, Sels, Janssens, Van den Brande, and Overlaet (2000) claimed that the employer-employee relationship in Belgium is "driven by attitudes and behaviors of high loyalty and low exit; respect for authority combined with the value of equality; strong work and salary orientations as driving motivators; a culture of compromise grounded in an institutional basis of rules and regulations; and a paradoxical mix between the need to belong to a group and individualistic perspective on work" (p. 48). Belgian employees might therefore differ from employees from other countries in the way they develop a relationship with their organization. Accordingly, it would be very helpful to replicate our results in other countries and within culturally-diverse populations in order to increase the generalizability of the findings.

Third, theoretical evidence led us to consider POS as an antecedent of organizational dehumanization and results of our first experimental study confirmed that POS negatively impacts organizational dehumanization. Nevertheless, we cannot disregard the possibility that organizational dehumanization perceptions might also reduce perceptions of organizational support (i.e. a reverse causality relation). We cannot thus preclude the idea that a bidirectional relationship or reciprocal relationships occurs among POS and organizational dehumanization. In order to address this interesting issue, longitudinal research with repeated

measures is greatly needed in order to deepen the understanding of the relationship between POS and organizational dehumanization, and their related outcomes.

Fourth, we did not take into account the influence of possible relevant variables that might increase or, conversely decrease, the strength of the relationship between POS and organizational dehumanization, or between organizational dehumanization and its subsequent outcomes. Yet, as organizational dehumanization is a subjective experience (Bell & Khoury, 2011), there are certainly several relevant contextual (e.g., type of contract, occupational status) or individuals factors (e.g., gender, age, organizational tenure) that might influence the extent to which employees' develop organizational dehumanization perceptions, or the extent to which organizational dehumanization perceptions have an influence on its outcomes. In this perspective, Bell and Khoury (2016) recently found that organizational dehumanization mediated the relationship between procedural justice and turnover intentions, only among a women population. To the best of our knowledge, this is the unique study that examined a moderator of the relationships between organizational dehumanization and its antecedents and consequences. Yet, as Bell and Khoury (2011) claimed "distinguishing differences in dehumanization among people experiencing the same organizational context will help us understand the basic nature of dehumanization" (p. 192). Age might be an interesting individual's factor to consider in future research in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and its subsequent consequences. Some studies (e.g., von Hippel, Kalokerinos, & Henry, 2013) showed that older workers are more sensitive to feelings of stereotype threat and thus react more negatively in terms of subsequent job attitudes and well-being as compared to younger workers. Therefore, we might expect that older workers will react more negatively to perceptions of being dehumanized by their employing organization (e.g., the feeling that their organization will replace them if it enabled the organization to make more profit) and consequently should report lower level of well-being or more negative

attitudes toward their organization. In addition, future research might examine the moderating role played by work centrality (i.e., “individual beliefs regarding the degree of importance that work plays in their lives ”; Walsh & Gordon, 2008, p. 46) in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and employees’ well-being. As employees with a high level of work-centrality consider their work as a crucial aspect of their life and identify strongly with their work role (e.g., Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002), we can expect that when treated in a dehumanized manner by their organization they will react more negatively and will hence suffer more from unwell-being. In a similar vein, as individuals experiencing high career commitment “may display higher levels of requirements and expectations from the organizations with which they establish relationships” (Lin & Chen, 2004, p. 524), future research might analyze whether these employees suffer more from perceiving that their organization will not hesitate to replace them if it allows making higher profits.

Fifth, we were interested in the consequences of organizational dehumanization as focusing on the mechanistic aspect of Haslam (2006)’s model of dehumanization because it is more likely to occur in organizational settings (Bell & Khoury, 2011). Yet, several scholars such as Bell and Khoury (2011) also suggested that the animalistic form of dehumanization (see Haslam, 2006) might also arise within organizations. For instance, Nisim and Benjamin (2010) argued that animalistic dehumanization should be most prevalent among housekeeper positions or cleaning employees. It will be interesting in future research to investigate the consequences of this other form of dehumanization and how it differs from the mechanistic form of dehumanization.

Finally, in this research, we exclusively examined the consequences of the POS-organizational dehumanization link in terms of employees’ subjective well-being. If this research contributes to a better understanding of the organizational dehumanization’ nomological network, it will be valuable for future research to examine other relevant

consequences (e.g., affective commitment and performance) and antecedents of this construct. In line with this latter perspective, it would have been very interesting to examine the influence of other sources of support (e.g., perceived supervisor support, perceived coworker support, perceived family support) in the prediction of organizational dehumanization perceptions and their subsequent outcomes. In this research, we were interested to the influence of POS on organizational dehumanization, as they both refer to the organizational target. Nevertheless, prior studies indicated that the effects of different sources of social support might be different (e.g., Caesens, Stinglhamber, & Luypaert, 2014; Ng & Sorensen, 2008). Accordingly, researchers (e.g., Ng & Sorensen, 2008) recommended to carefully examine the effects of each source of support conjointly in the prediction of outcomes. More generally, future research on the antecedents of organizational dehumanization might examine the relative weight of factors related to the organization (e.g., size of the organization), the supervisor (e.g., abusive supervision), the job (e.g., task characteristics) or the employee him/herself (e.g., intrinsic motivation) in the development of organizational dehumanization perceptions.

Practical implications

The present research provides a number of practical implications for managers. More precisely, our findings indicate that when employees feel supported and cared for by their organization they feel less dehumanized by their organization and ultimately experience a higher levels of subjective well-being (e.g., increased employees' job satisfaction, decreased employees' emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic strains). Organizations with employees perceiving low or average organizational support might take practical ways to enhance POS in order to reduce employees' perceptions of organizational dehumanization and finally have benefits in terms of employees' well-being. Prior work (e.g., Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2015) suggests diverse ways to foster employees' POS. More precisely,

a recent meta-analysis (Kurtessis et al., 2015) indicated that one of the major antecedents of POS is organizational justice. Managers should thus be attentive to promote fairness in the way organizational human resources politics and reward are administrated such as by providing accurate information, non-bias and consistent application of rules or procedures and permit employees to voice (e.g., Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

In addition, organizations might enhance POS by means of a variety of human resources practices and policies such as by assuring employees that their jobs are secure, by offering valuable training or developmental programs that promote employees' personal growth, and/or by eliminating continual work overloads (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Finally, meta-analyses (Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) revealed that one important driver of POS is the support provided by supervisors. Organizational representatives should make efforts to train their supervisors to be supportive toward their subordinates in order to promote POS. In this regard, Gonzales-Morales, Kernan, Becker, and Eisenberger (2016) recently developed a training program for supervisors suggesting four basic strategies (i.e., benevolence, sincerity, fairness, and experiential processing) and concrete behaviors in order to treat subordinates more supportively and ultimately enhance perceived supervisor support.

Conclusion

As a whole, results of our studies suggest that POS, by signaling to employees that they are welcomed and accepted members in the organization, by satisfying their need for affiliation, and by conveying them that there are respected, contributes to lessen their feeling of being treated like an object, or instrument useful for the organization's end. The decrease in organizational dehumanization that POS triggers leads, in turn, to higher levels of well-being among employees.

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Table 1

Study 1 and Study 2: Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis for organizational dehumanization

Items	Study 1		Study2	
	EFA	CFA	EFA	CFA
Organizational dehumanization				
1. My organization makes me feel that one worker is easily as good as any other	.58	.52	.77	.74
2. My organization would not hesitate to replace me if it enabled the company to make more profit	.71	.67	.77	.74
3. If my job could be done by a machine or a robot, my organization would not hesitate to replace me by this technology	.68	.64	.74	.70
4. My organization considers me as a tool to use for its own ends	.75	.73	.81	.79
5. My organization considers me as a tool devoted to its own success	.65	.61	.76	.73
6. My organization makes me feel that my only importance is my performance at work	.69	.65	.80	.78
7. My organization is only interested in me when it needs me	.72	.69	.82	.80
8. The only thing that counts for my organization is what I can contribute to it	.76	.73	.82	.80
9. My organization treats me as if I were a robot	.71	.67	.80	.79
10. My organization considers me as a number	.63	.58	.81	.80
11. My organization treats me as if I were an object	.74	.70	.83	.81

Note. EFA = Exploratory factor analysis, CFA = Confirmatory factor analysis. For EFA, eigenvalues and percentage of variance accounted for 5.30 (48.17%) (Study 1) and 6.93 (62.95%) (Study 2), respectively. For CFA, fit indices were (χ^2 (44) = 134.69, CFI = .95, NNFI = .94, and

RMSEA = .106, and SRMR = .06 (Study 1) and (χ^2 (44) = 937.08, CFI = .97, NNFI = .96, and RMSEA = .13, and SRMR = .04 (Study 2) and loadings presented in the table are standardized. Please note that for Study 1, the items were slightly adapted in order to fit the experimental context.

Table 2

Study 1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations among Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	--	--	--	.17***	.10**	.12***	.09**	.06*	.03	.05†	-.07*	-.17***
2. Age	38.93	11.27		--	.74***	.17***	.12***	-.09**	.08**	-.04	-.02	.04
3. Organizational tenure	8.78	8.98			--	.11***	.18***	-.12***	.10***	-.06*	.02	.04
4. Education	--	--				--	.14***	-.02	.01	.01	.02	.05
5. Size of the organization	--	--					--	-.12***	-.18***	.01	.01	.01
6. POS	4.33	1.27						(.89)	-.67***	.66***	-.43***	-.36***
7. Organizational dehumanization	3.69	1.46							(.94)	-.61***	.46***	.38***
8. Job satisfaction	4.76	1.50								(.90)	-.55***	-.43***
9. Emotional exhaustion	2.97	1.28									(.90)	.66***
10. Psychosomatic strains	2.95	1.04										(.82)

Note. $N = 1209$ (excepted for gender $N = 1174$, age $N = 1176$, organizational tenure $N = 1171$, education $N = 1175$, and size of the organization $N = 1175$). Internal reliabilities (coefficient alphas) are given in parentheses on the diagonal. POS = perceived organizational support. Females were coded 0 and Males were coded 1. Education was coded 1 for bachelor degree, 2 for master's degree, and 3 for Ph.D. or MBA. Organizational size was coded 1 for 1-10 employees, 2 for 11-49 employees, 3 for 50-249 employees, 4 for 250-500 employees and 5 for more than 500 employees.

† $p < .10$ * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Fit Indices for Structural Models

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df)$	Model
Hypothesized	5556.53	698	.96	.97	.08	.09	313.69(1) ^{***}	Hypothesized vs. Alternative 1
Alternative 1 (path added between POS and job satisfaction)	5242.84	697	.96	.97	.07	.09	55.83(1) ^{***}	Alternative 1 vs. Alternative 2
Alternative 2 (Alternative 1 + path added between POS and emotional exhaustion)	5187.01	696	.97	.97	.07	.09	9.91(1) ^{**}	Alternative 2 vs. Alternative 3
Alternative 3 (Alternative 2 + path added between POS and psychosomatic strains)	5177.10	695	.97	.97	.07	.09	--	--

Note. $N = 1209$. POS = perceived organizational support. NNFI = Non-Normed Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

^{**} $p < .01$. ^{***} $p < .001$.

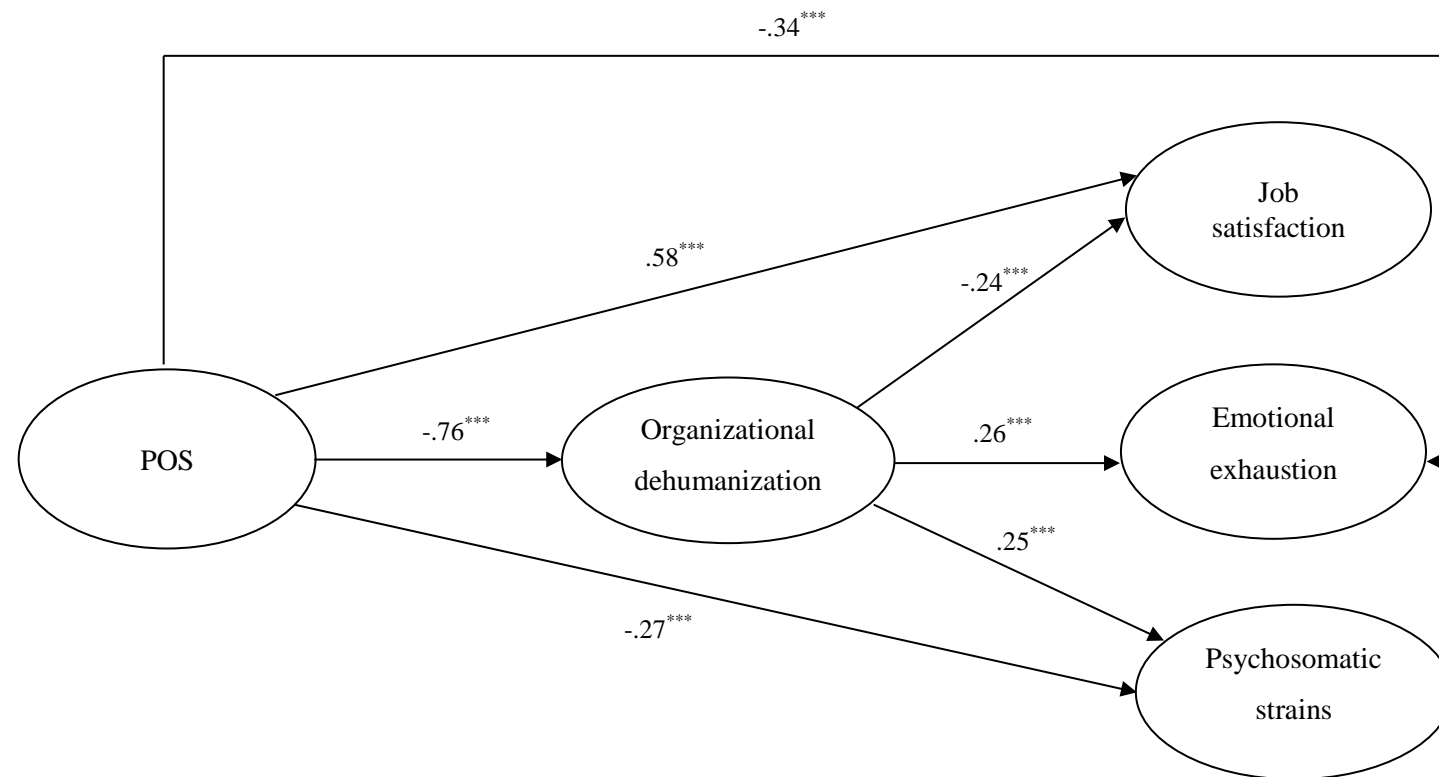


Figure 1. $N = 1209$. POS = perceived organization support. Completely standardized path coefficients for the alternative Model 3.

*** $p < .001$.