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The Underappreciation of Feeling Appreciated:  
Identifying and Measuring a Critical Bridge Construct

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**Abstract**

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Feeling appreciated is an important part of both individuals' social self-perceptions and relational interchange. It undergirds a number of foundational organizational constructs; and yet, as a unique management construct, feeling appreciated is essentially unrecognized and wholly underdeveloped. Over six interrelated chapters my dissertation develops a foundation for conceptualizing, measuring and researching *feeling appreciated*. I argue that feeling appreciated is associated with perceptions of one's own warmth and/or competence and thus serves as a strong common thread linking numerous foundational OB concepts and constructs. Results of three studies confirm that feeling appreciated is a critical factor driving both self-concerned and other-oriented organizational outcomes.

## DEDICATION

To my dearest Tonya whose love and support  
are forever my strength.

To Samuel my fearless missionary,  
Nathan for your generous heart,  
David for your passion for life,  
Zachary for your tenacious determination,  
and for Anna and your ability to make all around you beautiful.

And finally to my parents, who taught me to  
breathe life into all my dreams.

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Near the end of his life, William James (de Montmorency, 1921 p.277), father of American psychology noted, “I now perceive one immense omission in my psychology – the deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.” Individuals want their contributions to be appreciated and their sacrifices to be valued. Nations and communities institute days to show appreciation for the service of parents, soldiers, teachers, and honored men and women. Organizations create programs to recognize the achievements of their employees and give bonuses to show workers their contributions are valued. Management science meanwhile has shown that as individuals feel their work is appreciated, their efforts increase (Grant & Gino, 2010), their performance improves (Grant, 2008), and the bonds that tie them to those they serve are strengthened (Lee & Waite, 2010). Social scientists too have shown that feeling appreciated impacts intimate relationships because its presence shapes the responsiveness of individuals to the needs of their partner (Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis, & Keltner, 2012), while its absence motivates the discontinuation of the relationship (Gigy & Kelly, 1992).

In short, feeling appreciated is vital to long-term effective relationships. Indeed, recent scholars noted that feeling valued by others is “among peoples’ most critical and pervasive considerations at work and in most social settings” (Blader & Yu, 2017, p. 800). As a result, it is unsurprising that a number of foundational constructs in management science theoretically or empirically center on the feeling that one’s efforts are valued within an organization (Blader & Yu, 2017) and are tied together by this “craving to be appreciated” (de Montmorency, 1921 p.277). Management literature in large measure however, has failed to recognize feeling appreciated and to acknowledge the pivotal role it has in tying these constructs together. Additionally, the literature has yet to recognize that in bridging these constructs, feeling

appreciated affects the evaluations individuals make of themselves, of others, of their relationships, and the interpersonal evaluations they perceive others to make of them. Because many foundational constructs are individual evaluations of themselves, others, their relationships, and their perceived social self-evaluations, understanding the commonalities connecting these constructs, that is, understanding individuals' need for being appreciated, can lead to greater parsimony and clarity.

To increase our understanding regarding individuals' interpersonal evaluations and in response to Floyd and colleague's (2010) call to create bridging constructs that connect disparate phenomena in meaningful ways, this dissertation develops the construct feeling appreciated, as a bridge construct, tying together a number of foundational management constructs related to interpersonal and self-evaluations. In developing feeling appreciated, I draw upon Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Yu's (2002) stereotype content model (SCM) and its core tenant that social evaluations (and by extension, social self-evaluations) consist of two dimensions, warmth and competence. SCM research suggests that warmth and competence evaluations quickly answer two fundamental questions (1) does the individual intend help or harm? and, (2) can the individual carry out that intent? (Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske, 1992). By effectively answering both of these questions for the individual, feeling appreciated shapes the individual's perceptions of both warmth and competence. As a result, as researchers and practitioners understand the degree to which individuals feel appreciated, they may also readily understand how those individuals will make a number of other interpersonal and self-evaluations. I suggest that as individuals perceive their efforts to be gratefully received, or in other words as individuals feel appreciated, this perception provides evidence that others find them to be helpful (warm) and able to carry out their intent (competent).

Building upon SCM, I suggest that feeling appreciated is core to individuals' social self-evaluations (i.e. individuals' perception that others have of themselves) and it serves as a bridge connecting many of the foundational constructs of management. By better understanding the degree to which individuals feel appreciated, researchers and practitioners alike will not only gain clarity and parsimony in understanding individuals' social self-evaluations, but also be able to better explain these foundational constructs.

### **Feeling Appreciated: A Critical Yet Unrecognized Construct**

Because feeling appreciated is inextricably associated with individuals' social self-evaluative process, it is tied to constructs reflecting individuals' assessments of themselves and their social value within a group or relationship. Those constructs become symbols of gratitude shown them by the other party in the relationship. The respect, status, trust, or perceived organizational support, etc. that individuals perceive the other party to grant them reveal the degree to which that party gratefully receives their efforts (Cuddy et al., 2008; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rogers & Ashforth, 2017).

Feeling appreciated by an organization provides evidence of one's competence at the workplace thus affecting individuals' organization-based self-esteem (Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989). Organizational commitment and identification, exchange quality, social exchange, and satisfaction with the organization all are reflections of the degree to which individuals perceive the relationship between themselves and the organization to be of mutual warmth and competence which again is shaped by the degree to which individuals perceive their efforts to be gratefully received (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006).

In this dissertation I discuss how feeling appreciated is a strong common element tying together these and other foundational OB constructs. Because feeling appreciated is core to each of these foundational variables, the degree to which individuals feel appreciated by another party is reflective of the degree to which individuals experience these other core constructs as well.

Examining feeling appreciated takes added import because, despite the conceptual overlap between feeling appreciated and each of these core constructs, feeling appreciated's centrality to these constructs is rarely mentioned (if it is mentioned at all). Two examples illustrate this point clearly. First, while Blau (1964) developed social exchange theory upon benefits resembling assistance and feelings of appreciation (Colquitt, Baer, Long, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2014), constructs used to measure social exchange, including affective commitment (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993), exchange quality (Scandura & Graen, 1984), trust, and more recent measures of social exchange relationships (Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, Giles, & Walker, 2007; Colquitt et al., 2014; Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006) all fail to mention feeling appreciated or acknowledge the role it has in shaping the social exchange relationship.

Second, while perceived organizational support (POS) is defined as the degree to which employees perceive that the organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), its connection to feeling appreciated is largely overlooked. The single-factor construct POS is defined by the degree to which employees feel valued and cared for by the organization; however, the 36-item scale mentions feeling appreciated only once (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Instead items focus on the different types of benefits or support the organization provides. POS, exchange quality, affective commitment, and a number of other constructs are in large measure defined by the degree to which individuals' feel their efforts are appreciated. Consequently, as feeling appreciated affects the dual

dimensions of individuals' social self-evaluative process, these other constructs are affected as well as these constructs are largely reflections of the individuals' assessments that their efforts have worth within a given relationship.

### **Feeling Appreciated: A Common Element in Social Self-Evaluations**

The idea that a strong common element spans multiple related constructs is not new (Newman et al., 2016). Bridging constructs provide a common thread that tie “theoretical fragments” from disparate streams of literature, linking constructs that may be conceptually distinct (Floyd, Cornelissen, Wright, & Delios, 2010). Whereas umbrella or cardinal constructs refer to a set of related constructs residing underneath or within a larger construct domain, bridge constructs link conceptually distinct constructs that share a common element. Cropanzano and colleagues (2016) noted that scholars often incorporate related constructs to perform a similar function within a theory without (1) acknowledging other constructs that may be interchangeable within the role, or (2) recognizing the theoretical bridge connecting those constructs. For example, trust, support, and perceived organizational support have often been used to represent the initiating action in social exchange theory. In these papers the authors typically do not (1) acknowledge that those constructs are placeholders for a number of related constructs that may also initiate the social exchange process (Colquitt et al., 2014), or (2) address what it is about those constructs that make them potential placeholders within the social exchange process.

Bridge constructs fill this gap by recognizing the theoretical function that constructs play within a role and tying the constructs that fill the role together within the theoretical function. By so doing, they help us better understand the relationships that constructs have with each other while providing greater order and parsimony to the field (Newman et al., 2016). Due to the import these constructs have in organizing the discipline's conceptual landscape, scholars have

called for researchers to develop more bridging constructs (Floyd et al., 2010), which may in turn provide greater clarity between highly related streams of literature developed parallel to each other. Furthermore, by recognizing bridge constructs and their role within a given theory, insight into the relating constructs may help reduce time spent by scholars individually examining the redundant functions of those constructs and in proliferating constructs that perform similar functions.

Leavitt, Mitchell and Peterson (2010) argued that management research has relied on methods that lead to a proliferation of theories and constructs, rather than those that prune existing theory. Other scholars have noted that authors often disavow or simply ignore the relationship between well-established older constructs to create “new” ones (Newman et al., 2016). This propensity leaves the field with a significant number of theoretically or empirically redundant constructs (Le, Schmidt, Harter, & Lauver, 2010). Indeed, after reviewing 26 of the most influential OB/HR constructs, Newman et al. (2016) concluded that while one might assume that construct domains are relatively distinct, they are highly related and “the true number of underlying construct domains is actually much smaller than we previously assumed” (Newman et al., 2016, p.964). Bridge constructs allow researchers to recognize commonalities between disparate constructs. Floyd and colleagues (2010) note that bridge constructs may also develop into umbrella constructs as further research and theory grow around them.

I suggest that because feeling appreciated affects both individuals’ evaluations of their own warmth and competence, it is strongly linked to constructs related to individuals’ interpersonal and self-evaluations. It provides evidence that the individual and the relationship are of value. As a result, it operates as a bridge construct, tying, simplifying and structuring OB

literature, connecting constructs like respect, status, perceived organizational support, trust, and commitment.

In so doing, it helps address theoretical and empirical redundancy that exist within this nomological net. This latter assertion extends decades of scholarly warnings of false differentiation (Block, 1996; Cardinal, Sitkin, & Long, 2010; Hagger, 2014; Kelley, 1927; Newman, Joseph, Sparkman, & Carpenter, 2011), and follows a pattern of specifying instances where false differentiation occurs. Blader and Yu's (2017) recent theoretical argument that respect and status are phenomenologically equivalent, and Le and colleagues' (2010) empirical work showing that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are empirically redundant are two recent examples of this.

### **Contributions**

This paper contributes to management science in a number of ways. First, it develops the construct of feeling appreciated. Despite being recognized by several noted scholars (e.g. James, Blau, etc.) as a crucial concept, feeling appreciated as a whole has been unappreciated in the literature. Hence, no actual construct has been developed. This dissertation identifies feeling appreciated as a critical bridge construct, defines the construct, and connects it to organizational theory. Moreover, it uses feeling appreciated and theory on gratitude and social exchange to extend SCM, showing that warmth and competence dimensions not only shape social and self-perceptions, but they also affect social self-perceptions and perceptions of the relationship.

Second, it develops a single measure of feeling appreciated. This measure has a number of benefits. Because both the target and the actor within the measure are free, researchers are able to hold constant or to vary the different components inherent in feeling appreciated. As a result, different targets or levels can be examined simultaneously, making results more coherent

and comparable as scholars are able to more accurately assess whether the effects found stem from the construct, the level of analysis, or changes in the target.

Third, building upon gratitude and social exchange theories within the SCM framework, this paper theoretically proposes and then empirically shows that feeling appreciated bridges a number of core constructs related to individuals' interpersonal and self-evaluations. I then draw from theories of gratitude and social exchange to argue that feeling appreciated also affects important behavioral and identity-based organizational outcomes. In doing so, I examine the relationships between some of the most foundational constructs in OB literature including five of what Newman et al. (2016) referred to as the twenty most influential constructs in the field. Due to the import and centrality of these constructs in management science, understanding how feeling appreciated bridges these constructs is critical to comprehending organizational behavior itself. Additionally, I show that because feeling appreciated is a bridge construct sharing a high degree of overlap with a number of other constructs, scholars may gain insights into the relationships between a number of constructs by simply examining individuals' levels of feeling appreciated.

Finally, this paper sheds light on how significant a problem construct redundancy and proliferation has become in management science. Countless hours of research that neither uncover new knowledge nor clarify the field are wasted due to construct redundancy and proliferation (Le et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2016). This paper shows that more than a dozen primary constructs are highly empirically related and need to be more closely examined with more rigorous methods. This excessive similarity and lack of conceptual order stymies researchers' ability to comprehend real relationships or to compare findings across results.

This paper serves to illustrate how widespread the problem has become and suggests that scholars need to be more thorough in evaluating the tools that are being used to measure constructs. The practice of simply providing theoretical evidence for a construct's distinction may not be enough to warrant its creation.

Importantly, scholars need to pay more attention to the concept of transient error in construct measurement (error due to changes in the participants' psychological states across time) and take steps to include this type of error within their research. Specifically, as suggest by Shaffer and colleagues (2016), constructs should be measured across time with multiple indices to develop more accurate assessments of their discriminant validity (Le et al., 2010). This research confirms this general viewpoint. Failing to incorporate these procedures in creating new constructs may lead to additional proliferation and theoretical confusion.

### **Outline**

In sum, this dissertation develops a foundation for understanding feeling appreciated, defined as *the perception that one's' efforts are gratefully received*. In Chapter 2, I more thoroughly define feeling appreciated and explain how within the context of SCM it is connected to theories on gratitude and social exchange. In Chapter 3 I develop a measure for feeling appreciated and begin to test the validity of the measure. In Chapter 4 I propose that feeling appreciated is a bridge construct tying a number of foundational organizational behavior constructs together. I explain these relationships incorporating theories of gratitude and social exchange within the context of stereotype content model. In a longitudinal study involving two points in time and 407 employees from a variety of different industries, I then empirically test these relationships. In Chapter 5, I address some of the limitations of Chapter 4's study, specifically addressing potential issues regarding common method bias and limited

generalizability. In this chapter I conduct a diary study involving 120 employees over a three-week period. I again find evidence that feeling appreciated bridges a number of important organizational constructs related to individuals' interpersonal and self-evaluations. I also find initial evidence that feeling appreciated affects both employee's behavior and identity. In Chapter 6 I discuss my findings and argue that the data suggest that feeling appreciated is an important bridge construct that connects a number of important OB constructs together and warrants additional examination.

## CHAPTER 2 – DEFINITION AND THEORY

For decades, scholars have suggested that individuals' social and self-evaluations vary along two dimensions. Though scholars have used various labels for these two dimensions, they are generally regarded as competence and warmth (Asch, 1946; Bakan, 1956; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Cuddy et al., 2008; Grant & Gino, 2010, Wiggins, 1979, Rosenberg et al., 1968; Wojciszke et al., 1998). Competence has been operationalized as being “capable, skillful, intelligent, and confident,” while warmth has been seen as being understanding, good-natured, helpful, and trustworthy (Cuddy, Fiske, Glick, 2008, p.65). Wojciszke and colleagues (1998) found that these two dimensions accounted for 82% of the variance in global impressions towards individuals the participants knew well.

Incorporating warmth and competence Fiske and colleagues (2002) developed the stereotype content model (SCM) to explain social and interpersonal perceptions (Russell & Fiske, 2008). Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick (2008) addressed how these dimensions affect the evaluations that individuals make towards other individuals and groups. Wojciszke (2005) found that these two dimensions also are of prime import in not only forming evaluations of others, but also in evaluating oneself. Interestingly however he showed that in forming social evaluations warmth is the dominant dimension while in evaluating the self, competence is seen as having greater import (Wojciszke, 2005). Extending SCM, I draw upon theories on gratitude and social exchange to suggest that these dimensions not only explain social and self-evaluations, but also inform individuals social self-evaluation or the evaluations that individuals feel that others have of them.

Moreover, I suggest that the degree to which individuals feel appreciated or unappreciated affects the warmth and competence that individuals perceive others to have of

them. As individuals interpret expressions of gratitude, whether explicit or implied, real or imagined, the perception that one's actions are gratefully received by a target provides evidence that the target feels that one's efforts are directed to benefit them, creating a sense of communion, belonging, or warmth (e.g. "because others appreciate what I do, they probably feel we are friends"). Similarly, those perceptions provide evidence that others find their efforts to create value and display competence (e.g. "because others appreciate what I do, they probably feel that I did well"). Consequently, feeling appreciated is generally not isolated to affecting one dimension of the social self-evaluative process, but affects both dimensions.

While individuals' perceptions that their efforts are valued and of worth to a relationship are central to several theories in organizational behavior. In this chapter I draw on theories of gratitude and social exchange to (1) explain how feeling appreciated expands our understanding of SCM, showing that the dimensions of warmth and competence affect not only social and self-perceptions but also social self-perceptions (i.e. individuals' perception that others have of themselves), (2) explain how research on feeling appreciated has developed within management literature and (3) explain how by affecting both dimensions of individuals social self-evaluations, feeling appreciated bridges a number of foundational OB constructs.

### **Definition**

While feeling appreciated has not been defined in management literature, I extend Gordon and colleagues' (2012) definition of appreciation as a "general [feeling] of gratitude for whom a person is and for what a person does" (p. 258), to construct a particularized conception (cf. Rogers & Ashforth, 2017) of feeling appreciated. I define feeling appreciated as *the perception that one's efforts are gratefully received*. In so defining the construct, I articulate several important attributes of the construct.

First, feeling appreciated is inextricably relational in nature. Where individuals may feel gratitude without another party (e.g. gratitude for needed rain, a beautiful day, or for performing well on a given task; Lambert, Graham, Fincham, 2009), feeling appreciated requires at least two interacting parties—a target and a source. In feeling appreciated, the target is necessary to gratefully receive the source's efforts, whether those efforts be in terms of sacrifices or benefits. The source is needed to both extend those efforts and perceive that the efforts have been gratefully received. While feeling appreciated requires two interacting parties, it is both a source and target free construct. In other words, the target may span multiple levels including the organization, team, supervisor, coworker, etc. Similarly, the source may exist at any level in which a single or shared perception may be held (e.g. individual, group, etc.). To limit the scope of this paper, I examine the construct with the individual as the source and the target at the organizational level.

Second, while the construct requires two parties, one to express gratitude, and another to extend effort and perceive that gratitude, it is a perception (whether individual or shared)—an intrapsychic phenomenon similar to feelings of trust, commitment, satisfaction, etc. However, where individuals reflect on their own feelings with the previously mentioned intrapsychic evaluations, feeling appreciated is outwardly oriented with the source assessing (whether correctly or incorrectly) the feelings of the target rather than their own feelings.

Third, feeling appreciated is a non-binary evaluation that develops through a three-step process as (1) the source exerts a certain degree of effort that benefits or is intended to benefit the target (2) the target receives the intended benefit with various degrees of gratitude, communicating its gratitude explicitly or symbolically to the source; and (3) the source perceives that the target received the act with a varying degree of gratitude. High levels of feeling

appreciated are associated with higher levels of effort combined with high levels of perceived communicated gratitude by the source.

Fourth, feeling appreciated is the result of effort (generally volitional effort) by the source. The definition for feeling appreciated directly ties the individuals' feeling of worth or value to the sacrifice or beneficial action of that individual. While other similar constructs consist of both a generalized and particularized view of the construct (e.g. respect), where the construct's generalized conception includes global evaluations assigned to the person and the particularized conception involves an individual assessment of the individual's specific actions, feeling appreciated is defined as contingent on the sources actions rather than as any global feelings of value as a person. In other words, in order to feel appreciated according to the definition of the term, individuals must exert some effort worthy of appreciation.

### **Feeling Appreciated and Gratitude**

Academic research on appreciation in general began as an extension of research examining gratitude. Cicero stated, "gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others" (Cicero, 1851, p.139 as quoted in Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006, p.319), and Adam Smith wrote that it is "the sentiment which most immediately and directly prompts us to reward" (Smith, 1790/1976, p.68, as quoted in McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2004). Social theorists for centuries have recognized that gratitude is essential in developing and maintaining social relationships. In the business world, a number of organizations including Toyota and Panasonic were built with gratitude as one of their founding principles. Though in academia, research on gratitude began less than two decades ago (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001), it has quickly expanded as scholars have sought to understand the effects of gratitude on individuals, in close relationships (Visserman, Righetti, Impett, Keltner, & Van Lange, 2017),

among strangers (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006), friends (Rotkirch, Lyons, Davis-Barrett, & Jokela, 2014), and in the workplace (Fehr, Fulmer, Awtrey, & Miller, 2017; Kaplan et al., 2014; Waters, 2012).

Scholars have found that feeling gratitude triggers a number of positive individual outcomes including, an increased positive mood, life satisfaction, and physical health (e.g., Emmons & McCullough, 2003; McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002; Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). However, research has shown that gratitude does not simply benefit the individual, it also strengthens and promotes relationships. Gratitude increases relational satisfaction, trust, and commitment between parties (Algoe, Gable, & Maisel, 2010; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Gordon et al., 2012). Indeed, Visserman and colleagues (2017) noted that gratitude is essential to close relationships, the “social glue of interpersonal interaction (Algoe, 2012), and a foundational element to relational and group interactions (Bartlett, Condon, Cruz, Baumann, & DeSteno, 2012).

As such, and given the impact that gratitude has on important individual and relational outcomes, it is unsurprising that research on gratitude expanded to examine not only trait and state experiences of gratitude, but also the expression of gratitude on both those that express gratitude (Lambert & Fincham, 2011) and those that received those expressions of gratitude (Grant & Gino, 2010). From this research, scholars noted that gratitude expressions shape the way individuals perceive themselves within social contexts (Grant & Gino, 2010). It is from this expansion scholars have begun to examine feeling appreciated. Though research specifically examining feeling appreciated is in its infancy, its interconnection with gratitude, along with its relationship with other important organizational variables make understanding this construct of prime import.

Initial research on feeling appreciated has shown that while it is closely related to feeling gratitude and shares a number of commonalities, it is also theoretically and empirically unique. Gordon et al. (2012) found in 3 studies that in close relationships these two constructs were inextricably linked, with feeling appreciated by one's partner (A) and feeling grateful for one's partner (B) reciprocally linked directly ( $A \rightarrow B$ ) and indirectly ( $B \rightarrow C \rightarrow A$ ) through relationship maintenance behaviors (C). Because of this reciprocal relationship, feeling appreciated like gratitude is theorized to strengthen relational bonds and increases individuals' closeness to the target; however, while feeling appreciated is contingent upon the perception that the target is grateful for one's actions, feeling gratitude is not necessarily contingent upon another feeling appreciated. Rather, scholars (Lambert, Graham, Fincham, 2009) have shown that lay conceptions of gratitude expand beyond an emotional response to beneficial action of another and encompasses a broader array of experiences that might not be perceived to have a direct benefactor outside oneself (e.g. the weather, a beautiful view, good health, etc.).

In expressing gratitude, individuals may show thanks through a number of different ways. While expressing gratitude by explicitly thanking the actor may be the most obvious form of gratitude expression, scholars have noted that gratitude can also be expressed through symbolic gestures or tokens (Fehr et al., 2017), and that these benefits are symbolically bestowed (Foa & Foa, 1980; Colquitt et al., 2014) to show the individual that he or she is valued. Elementary school teachers receive gifts from their students. Employees receive plaques, mugs, and gift cards from their employers. Friends receive increased trust, time together, a hug, or other displays of physical affection. People show their gratitude through a wide range of symbolic tokens. In a pilot qualitative survey asking individuals why they felt appreciated, participants often noted that they felt appreciated when they received verbal or written thanks. However, a

number of individuals also mentioned that they felt appreciated through a variety of other more symbolic forms of gratitude expression including receiving greater trust, more responsibility, monetary rewards, gifts, time off, or other benefits. As a result, individuals may feel appreciated even when the target party does not explicitly say “thank you.” This becomes important as many of the items from the focal constructs consist of benefits or symbolic displays of gratitude for an individual or their work.

Additionally, it is important to note that because feeling appreciated is a perception, individuals may at times feel appreciated when the beneficiary is not grateful or feel unappreciated when the beneficiary is grateful. For example, if gratitude is not effectively expressed or the benefactor fails to perceive the gratitude, the benefactor may feel unappreciated though the beneficiary may truly feel grateful. Conversely, individual characteristics and environmental situations may elicit individuals’ feelings appreciated without the other party expressing gratitude or even being grateful for the actions of the individual. Indeed, the target may be frustrated with the efforts or performance of the source while the source experiences strong feelings of being appreciated.

### **Feeling Appreciated and Social Exchange Theory**

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) noted that social exchange theory is a collection of conceptual models that view social life as a series of interactions between parties. In these interactions resources are reciprocally exchanged as the relationship between the parties is strengthened (Blau, 1964) and greater trust and flexibility is displayed (Organ, 1990). A generic model of a positive social exchange is outlined by the following: (1) a source provides a benefit to a target which (2) leads to a high quality social exchange relationship between the source and target which (3) then leads to the target providing some reciprocating response to the source.

This generic model mirrors Gordon et al.'s (2012) model of appreciation mentioned above where expressed gratitude leads to feeling appreciated through reciprocated acts of relational maintenance.

The responses in the exchange relationship, whether they are behavioral (e.g. added support) or relational (e.g. trust, commitment, support, etc.; Cropanzano et al., 2017) often serve as expressions of gratitude from the target and provide the source with evidence that the target appreciates his or her actions within the relationship (Colquitt et al., 2014). As a result, within a positive exchange relationship though there may be theoretical distinction between constructs like trust, commitment, perceived organizational support, etc., within social exchange theory, they fill a similar theoretical role (Cropanzano et al., 2017), namely they indicate to the actor the degree to which he or she is appreciated by the target. Within this function it is unsurprising that research on expressing gratitude and feeling appreciated has shown these constructs to be relational binders that function to bring individuals together. Explicit and symbolic expressions of gratitude signify that the individuals are valued within the relationship.

### **Expanding the Stereotype Content Model**

Research on SCM explores how dimensions of warmth and competence affect individuals' social perceptions, including their perceptions of other groups and individuals, and individuals' self-perceptions or the perception that they have of themselves (Cuddy et al., 2008). Research though has yet to explore how SCM might be incorporated into the individuals' perceptions of other people's evaluations about them or their perceptions of their relationships. Drawing from gratitude and social exchange theory, I suggest that the relational and reciprocal nature of these constructs suggests that dimensions of warmth and competence are not only important for the perceptions that individuals have of others and in the evaluations they make of

themselves, but also those dimensions are important in both how they perceive their relationships with others and how they perceive others to perceive themselves (i.e. social self-evaluations).

Abele and Wojciszke (2007) hypothesized and showed that warmth and competence do not only exist in social and interpersonal evaluations, but also in self-evaluations; and the difference between these evaluations was that individuals valued competence more when making self-evaluations and warmth more when making social or interpersonal judgments. Despite this, Mandisodza et al. (2005) showed that generalities existed between self and other appraisals in relation to feelings of warmth and competence. Still, this research has yet to examine the reciprocal and relational nature of interpersonal interaction and instead has examined evaluations as single isolated events.

Gratitude and social exchange research suggests that interpersonal evaluations are built upon a cyclical model affected by reciprocal beneficial acts, acts of gratitude expression, heightened feelings of gratitude, appreciation, and mutual regard (Gordon et al., 2012; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Colquitt et al., 2014). Because individuals' evaluations are shaped not by a single isolated event, but by relational interchange (Sherif, 1954) it is important to consider this cyclical process. Gratitude theory suggests as individuals positively evaluate others through expressions of gratitude (either explicit or symbolic) those expressions will affect both how individuals see the relationship and how they perceive others to see themselves (Gordon et al., 2012). Similarly, social exchange suggests that individuals' evaluations will be affected by positive (or negative) interchange between the parties (Cropanzano et al., 2017). As a result, as individuals perceive a target in terms of warmth and competence, and the target expresses gratitude for the individuals' efforts, that gratitude message expresses both a sense that the individual's efforts were valued and the target values the relationship.

There is reason to believe that individuals social self-perceptions and perceptions of their relationship are also affected by these two dimensions warmth and competence. First, because of the cyclical nature of relationships it makes sense that the way individuals evaluate others, evaluate themselves, and perceive others to evaluate themselves are parallel in nature. Or in other words, it makes sense that individuals evaluating their own worth or the worth of another in terms of warmth and competence would also perceive others to evaluate them in terms of warmth and competence. Mandisodza et al. (2005) found evidence suggesting this. Individuals who valued competence more in evaluating others valued competence more in self-evaluations as well. Cuddy and colleagues (2008) argue that the foundation of these two dimensions stems from individuals' cooperation/competition and status, two dimensions that are highly correlated with feeling appreciated as they deal with the value that an individual has in a given context and the quality of the relationship.

In conclusion, feeling appreciated is inextricably linked to both theory of gratitude and social exchange. It is a core element within gratitude and social exchange theories and as a result it is tied to both dimensions of social self-evaluations. Moreover, individuals social and interpersonal perceptions as well as their self-perceptions, their social self-perceptions and their perceptions of the relationship are all affected by feeling appreciated. Feeling appreciated affects both warmth and competence dimensions and those dimensions are inherent not only in social and self-perceptions but also in perceptions of the relationship and how individuals perceive others to view them. Over the next chapters I develop a measure of feeling appreciated, allowing researchers to examine the relationship feeling appreciated has with others, then test feeling appreciated's relationship with other evaluative constructs.

### CHAPTER 3 – SCALE DEVELOPMENT FOR FEELING APPRECIATED

In designing the measure for feeling appreciated I wanted it to provide flexibility and ease of use for researchers and practitioners. I assessed the domain space of the construct, both theoretically and empirically, then created a measure that (1) covered the complete conceptual domain of feeling appreciated, (2) was both target and source free, (3) consisted of items that could be easily understood by working adults, and (4) was short enough to be easily portable for researchers in a variety of settings and did not fatigue participants. This measure was created and revised over several studies using a number of different samples during which my understanding of the construct evolved. I initially conceived it as a two-factor construct consisting of the perception that individuals' sacrifices and contributions are gratefully received to a unitary construct that reflect the perception that individuals' efforts are received with gratitude. Reasons for this development are provided below.

In a pilot study I used a qualitative survey in order to assess both the domain space and whether the items created adequately measured that space. In Study 1a and b, I tested the content validity of feeling appreciated with 223 participants using Hinkin and Tracey's (1999) quantitative approach. This approach assesses how well the items of a scale reflect the theoretical domain and map onto a given definition. Hinkin and Tracey's method asks participants to rate how well items map onto the different factors within a scale. I used this measure to assess the integrity of the scale and whether a two-factor solution provided the highest degree of content validity.

To gain greater perspective of the domain space, I initially conducted 12 qualitative surveys. The sample was a convenient sample taken of participants at a park in the Pacific Northwest. Participants were predominantly male (33.33% women, 66.67% men). The average

age was 48.5 years, and the participants had worked for an average tenure of 22.92 years. They reported being employed in a variety of different fields including education, public health, manufacturing, aerospace, and arboriculture. The average time taken to complete the survey was slightly over 30 minutes. The survey questions were open ended questions with prompts asking the participants to describe times when they were and were not appreciated at work. Participants were also asked to describe how others showed them appreciation, why they did and did not feel appreciated, along with a number of other questions exploring the participants' experiences in feeling appreciated or unappreciated.

While participants' reports varied in the context, substance of the events, and many of the particulars regarding their experience in feeling appreciated, there were several similarities between the responses. For each respondent, feeling appreciated was directly associated with a specific action they took. These efforts were framed in terms of benefits they provided e.g. "I developed a training course" or sacrifices they made e.g. "for 8 years I volunteered my time." Typically when individuals spoke of the benefits they provided they would not only mention how their actions benefited others, but they would also mention the import of their actions (e.g. "it saved technicians 2 to 3 hours per shift"), how they went beyond what may have normally been required (e.g. "... going above and beyond my responsibilities"), how they overcame some challenges (e.g. "I got the required permits just in the nick of time"), or how they provided help that the target "couldn't do themselves."

Additionally, each of the respondents talked about how their efforts were gratefully received, how those they helped not only recognized what they did but expressed in some way how much they valued what they did. While for each of the participants in this sample the gratitude was explicitly communicated (in a written note or directly stated), the respondents also

noted other ways in which they were shown gratitude. Some participants mentioned they gained additional respect or trust (e.g. “they trusted me to accomplish it however I saw fit”), other participants mentioned that their work was publicly recognized by those they served or by respected individuals within the organization. Some mentioned that they received gifts, money, smiles, compliments, and additional time off. Interestingly, individuals mentioned that they failed to feel appreciated—even though gratitude was expressed—when those they helped (1) did not truly understand the effort or sacrifices that were made by the helper, (2) did not value or accept the help offered, or (3) expressed thanks “as just a matter of routine,” “out of obligation or duty,” or in a way that was not “heartfelt” or “genuine.”

From these initial insights I proposed a 2-factor solution to feeling appreciated with one factor loading onto feeling appreciated for the perceived contributions that one makes to the target and the other factor loading on the perceived sacrifices one gives for the target. Prior research has shown that individuals differentially perceive value when events are framed in terms of what is gained in comparison with what is lost or given up (Kahneman & Tversky, 1981; Kühberger, 1998). Building upon the responses from the qualitative survey, I designed the measure for feeling appreciated examining a 2-factor solution where individuals differentially value things given up relative to things gained.

In order to test a two-factor solution for feeling appreciated I incorporated Hinkin & Tracey’s method for testing whether the items adequately assessed the content of the individual factors, by first conducting a factor analysis followed by their recommended content validation approach using paired-samples t-tests to provide “a higher degree of confidence in determining item integrity and scale content validity” (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999, p. 175).

## Study 1a

In Study 1a, 127 participants (49% women, 51% men) were recruited and paid for their participation through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. The participants were currently employed (either part or full-time) and were required to have both a manager or supervisor and colleagues. The average age of the respondents was 34.48 years ( $SD=9.36$ ). The participants reported being 71% Caucasian, 9% Asian-American, 8% African-American, 6% Hispanic, and 6% other or unreported. Individuals were given the 20 items that assessed feeling appreciated. The organization was the target and the individual was the source (e.g. *My organization is grateful for my contributions*).

### Instrument Development

I used an inductive approach to assess the breadth and scope of the content domain, integrating the data gathered from the qualitative surveys to check the adequacy of the specific scale items. In taking this approach, first, I examined a variety of constructs that were conceptually related to feeling appreciated or feeling valued within a relationship and collected 105 relevant items that reflected aspects of the definition of feeling appreciated. Next, I compared items to the definition. Items were then reworded and formatted to match. Identical or theoretically redundant items were eliminated, and the items were made to more explicitly relate to the core components of the definition including (1) the source exerting effortful action to benefit a target, (2) the source perceiving a grateful reception of the effort by the target, and (3) the source feeling appreciated by the target. In taking these steps, the original pool was reduced to twenty items. Sixteen of those items were positively phrased while four items were negatively worded requiring reverse coding. The items were written at a 7th grade level and the median length of the items was between 8 and 9 words with the longest item 15 words long. The items

use a Likert format and were scaled from 1 “strongly disagree” to 7 “strongly agree.” To pilot the construct’s convergent and discriminant validity I included additional constructs that were expected to be similar and dissimilar to feeling appreciated.

## **Results**

The first step of Hinkin’s process is to calculate an item-by-item Q-correlation matrix (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999). Analyzing the items through an exploratory factor analysis yielded 3 factors after subjecting the data to a varimax rotation with three eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Upon closer examination of the factors I noticed that the reverse coded items from both the sacrifice, e.g. *my organization isn’t grateful for the sacrifices I make*, and the benefits factors e.g. *my organization never thanks me for my work* were loading onto a factor of their own. This may suggest one of two possibilities (1) feeling unappreciated may be a unique construct or (2) the empirical differentiation may be an artifact of the measure’s wording. Because the negatively worded items separated themselves into a separate factor, muddling the scale these items were removed from further analysis.

After removing these items, the 16 items from both surveys generally loaded correctly onto the two different factors, and the 2 factors accounted for 83.50% of the variance. The factor analysis with the 16 items can be seen below in Table 1. One item, C8 (*my organization is aware of even my minor contributions*), was removed because it loaded onto the wrong factor. The remaining items loaded highly onto the correct factor, however there were a number of items that had a high cross loading (above .40).

Table 1. Factor Analysis from Study 1a

Items	Contribution	Sacrifice
C1 My organization values my work	0.847	
C3 My organization appreciates what I do	0.834	
C5 My organization feels my work is important	0.821	
C4 My organization is grateful for my contribution	0.831	
C6 My organization thinks my contribution makes a difference	0.808	
C7 My organization realizes the positive impact of my work	0.807	
C2 My organization is thankful for my efforts	0.835	
S8 My organization appreciates the emotional and physical stress I experience at work		0.86
S3 My organization recognizes how difficult the work I do can be		0.817
S4 My organization appreciates all the demands my work		0.813
S1 My organization understands the sacrifices I make for my		0.81
S2 My organization realizes just how hard I work for them		0.804
S6 My organization recognizes the price I pay to do my job well		0.761
S5 My organization appreciates all that I give for the	0.531	0.758
C8 My organization is aware of even my minor contributions		0.755
S7 My organization recognizes the challenges I overcome at		0.748

Note. Loadings below .500 are hidden

### Study 1b

Hinkin and Tracey (1999) suggest that in order to assess a construct's construct validity, scholars should also compare the items' mean ratings to ascertain whether the items correctly cover the conceptual space for each factor. Hinkin and Tracey (1999) noted that the design of this process allowed researchers to use smaller sample sizes and non-expert samples in their assessments. For Study 1b I used the 20 original items for feeling appreciated (during the analysis I removed the 4 reverse coded items mentioned above). The sample consisted of 96 participants (66% women, 34% men) recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. The average age was 35.17 years ( $SD=12.11$ ). The majority of the individuals reported being Caucasian

(79%). African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans made up 6%, 5%, and 4% of the sample respectively. Scholars recommend that participants for the survey should have “sufficient intellectual ability to rate the correspondence between items and definitions of various theoretical constructs” (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999, p.179), as a result, similar to other scholars utilizing this method (Colquitt et al., 2014) I screened participants based on whether they had completed or were currently attending college.

Respondents assessed how well the items loaded onto the two dimensions of feeling appreciated through an online survey. At the top of each page was listed the definitional component of the measure (i.e. “the perception that one’s sacrifices are gratefully received” or “the perception that one’s contributions are gratefully received”). Below the definitions were listed all the items from the measure. Participants were asked to assess how well each of the items fit the definition at the top of the pages with responses ranging from “*the item does an extremely bad job at fitting the definition*” to “*the item does an extremely good job at fitting the definition.*” In order to avoid any response bias due to ordering effects, the items were randomized.

Hinkin and Tracy (1999) suggest that a simple way to determine whether an item should be kept is to assess whether the mean of the respondents’ assessments for each item are significantly higher when definitions fit their conceptual dimension than for items of other dimensions. I conducted paired-samples t-tests to test whether individuals found the items associated with each factor to correspond with the correct factor significantly better than the incorrect factor.

## Data Analysis

In Study 1b I conducted a number of paired-samples t-tests and found that the majority of the items showed significant differentiation from the other factor. Specifically, all eight of the contribution items were significantly different from the sacrifice items, while six of the eight sacrifice items adequately differentiated from the contribution items. Two of the sacrifice items did not show adequate differentiation from the contribution factor. S2, “*my organization recognizes how difficult the work I do can be*” and S7 “*my organization recognizes the challenges I overcome at work*” were not adequately differentiated from the other items and thus were removed as items from the measure. The complete mean ratings from the content adequacy assessment can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Ratings and Significant Differentiation from Adequacy Assessment for Study 1b

Items	Contribution	Sacrifice	Significance
C1 My organization values my work	<b>6.08</b>	<b>4.8</b>	0
C2 My organization is thankful for my efforts	<b>6.19</b>	<b>5.26</b>	0
C3 My organization appreciates what I do	<b>6.19</b>	<b>5.02</b>	0
C4 My organization is grateful for my contribution	<b>6.34</b>	<b>5.1</b>	0
C5 My organization feels my work is important	<b>5.55</b>	<b>4.53</b>	0
C6 My organization thinks my contribution makes a difference	<b>5.42</b>	<b>4.65</b>	0
C7 My organization realizes the positive impact of my work	<b>5.42</b>	<b>4.44</b>	0
C8 My organization is aware of even my minor contributions	<b>3.73</b>	<b>3</b>	0.001
S1 My organization understands the sacrifices I make for my work	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.86</b>	0
S2 My organization realizes just how hard I work for them	5.1	5.29	0.323
S3 My organization recognizes how difficult the work I do can be	<b>4.45</b>	<b>5.11</b>	0.001
S4 My organization appreciates all the demands my work requires	<b>5.11</b>	<b>5.59</b>	0.005
S5 My organization appreciates all that I give for the organization	<b>5.95</b>	<b>5.64</b>	0.028
S6 My organization recognizes the price I pay to do my job well	<b>3.55</b>	<b>4</b>	0.048
S7 My organization recognizes the challenges I overcome at work	3.35	3.36	0.958
S8 My organization appreciates the emotional and physical stress I experience at work	<b>4.69</b>	<b>5.16</b>	0.008

Note. Bold italicized items are significantly different

One of the reasons for developing this scale was to create a portable tool that scholars could easily use to test the level at which individuals feel appreciated. While a 2-factor solution worked with the remaining 13 items, a 13-item scale was too cumbersome an instrument to keep participants engaged. As a result, I removed an additional 5 items. In doing so, a 2-factor solution was no longer viable, and the factor analysis collapsed onto one factor.

### **Discussion**

Building upon the pilot study where individuals framed feeling appreciated in terms of the sacrifices or contributions they made, I hypothesized that feeling appreciated may operate as a two-factor solution where individuals differentiate between feeling appreciated for the contributions and the sacrifices that they make. In Study 1a I found initial support for this hypothesis through an exploratory factor analysis. The initial factor analysis showed that the 16 items used in the study (with one exception) loaded cleanly onto the two factors. Per Hinkin & Tracey's (1999) recommendation I conducted a follow-up study, Study 1b, where the content adequacy of the different items was assessed as individuals rated how well each individual item fit the definition for the factor. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to assess whether each item was statistically a better fit for each factor. From this test I dropped an additional two items. In order to make the instrument more engaging for the participants and useable for researchers I removed an additional 5 items, after which a two-factor solution was no longer successful.

After removing the additional items, I again conducted an exploratory factor analysis with a varimax rotation. In examining the eigenvalues for the items there was a deep break in the scree plot between factor one (eigenvalue of 6.433) and factor two (eigenvalue of 0.633) suggesting a unidimensional construct. The factor loading along with their means are listed in

Table 3. The factor loadings were sufficiently high  $>.80$  and Cronbach's alpha =  $.964$  for the eight items.

*Table 3. Feeling Appreciated Descriptive Statistics, Loadings, and Reliabilities for Study 1b*

Items	Mean	SD	Factor Loading	Alpha If Item Deleted
C1 My organization values my work	5.24	1.37	0.90	0.96
C3 My organization appreciates what I do	5.24	1.35	0.92	0.96
C4 My organization is grateful for my contribution	5.1	1.37	0.93	0.96
C7 My organization realizes the positive impact of my work	5.13	1.44	0.91	0.96
S1 My organization understands the sacrifices I make for my work	4.53	1.53	0.85	0.96
S4 My organization appreciates all the demands my work requires	4.76	1.60	0.90	0.96
S5 My organization appreciates all that I give for the organization	4.74	1.62	0.92	0.96
S6 My organization recognizes the price I pay to do my job well	4.61	1.62	0.86	0.96

The goal of this chapter was to develop a measure of feeling appreciated that covered the domain space of the construct, was both target and source free, and was easy to use for both researchers and practitioners. Through the pilot study and two additional studies, I was able to create such a measure. Based on the results from the qualitative data, I began with a two-factor solution for feeling appreciated. Individuals in the pilot study framed the efforts they exerted in terms of the contributions they provided the target or the sacrifices they made for the target. Their qualitative responses suggested that feeling appreciated (or unappreciated) affected the participants' relationships with the target immensely. It also affected their behavior toward the target, as individuals stated that when the target expressed a high level of appreciation, that expression led them to both increase their effort and the help they offered. In developing and testing the measure for feeling appreciated, the quantitative results suggested that the two-factor version of the measure (i.e. benefits and sacrifices) was in fact unidimensional.

The completed measure has several methodological advantages. First, it is the only OB measure to my knowledge that specifically examines how a source feels appreciated by a target. Second, the measure is closely tied to each of the components of feeling appreciated. It incorporates both the effort made by the source and gratitude expressed by the target. As a result, it is specifically tied to gratitude and gratitude theory. Third, the measure is target and source free. This allows researchers more control over what they are examining. Specifically, it allows researchers to assess whether they are measuring their phenomenon of interest or the shift in target or source. Past research has often confounded these different components within the model. As a result, it is unclear what is truly driving their results. Where scholars may be arguing that the affect drives the proposed change, past research has shown that surprisingly this may not always be the case (Rupp & Cropanzano; 2002)

Because feeling appreciated is at the heart of individuals social self-evaluations, affecting both perceptions of warmth and competence, there is reason to believe that the construct is tied to a number of foundational constructs residing in this domain space. Over the next two chapters I continue to examine feeling appreciated with this measure, testing its relationship with related constructs and important organizational outcomes.

## CHAPTER 4 – STUDY 2

Feeling that one's work is appreciated or of value to others is an essential part of individuals' social self-evaluative process (Cuddy et al., 2008), essential to both effective social exchange relationships (Ariely, Kamenica, & Prelec, 2008) and positive perception of individuals' social worth (Grant & Gino, 2010). Consequently, by assessing the degree to which individuals feel appreciated by an organization, scholars may also be able to easily ascertain a wide range of managerial constructs relating to the social self-evaluative process—constructs that assess individuals' perception of their own competence in the organization and affective evaluations concerning their warmth or the relationship with the organization. In this chapter I propose that these constructs are linked to individuals' interpersonal and self-evaluations and are tied by a common element, namely the degree to which individuals feel appreciated.

Though the collection of constructs may vary based on the target of the interaction whether it be at the individual, group, or organizational level, at the organizational level, feeling appreciated's nomological net includes a number of highly influential and foundational OB constructs. Specifically, in this chapter I test feeling appreciated's connection with respect, status, OBSE, organizational identification, organizational commitment, exchange quality (i.e. OMX), perceived organizational support, satisfaction with the organization, trust, and positive affect. Although theoretically and empirically, scholars have suggested other constructs (e.g. interactional justice, contract fulfillment, perceived politics, social worth, value congruence, etc.) may also be included within this nomological net, in order to make the study more manageable, I focused on these twelve constructs. Between these twelve constructs are hundreds of citations as five of the most influential constructs in OB are included in this list (Newman, 2016). Despite

this popularity, scholars have yet to understand their true relationships with each other or the import that feeling appreciated has on this set of constructs.

Researchers have previously noted strong relationships either theoretically, empirically, or both theoretically and empirically between a few of these focal constructs (Newman et al., 2016). On one hand, Cropanzano and colleagues (2017) noted that some of these constructs display a high degree of theoretical overlap as they occupy very similar roles within social exchange theory. On the other hand, others have noted theoretical disparity but argue that empirical similarity between some of these constructs makes them appear to be empirically indistinguishable from each other (Le et al., 2010). Despite these suggestions that some of the constructs may be associated, no research to my knowledge has attempted to explore the relationship between such a wide range of important constructs or proposed a theoretical and empirical bridge connecting spanning such a wide range of important constructs. In this dissertation within the framework of SCM I draw from both social exchange theory and gratitude theory to suggest that these 12 focal constructs are inextricably connected to the two dimensions of the interpersonal and self-evaluative process. Moreover, these constructs are tied together by the degree to which individuals' feel appreciated by the organization.

Because feeling appreciated affects individuals' feelings of competence, I suggest that many of the measures that assess the degree to which individuals feel they provide value within a relationship (e.g. respect, status, OBSE) will be highly related to feeling appreciated. Similarly, because feeling appreciated is a reflection of the symbolic and explicit gratitude shown an individual and a critical part of the social exchange process, other constructs that assess their perception of the relationship's value or their perception of how the organization values the relationship (e.g. POS, satisfaction, exchange quality, etc.), will also be highly related to feeling

appreciated. Constructs like trust, commitment, perceived organizational support, organization-member exchange, and other similar constructs are often perceived by an employee to be symbolic expressions of gratitude from the target, communicating to individuals that their efforts are of value within the relationship. Similarly, an organization's lack of trust, commitment, or support, communicate that the employees' efforts are not appreciated or valued. As a result, despite the theoretical differences between the constructs and feeling appreciated, those constructs occupy the same theoretical space in both Gordon et al.'s (2012) model of appreciation and a generic model of social exchange (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Consequently, those constructs are used as heuristics by employees to assess the gratitude that the organization has for them along with the level at which they feel appreciated.

In the following sections I examine each of the constructs listed above. I briefly describe each construct then outline how feeling appreciated is a common thread through each of these constructs bridging them together either theoretically or operationally.

### **Respect**

In discussing the focal constructs and their relationship with feeling appreciated I begin with respect, the most theoretically similar construct to feeling appreciated. Research on respect has been hampered by scholar's inability to build upon a widely accepted definition (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017) or theoretical foundation (Dillon, 2007). As a result, respect has been conceptualized in a variety of ways, with some conceptualizations corresponding more tightly with feeling appreciated than others. For example, respect has been theorized to be a type of treatment, a behavior, a status evaluation, a feeling, an attitude, and a perception among others (Grover, 2014). Additionally, Rogers and Ashforth (2017) noted that researchers have yet to draw consensus around in whom respect resides. Some scholars define respect as residing in the

receiver (e.g. as an assessment of the value, inclusion, and worthiness a person feels within their group; Blader & Yu, 2017) and other scholars claim it resides in the sender (e.g. as a “behavioral manifestation of believing another person has value”; Grover, 2014, p.28).

This definitional confusion has made it difficult for researchers to build upon the construct and gain research traction as scholars have proposed a widely varying range of definitions (Grover, 2014). Bies and Moag (1986) operationalized respect as avoidance of deliberate rudeness or attacking behaviors, Heuer and colleagues (1999) saw respect as polite treatment. Colquitt (2001) in his paper on justice defined respect as a part of interpersonal justice, being treated politely, with dignity, and without rudeness. Others have defined respect as a status evaluation within a group (Tyler & Blader, 2002), as the degree of worth and recognition one feels (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005), and as the perceived value of the self (Sleeboos, Ellemers, De Gilder, 2006). More recently, Rogers and Ashforth (2017) and Blader and Yu’s (2017) define respect as a feeling of perceived worth that is bestowed upon that person by another.

Where the definition for respect is muddled, feeling appreciated not only avoids the definitional confusion (it is a perception, always residing in the sender), it also provides the operational flexibility, allowing researchers to compare how feeling appreciated operates across levels of analysis or across targets, a flexibility which measures of respect do not afford. The differing theoretical origins and developmental paths of these constructs have also led to differences in the assumptions, nomological nets, and scholarly focus. For example, the process by which respect and feeling appreciated developed is fundamentally different. Where feeling appreciated is a response to individuals’ perception that their efforts were gratefully received, respect is not contingent on any initial effort. Individuals may show respect to strangers on the street or new colleagues with whom they have yet to interact. They may feel that others respect

or should grant them a general sense of respect as a human being regardless of any prior interaction (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017). Additionally, respect is not contingent on the targets' perceived experience of gratitude. Where gratitude, a relational binding mechanism is at the heart of feeling appreciated, respect rather is based on conceptions of justice, civility, and status. As a result, individuals may have respect for others for whom there is no relational closeness or relational bonding and towards whom they may be antagonistic or indifferent.

Despite these differences both constructs are interpersonal evaluations. Within the context of SCM, social exchange theory suggests that respect and feeling appreciated share a high degree of variance as both constructs are critical in developing relational ties and perform a similar role within the model. Similar to feeling appreciated, research suggests that respect increases the strength of a given relationship (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002). De Cremer and Mulder (2007, p.444) noted that respect is the “‘social glue’ in our social lives” while Algoe, Fredrickson, and Gable, (2013) and Gordon et al. (2012) noted that gratitude and appreciation are relational binders uniquely functioning to build interpersonal bonds. Adam Smith also famously stated that gratitude, that twin virtue of feeling appreciated, is the sentiment that prompts individuals to act in a manner that might strengthen or build relationships among individuals. Empirical investigation supports these assertions as feeling appreciated has been shown to increase both relational satisfaction (Berger & Janoff-Bulman, 2006) and individuals' tendencies to maintain relational bonds (Lambert & Fincham, 2011).

These two constructs also share a number of other commonalities. Both are central in fulfilling human needs. As stated previously, William James (de Montmorency, 1921) described the need for appreciation as the deepest principle of human nature while Rogers and Ashforth (2017) proposed that respect satisfies individuals need for belonging and status. Spears,

Ellemers, Doosje, and Branscombe (2006) found that indeed employees valued respect above the income, career opportunities, and leisure time provided by their job. Interestingly, despite the import of these constructs, scholars have commented that they both are underrepresented in direct research (Gordon et al., 2012; Grover, 2014) despite the fact that they are related to a significant number of core management areas. This is evidenced by both respect and appreciation's inclusion in the operationalization of a number management variables. For example, respect is included in self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), leader-membership exchange (Liden & Maslyn, 1998), satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), trust (McAllister, 1995), workplace status (Djurdjevic et al., 2017), civility (Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth, & Belton, 2009), interpersonal justice (Colquitt, 2001), among a variety of other constructs. Because of the conceptual overlap between these constructs is considerable, I hypothesize that feeling appreciated will be strongly correlated to respect.

*Hypothesis 1: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and respect within an organization are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Status**

Just as feeling appreciated is tied to individuals' evaluations of competence within SCM, Cuddy and colleagues (2008) noted too that status plays an instrumental role within this model as it predicts individuals' evaluations of competence. Magee and Galinsky (2008) conceptualized status as a combination of respect and admiration that one has in the eyes of others. It is an assessment of an actor's social value and esteem within a larger group (Chen, Peterson, Phillips, Podolny, & Ridgeway, 2012). More recently after reviewing both the literature on respect and status, Blader and Yu (2017) concluded that though the constructs developed from distinct theoretical foundations, ask different questions, and hold divergent conceptions of social worth

within group or workplace contexts, the constructs are two sides of the same coin, investigating the same phenomenon, namely “individuals’ sense of their own social worth in groups” (p. 801). This sense of feeling valued by others is core to feeling appreciated as it signals to actors not only that the target is grateful for their efforts, but they are competent in performing their job. In exercising the same role as status, namely affecting individuals’ evaluations of competence within the SCM model, feeling appreciated shares a high degree of correspondence. Moreover Anderson, Hildreth, and Howland (2015) suggested that just as individuals have a need for appreciation (Maslow, 1943; Blader & Yu, 2017) so too do individuals have an intrinsic need for status.

Though these constructs perform a similar function within SCM, they also differ in a number of meaningful ways. First, the dominant conception of status views the construct as a relative judgment that reflects individuals’ perceived hierarchy relative to others within the group, whereas feeling appreciated is not hierarchical in nature. In other words, feeling appreciated is not a relative comparison to others in a group, rather it is an assessment that one’s efforts are valued. Status is a comparative judgement of one’s social worth, while feeling appreciated is typically not a comparative judgement (though social comparison may affect feeling appreciated).

Second, feeling appreciated is the results of a targets gratitude for an actor’s efforts. As a result, it is contingent on the contributions and sacrifices that an actor makes to a target. On the other hand, while status may be a reflection of an individual’s behavior, behavior is not necessarily tied to that individual’s status, rather status may be a function of individual characteristics including race, age, or position within the organization. As a result, individuals of low status within an organization may feel very appreciated by the organization. Similarly,

teachers or leaders may have high status within an organization but feel unappreciated by those they serve. Still notwithstanding these differences because both status and feeling appreciated perform a similar role within SCM, affect individuals' competence evaluations and because they center on individuals' interpersonal evaluations of social worth, I hypothesize that feeling appreciated will be highly related to status.

*Hypothesis 2: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and perceived status within an organization are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Organization-Based Self-Esteem**

Another self-evaluative construct relating to individuals' perception of competence is organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Within SCM, OBSE functions as a self-evaluation tied to competence. Similar to status and respect, OBSE centers around the individuals' perception of the social value they provide the organization. OBSE was developed by Pierce and colleagues (1989) and is defined as the value that individuals perceive themselves to have within an organizational context or in the words of Pierce and Gardner (2004; p.593) it is "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member."

Scholars have suggested that OBSE is a social creation developed through individuals' history within the organization, their interpersonal experiences, and systemic experiences (Pierce et al., 1989). In other words, similar to feeling appreciated, OBSE develops over time through individuals' interactions with those in the organization and is communicated through three mechanisms, namely (1) implicit signals permeating the environmental structure of the organization; (2) personal evaluations that one's own efforts have been worthwhile (3) external

cues (e.g. positive feedback, awards, etc.) that one's efforts are valued by the organization or others within the organization (Pierce & Gardner, 2004).

This development mirrors the development of feeling appreciated where the value that individuals' feel their actions make is a function of (1) the environment in which they act; (2) their personal evaluations of the efficacy of their action; and (3) their interpretation of the expressed symbols of gratitude by the sender. As a result, both feeling appreciated and OBSE develop through a combination of the environment in which the individuals act, internal interpretation of those acts, and external gestures others display to express positive or negative evaluation of the individuals' actions. These evaluations, as Grover states take form in "awards, raises, public recognition, or promotion, [and] generate explicit self-esteem because they are self-relevant indicators proximal to the individual" (2014, p.37).

Additionally, both constructs are operationalized in ways that mirror each other, with individuals assessing the degree to which they are of social value to the organization. Each of OBSE's 10-items from its single factor solution scale (Van Dyne, VandeWalle, Kostova, & Cummings, 2000; Pierce & Gardner, 2004) e.g. "I am a valuable part of my organization" and "I count around my organization" assess whether value has been provided the organization. Similarly, the items for feeling appreciated e.g. "my organization appreciates what I do for it" are worded to gauge this central phenomenon.

Despite the similarity between the scales, there are a number of important distinctions. First, feeling appreciated is an interpersonal evaluation with the actors evaluating what they perceive others to think about themselves, while OBSE is simply the actors own self-evaluations. This difference is especially relevant in situations where there is a discrepancy between what the organization thinks or expresses about the individuals' worth and what the individuals perceive

their own contribution to be worth. Additionally, while the measure for OBSE focuses primarily on assessing the individual (e.g. “I count...,” “I am important,” etc.), feeling appreciated focuses on the relational interchange between the organization and the individual’s assessment of the sender’s gratitude or appreciation.

Second, feeling appreciated makes the prosocial role of the individual towards the organization salient. Where OBSE focuses on the worth the individual feels within the organization (often only inferring the contribution made by the individual), feeling appreciated focuses on the efforts to benefit the organization. Each item within the measure of feeling appreciated focuses on the contribution or the sacrifice of the individual towards the organization e.g. “my organization appreciates the price I pay to do my job well.” On the other hand, the OBSE items highlight personal capability without necessarily reflecting on the benefits that the individual provides. For example, “I am efficient at my organization” asks the individuals to gauge their capability rather than their contributions.

Finally, while OBSE is specifically tied to individuals’ self-esteem at the organizational level, feeling appreciated has the benefit of being context free. The measure can be used to assess the phenomenon of interest across levels of analysis (e.g. the organization, team, supervisor, coworker, etc.). Despite these distinctions, the similarity between these constructs, specifically their close proximity within SCM and their focus on the perceived value which the individual provides makes the constructs very similar. As a result, I hypothesize that feeling appreciated and OBSE will be highly related.

*Hypothesis 3: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and organization-based self-esteem are highly correlated with each other.*

## **Organizational Identification**

Early management scholars noted that organizational identification's theoretical and empirical distinctions were often obfuscated by related constructs (e.g. affect, organizational commitment, internalization, etc.) and through a lack of theoretical clarity (Wiener, 1982; Reichers, 1985). Ashforth and Mael's (1989) integration of social identity theory with the construct helped provide a much-needed theoretical foundation from which scholars have been able to build. Social identification was originally conceived by Tajfel (1982) as he recognized that individuals take on the identity of various social groups to which they belong.

Research early on centered upon how individuals identify with groups in order to improve their own social value (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). However, in developing the group engagement model, Tyler and Blader (2003) proposed that individuals' judgements about their value within a group were also of primary import in shaping their identification with the group. The conceptual shift that individuals' social identities are connected to assessments that encompass not only an intergroup evaluation, but an intragroup evaluation closely tied organizational identification to feeling appreciated. Perception of individuals' social worth to the organization shapes not only the degree to which individuals feel appreciated, but also the degree to which they identify with the organization.

Affected by the individuals' perceived worth, organizational identification, is an individuals' evaluative judgment regarding the degree to which their self-concept is wrapped up in the organization. Within an SCM context, both social exchange and gratitude theories suggest that as individuals feel their efforts are gratefully received, the evaluation of the relationship or the psychological closeness to the organization is strengthened. This may in part be because both constructs play a part within the generic model of social exchange, where positive interaction

leads to higher levels of psychological closeness, which in turn leads to reciprocated behaviors. Feeling appreciated is linked to relational maintenance behaviors (Gordon et al. 2012) much like organizational identification is linked to extra-role performance for the organization (Riketta, 2005). High levels of both organizational identification and feeling appreciated are closely tied to decreased desires to terminate a relationship (Conroy, Becker, & Menges, 2016; Gigy & Kelly, 1992). Finally, high levels of both these constructs are also tied to satisfaction in the relationship (i.e. satisfaction with the organization, Lee et al., 2015; relational satisfaction, Le & Waite, 2010).

Scholars have also noted that identification is a type of bond that lies on a continuum of social bonds where individuals see themselves as one with a target (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012). Similarly, feeling appreciated is a binding agent that ties individuals to a given target (De Cremer & Mulder, 2007; Algoe et al., 2008; Gordon et al., 2012). Research has shown that individuals that provide value to a target identify with that target, and the more the individual perceive themselves to be of value, the greater the feeling of identification (Cha, Chang, Kim, 2014). Because feeling appreciated and gratitude are social binders, the degree to which individuals feel appreciated by the organization affects the degree to which they identify with the organization. Due to these similarities, I hypothesize that feeling appreciated and organizational identification share a high degree of empirical overlap.

*Hypothesis 4: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and organizational identification are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Commitment to the Organization**

Like some of the other focal constructs, “despite decades of research, a lack of consensus persists regarding the meaning, structure, and measurement of commitment” (Klein et al., 2012,

p.130). Scholars note that these struggles have led researchers to question both the construct's uniqueness (Klein, Cooper, Molloy, & Swanson, 2014, Le et al., 2010) and its relevance. Klein and colleagues (2012) suggest that the imprecision and ambiguity was a result of adopting an inclusive approach to the construct's development. This led not only to a lack of definitional clarity, to confusion, and misinterpretation (Jaros, 1997), but also to an empirically bloated construct (Osigweh, 1989) whose measures were contaminated and deficient (Klein et al., 2012).

From its conception organizational commitment, has struggled with concept clarity and discriminant validity. One conception of organizational commitment defined the construct in terms of identification with the organization (Meyers & Allen, 1991), while another conception (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) of the construct has been described as simply a blend of job satisfaction, value congruence, and turnover intentions (Newman et al., 2016). Indeed, Le and colleagues (2010) found that while organizational commitment and job satisfaction were theoretically distinct, the constructs were empirically identical. Klein et al. (2012) made significant headway in resolving some of the theoretical issues by conceptualizing commitment as a target free construct defined as "a volitional psychological bond reflecting dedication to and responsibility for a particular target (Klein et al., 2012, p.131).

Similar to organizational identification, affective commitment is a construct that assesses the relational bond that an individual has with an organization. In the context of SCM when assessing one's level of commitment, individuals are assessing the warmth and communion of the relationship. Social exchange suggests that as individuals act in ways that benefit others, the relationship between those parties is strengthened and the other party will respond with a reciprocal beneficial action (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Scholars (Colquitt et al., 2014) have used affective commitment to measure the relational strength within this model. Though feeling

appreciated does not ask individuals to assess the relational closeness, the construct itself is a relational binder and a close proxy as the actor assess how much the target values his or her contributions or sacrifices for the relationship.

As the emotional binder in relationships (Algoe, 2013), feeling gratitude and appreciated are binding agents which facilitate this closeness. For this reason, scholars have shown that feeling appreciated is one of the most important factors in a long-term committed relationship (Sharlin, 1996). It is associated with higher marital satisfaction among newlyweds (Schramm, Marshall, & Harris, 2005) and has been shown to lead to the formation and maintenance of new relationships (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008). Additionally, appreciation strengthens the perception of relational bonds between individuals (Lambert, Clark, Durtschi, Fincham, & Graham, 2010), and it leads to increased transparency of communication between those relationships (Lambert & Fincham, 2011). In short both feeling appreciated and expressing appreciation strengthen the dedication and responsibility that individuals feel for each other.

Because both feeling appreciated and affective commitment share this theoretical overlap, I suggest that the constructs are highly correlated with each other and other focal constructs. As a result, I hypothesize that there is a very high degree of empirical overlap between feeling appreciated by the organization and organizational commitment.

*Hypothesis 5: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and affective commitment to the organization are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Exchange Quality (LMX, OMX, TMX, etc.)**

Similar to affective commitment exchange quality has been used by scholars to assess the relational strength that an individual has with a target within social exchange theory. This is unsurprising because leader-member exchange (LMX) was built upon social exchange theory

(Blau, 1964; Graen & Scandura, 1987) and was introduced as an alternative perspective to the current leadership theories built on individual characteristics, environmental factors, or fit between the two. LMX theory suggested that leaders differentially treat their subordinates (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975). In so doing, the quality of the relationship varies, with high quality relationships leading to a number of important individual and organizational outcomes (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidyarthi, 2011; Martin, Epitropaki, Thomas, & Topakas, 2010; Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016; Schriesheim, Neider, & Scandura, 1998; Van Breukelen, Schyns, & Le Blanc, 2006).

From LMX scholars have recognized that the relationship quality between other parties also plays an important role in organizational behavior. As a result, the relationships between various targets have been examined including the relationship between individuals and the organization in organization-member exchange or OMX (Karriker & Williams, 2009; Lam & Lau, 2012), and between team members in team-member exchange or TMX (Seers, 1989).

While LMX has evolved over time, the constructs assessing exchange quality (i.e. LMX, TMX, OMX) are centered on the perceived effectiveness of the relationship between multiple parties (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Though exchange quality has been theoretically conceived as the joint relationship between two parties, operationally, it is typically measured as the perception of the relationship from the individuals' perspective (Joseph, Newman, & Sin, 2011). Scholars (Sin, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2009) have found that the relationship between the leader and subordinate perspectives only moderately converge (.37). As a result, others have concluded that leader and member LMX are independent constructs (Joseph et al., 2011).

As individuals make interpersonal evaluations, SCM suggests that those relational evaluations can be generalized in terms of warmth and competence. Feeling appreciated is highly

related to exchange quality for two reasons. First, within the model of social exchange and gratitude, feeling appreciated affects the evaluations of the quality of the relationship. Second, as previously mentioned feeling appreciated is the glue that connects individuals together (Algoe et al., 2013; Gordon et al. 2012). As feeling appreciated increases for individuals, the perceived quality of the relationship increases as well (Lee & Waite, 2010).

Operationally, feeling appreciated is closely related to exchange quality as well as both measures ask individuals to assess the degree to which they perceive that the other party values their actions in the relationship. Feeling appreciated assess this in the context of individuals' efforts and the gratitude they perceive from the target. The two predominant measures for exchange quality, the LMX-7 and the LMX-MDM are correlated at a high level ( $r_{corrected}=.9$ ) and assess this by asking about future or past benefits the target is willing to give (Colquitt et al., 2014), about reciprocation (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and the degree to which individuals' potential value is recognized (Scandura & Graen, 1984). As a result, I suggest that exchange quality and feeling appreciated share a high degree of empirical overlap.

*Hypothesis 6: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and organization-member exchange are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Social Exchange Relationship**

Conceptually similar to exchange quality, scholars have developed a measure to specifically assess the quality of the social exchange relationship (Shore et al., 2006; Bernerth et al., 2007; Colquitt et al., 2014). While exchange quality developed from leadership literature, both constructs were built upon social exchange theory. Building from Blau's (1964) original conception of social exchange relationships, Colquitt and colleagues (2014) defined the construct

as the degree to which a relationship between two exchange partners is characterized by mutual obligation, mutual trust, mutual commitment, and mutual significance.

While the items in the social exchange relationship measure do a better job in assessing the relationship rather than the benefits that the individual has received (Colquitt et al., 2014), the construct fills the same theoretical role within social exchange theory as a number of other constructs including affective commitment, perceived organizational support, and exchange quality. As a result, these constructs share an incredibly high degree of theoretical overlap. Additionally, in the context of SCM, exchange quality, or affective commitment, or social exchange relationship are generalized in terms of warmth or communion.

As a result, feeling appreciated bridges these constructs. As individuals feel appreciated by the target, these feelings of warmth and communion with the organization are strengthened. Additionally, the cycle illustrated within gratitude and social theory perpetuates and the relationship is strengthened. As individuals feel appreciated by the other party, willingness to invest in the relationship and reciprocate feelings of trust, commitment, obligation, and significance are manifest. In these relationships where high quality social exchange exists, the parties will generally feel a desire to express gratitude for the sacrifices and benefits that are received while feeling appreciated through the gratitude expressed. As a result, I suggest that there is a high degree of both conceptual and empirical overlap between social exchange relations and feeling appreciated.

*Hypothesis 7: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and the social exchange relationship are highly correlated with each other.*

## **Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support (POS) is another construct that has been often used to proxy the relational quality within social exchange theory (Colquitt et al., 2014) even though Eisenberger and colleagues (1986) grounded POS in organizational support theory. The construct itself has been defined as the employees' perception that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Moreover, it is the belief employees hold that they will be supported to perform their function when difficulties may arise (George, Reed, Ballard, Colin & Fielding, 1993). Organizational support theory argues that employees form perceptions about how the organization cares about them, and that favorable treatment from the organization enhances POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Past research on the construct has shown a high degree of overlap with other constructs within this nomological net. For example, Kurtessis and colleagues (2017) in a meta-analysis found that POS had a corrected mean correlation of .75 with trust in the organization across 23 studies and 9,362 participants. Similarly, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found that POS had a corrected mean correlation of .73 with affective organizational commitment across 43 studies and 11,706 participants. Looking overtime, Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001) found that POS and affective commitment had a factor correlation of .84 and .79. It is important to note that both meta-analyses and Rhoades' study failed to account for transient error suggesting that as high as these correlations are, the authors are most likely underestimating the true relationships between the variables (Le, Schmidt, & Putka, 2009).

While past research showed the relationship between POS and other variables within this nomological net (e.g. job satisfaction and LMX) to be weaker, this could be in large measure due to mismatches in targets. In other words, researchers examining the correlation between POS and

other constructs compared for example, satisfaction with the job rather than the organization or exchange quality between the leader and the member rather than the exchange quality between the organization and the member. As a result, their results confounded the shift in target with the effect of the construct. Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) were surprised by the impact mismatched targets can have in examining procedural and interactional justice. They found that the different constructs were more related to each other (.79 between the two constructs with the supervisor as the target and .75 with the organization as the target) than they were to themselves across targets. For example, the correlation between procedural justice for the organization and the supervisor was .36, and the correlation between the two targets of interactional justice was .49.

The theoretical similarities and differences that exist between feeling appreciated and many of the other focal constructs also exist between POS and feeling appreciated. First, because POS fills the same role within social exchange theory as many of these other constructs (Colquitt et al., 2014), namely as an assessment of the relational quality between two parties, SCM suggests that the evaluation of the relationship is made in terms of warmth (Cuddy et al., 2008). Because feeling appreciated affects these perceptions of warmth, it affects and is closely related to the perception that the organization cares about the individual.

Operationally, POS asks individuals to consider how the organization cares for their wellbeing. Items in the measure, like the items in LMX, focus on benefits that individuals receive from the organization (e.g. “the organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me...,” “the organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part,” “if the organization earned a greater profit, it would consider increasing my salary”), rather than assessing the degree to which the employees feel their actions are gratefully received. The benefits however, similar to previously mentioned constructs, are in large measure symbols of gratitude. As a result, I

suggest that the similarity between the constructs leads to a high degree of conceptual and empirical overlap.

*Hypothesis 8: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and perceived organizational support are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Trust**

Recent research on trust has developed from two theoretical framings (Colquitt et al., 2014). In the first, developed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), trust is defined to be an individual's willingness to be vulnerable to another party with the expectations that the party will perform certain actions regardless of control or monitoring. The second framing developed by McAllister (1995) conceptualizes trust as a two-factor solution with affect-based trust rooted in the emotional ties that an individual has with the other party and cognitive-based trust captured by an individual's rational assessment of the other party's trustworthiness.

Scholars have noted that trust is essential for effective social interactions (Valley, Moag, & Bazerman, 1998). Like many of the other constructs within this nomological net, trust has also been used to measure the relational quality between individuals (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Cropanzano et al., 2016; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Lewicki et al., 2006; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Explicitly grounded in social exchange theory (McCallister, 1995), this construct has been used as a mediator to explain the social exchange relationship (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2014; Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata, & Rich, 2012; Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Montes & Irving, 2008; Yang, Mossholder, & Peng, 2009). As such, feeling appreciated bridges this construct as it affects the social exchange relationship by affecting warmth and competence evaluations.

Additionally, while no research has directly examined feeling appreciated and trust, scholars have found strong theoretical and empirical relationships between other variables within the related nomological net. For example, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) noted that high quality exchanges (LMX) are “characterized by a high degree of mutual trust” (p.227). Colquitt et al. (2013) found in a meta-analysis that when the targets were matched trust in one’s supervisor and LMX were empirically indistinguishable, correlated at a .90 level. They also found that trust in the organization and POS were correlated at .79 (though both correlations did not include transient error and as a result underestimate the strength of the relationship). Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) found that positive affect like happiness and trust were also significantly related to trust.

Blau (1964) included mutual trust as a foundational component of the social exchange relationship, and Colquitt et al. (2014) included mutual trust as one of the four items in their measure of social exchange. Kurtessis et al. (2017) meanwhile found in a meta-analysis with 23 studies and 9,362 participants that trust had a corrected correlation of .75 with perceived organizational support (though again this number too did not account for transient error, and as a result is most likely an underestimate of the actual correlation; Shaffer, DeGeest, & Li, 2016). In looking at the items of the measures of trust, affective-based trust items appear to again share significant overlap with many of the variables to which feeling appreciated is highly related. As a result, I suggest that the similarity between trust and feeling appreciated leads to a high degree of empirical overlap.

*Hypothesis 9: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and trust for the organization are highly correlated with each other.*

## Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been a critical component of management science for decades (Hülshager, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Hulin, 2017; Locke, 1969). Most of the research on satisfaction in management focused on job satisfaction, conducted at the individual level where either the job, the work (e.g. Agho, Price, & Mueller, 1992; Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981; Pond & Geyer, 1991), or aspects of the job (e.g. pay, promotion, job security, etc.) are combined to develop an aggregated score for job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; P. C. Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969; Spector, 1997; Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Scholars have also examined satisfaction from a number of additional targets including satisfaction with the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992); satisfaction with one's career (Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, & Mansfield, 2012), and satisfaction with one's life (Erdogan et al., 2012).

Despite the decades of research examining satisfaction, a clear definition of the construct has not been agreed upon. Some scholars define the construct as a cognitive assessment of one's present condition relative to one's desired condition (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Tov & Lee, 2016). Others (e.g., Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Weiss, 2002) define satisfaction as an evaluative judgement springing from affective states (Judge et al., 2017). Still others define satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state associated with a given target (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997).

Satisfaction with the organization is an assessment of the degree to which the actor positively appraises the organization. Though this construct does not share as much theoretical overlap as some of the other constructs, prior research has shown there to be a high degree of empirical overlap between satisfaction and many of the focal constructs. Satisfaction has been

found to be empirically related to a number of the focal constructs including positive affect (Tov & Lee, 2016), perceived organizational support (Mahmoud, 2008), trust (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, Frey, 2013), organizational identification (Feather & Rauter, 2004), and others. Notwithstanding the theoretical differences, as mentioned previously, Le and colleagues (2010) found that organizational commitment and job satisfaction were empirically identical with a correlation above .90.

In regard to feeling appreciated, social scientists have begun to examine its relationship with relational satisfaction in close relationships. Siegrist (1998) found that relational dissatisfaction arose when marriage partners violated expectations of reciprocity, failing to show or express appreciation for their partners efforts. In examining housework among dual earning married couples, Klumb, Hoppmann, and Staats (2006) suggested that being thanked predicted individuals' sense of fairness (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Hawkins, Marshall, & Meiners, 1995) and found that women who were thanked for their housework reported greater levels of relationship satisfaction. Similarly, Le and Waite (2010) found that feeling appreciated not only increased individuals' well-being, but also their relational satisfaction.

I suggest that because feeling appreciated affects individuals' perceptions of the relationship, it will affect individuals' satisfaction with the organization.

*Hypothesis 10: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and satisfaction with the organization are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Positive Affect**

Positive affect “is a broad term referring to positively valenced attitudes, moods, and emotions” (Ramsey & Gentzler, 2015; p.59). Scholars suggest that positive affect arises from good situations, events, or conscious effort (Gross, 2010). According to the broaden-and-build

model (Fredrickson, 1998, 2004) as individuals experience positive emotions they expand the resources, thoughts, and actions that are available for future use. It is usually considered less stable than attitudes like satisfaction. Additionally, while positive affect as a state is typically not theoretically tethered to a specific target (Ramsey & Gentzler, 2015), within organizational literature, positive affect has been connected to the workplace (Lam, Spreitzer, & Fritz, 2013), to specific events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), or various time periods (Barnes, Miller, & Bostock, 2017; Gabriel, Diefendorff, & Erickson, 2011).

While little research has been done combining positive affect and social exchange theory, scholars have suggested that a close relationship between social exchange and affect exist (Colquitt et al., 2013) and suggest that positive social exchange may trigger a number of emotions including gratitude and pride (Lawler & Thye, 1999). I suggest that as individuals feel that their efforts are valued they are likely to experience a degree of positive affect. Moreover, I propose that the positive feelings that an individual has in response to the benefit → increased social exchange relationship → reciprocated behavior causal chain (Organ, 1990) are associated not only with receiving benefits, or the positive exchange relationship, but also with feeling that one's efforts are appreciated. As a result, I suggest that positive affect and feeling appreciated share a high degree of empirical overlap.

*Hypothesis 11: The measures for feeling appreciated by the organization and positive affect for the organization are highly correlated with each other.*

### **Study Objective**

The goal of this study was to test whether feeling appreciated bridges a number of important variables within organizational behavior and to examine the discriminant validity of feeling appreciated with a number of related constructs. Building off the guidelines provided by

Shaffer et al. (2016), I began my examination of feeling appreciated by investigating a wide range of constructs that could be theoretically or empirically related to feeling appreciated.

In collecting focal constructs, as suggested by Shaffer et al., (2016), I looked broadly to incorporate those constructs that might not theoretically align or readily be included in such an investigation. These constructs spanned a number of heterogeneous literatures including research on affect, trust, gratitude, leadership, organizational culture, along with a number of other streams. Recognizably though, the list of constructs is not comprehensive. I focused on constructs that are both currently prominent in the field and that utilize scales that have been empirically validated and examined. As a result, constructs that are new (e.g. relational energy) or whose measures have not undergone the rigorous validation process (e.g. social worth) are not included in the study. However, I attempted to avoid omitting relevant constructs by conducting both backward and forward literature searches, by soliciting suggestions from a number of subject matter experts, and by considering studies within and without my focal research domain (Shaffer et al., 2016).

While I suggested a number of constructs that theoretically or empirically overlap with feeling appreciated, in order to make the study accessible to participants, I limited the number of constructs. However, I suggest that there are other constructs that may exhibit similar relationships to those included in this study. For example, interactional justice is a construct that has been defined in terms of showing respect (Johnson, Lanaj, & Barnes, 2014) and is often confused with the respect (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017). Given the high correlation between feeling appreciated and respect, a similar relationship may exist between feeling appreciated and interactional justice. Additionally, the perception of politics in an organization, a construct that

correlated with POS at  $-.83$  without accounting for transient error (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) may also be highly negatively correlated with feeling appreciated.

Operationally speaking, the items in this network of related constructs are difficult to distinguish. Items like “I am trusted at my organization” (OBSE), “I feel happy to be an employee in my organization” (organizational identification), “My organization values me as a member of the organization” (respect), “My organization recognizes my potential” (OMX), “My organization values my contributions to its well-being” (POS), “I like my organization” (organizational-based satisfaction), “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization” (organizational commitment) from a qualitative assessment seem to be almost interchangeable. Many of these items are so similar that within-construct correlation in relation to between-construct correlation may be more a function of similar question formatting, and item ordering and grouping than a function of differences between the latent variables attempted to be measured (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Lee, 2003).

## **Study 2**

### **Participants and Procedures**

The study sample was conducted through Amazon Mechanical Turk and consisted of 407 working adults living in the United States. Participants were paid for their participation and agreed to complete two online surveys one week apart. Three hundred and fourteen individuals completed both surveys with an overall response rate of 77.15%. I compared those who completed only the initial survey to those who completed both surveys on a number of demographic variables including age, gender, and tenure at their current organization, and found no significant difference between the two groups.

The sample was limited by two additional factors. First, because I accounted for transient error it was important to eliminate those participants who felt there were substantial changes within their organization between the two surveys. A question at the beginning of the second survey asked whether anything significant happened that affected the participants' view of the quality of their work life. An additional 70 individuals indicated that something had affected the quality of their work life. As a result, those individuals were eliminated from the survey.

Second, a number of steps were taken to assure individuals were carefully responding to the surveys and responses were not affected by additional measurement artifacts. Attention checks asking participants to *not* answer specific items were included and the various scales were randomly ordered throughout the survey (though the specific items were not randomized between scales). Additionally, the time spent on the whole survey was also analyzed. I excluded those finishing the survey two standard deviations under the mean duration. Between these additional constraints, the sample size for those completing both sections was reduced by 42 to 202 participants (57% women, 43% men).

The average age of the participants was 35.93 ( $SD = 13.17$ ) years and the participants reported the following ethnicities: 80% Caucasian, 7% Asian, 7% African American, 4% Hispanic, and 2% other. The majority of the participants were employed full-time (84.57%) with an average tenure of 6.45 years ( $SD = 6.32$ ) with their current organization. They reported working in a variety of industries including retail, manufacturing, legal, service, education, healthcare, technology, military, government, aerospace, and others.

### **Constructs and Measures**

In order to hold the target in the relationship (e.g. the individual/group/organization that the participants feel appreciates them) constant, all measures reflect the relationship between the

participant and the organization. Unless otherwise noted all measures asked the degree to which the participant agreed with a statement. The scale ranged from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree* unless otherwise mentioned.

**Feeling appreciated.** Participants responded to the eight-item measure for feeling appreciated that was developed in the second chapter of this paper ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .97).

**Respect.** As an indicator of respect, participants responded to Blader and Tyler's (2009) six-item respect measure, updated from Tyler et al. (1996). Participants were asked to judge items like "My organization values what I contribute at work," "My organization values me as a member of the organization," and "My organization respects the work I do" ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .94).

**Organization-based self-esteem.** As a measure of organization-based self-esteem participants completed Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, and Dunham's (1980) ten-item scale of OBSE. Participants were asked to assess items like, "I count at my organization," "I am a valuable part of my organization," and "I am trusted at my organization," "and I count at my organization," ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .94).

**Organizational identification.** As a measure of organizational identification, participants responded to Johnson, Morgeson, and Hekman's (2012) eight-item scale on organizational identification. This scale was used as a result of the content validity of the scale along with the authors' thorough and rigorous evaluation of organizational identification measures. Participants responded to affective items like "I feel happy to be an employee in my organization" and "If I were forced to leave my organization, I would be very disappointed," and cognitive items like "My membership in my organization is very important to my sense of who I

am” and “If my organization were criticized, it would influence how I thought about myself” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .95).

**Affective commitment.** To measure affective commitment to the organization, participants responded to Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) six-item scale of affective commitment. They were asked to assess items like “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization,” “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me,” and “I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .94). Additionally, participants were asked to respond to Klein et al.’s (2014) target-free measure of commitment. This is a 4-item measure that asks, “How committed are you to the organization,” “To what extent do you care about the organization,” “How dedicated are you to the organization,” and “To what extent have you chosen to be committed to the organization?” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .97)

**Leader-member exchange (organization target).** As a measure of exchange quality, participants responded to the scale adapted by Hofmann, Morgeson, and Gerras’s (2003) to assess individuals’ perception of exchange quality with the organization. This scale was derived from Scandura & Graen’s (1984) seven-item LMX scale assessing the exchange quality between leaders and subordinates. Participants are asked to assess items like “My organization recognizes my potential,” “My organization would use its power to help me solve work related problems,” and “I defend and justify my organization's decisions” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .92).

**Perceived organizational support.** Perceived organizational support was measured using a nine-item short form of Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa’s (1986) perceived organizational support scale. These items assessed the degree to which employees felt

that the organization valued and cared about them. The scale included items like “My organization takes pride in my accomplishments,” “My organization values my contributions to its well-being,” and “My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .96).

**Satisfaction.** In order to measure satisfaction, participants were given two scales. The first scale was taken from Spector’s (1997) four-item scale and adapted to target the organization rather than the supervisor. Participants were asked to respond to items that included “I like my organization” and “My organization is unfair to me” (reverse coded). The second scale was taken from Agho, Price, and Mueller’s (1992) six-item scale of job satisfaction. Items were again adapted. This time they were changed to refer to the organization rather than the job. Participants responded to items like “Most days I am enthusiastic about my organization” and “I feel fairly well satisfied with my present organization” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .95).

**Social exchange relationships.** In order to measure of social exchange relationships, participants responded to Colquitt et al.’s (2014) four-item scale measuring social exchange. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with items like “My relationship with my organization is characterized by mutual trust” and “My relationship with my organization is characterized by mutual commitment” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .89).

**Trust.** In order to measure trust, both affective trust and trust as individuals’ willingness to be vulnerable were measured. Participants were assessed on their affective based trust utilizing Colquitt et al.’s (2014) adaptation of McAllister’s (1995) six-item measure of affective-based trust. The measure includes items like “My organization and I would both feel a sense of loss if I could no longer work there” and “If I shared my problems with my organization, I know that my

management would respond constructively and caringly” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .94). As a measure of trust as individuals’ willingness to make themselves vulnerable, participants responded to an adaptation of Schoorman, Mayer, and Davis’s (2007) six-item trust scale. The measure included items like “If my organization asked why a problem occurred, I would speak freely even if I were partly to blame” and “If I had my way, I wouldn’t let my organization have any influence over decisions that are important to me” (reverse coded;  $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .78)

**Positive affect.** In measuring positive affect, participants responded to a scale made up of six items developed by Segura and González-Romá (2003). Items were adapted to fit within the context of an organization and participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed to items like “My organization makes me feel optimistic” and “My organization makes me feel enthusiastic” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .95).

**Status.** In order to measure status, participants responded to the five-item workplace status scale (WSS) developed by Djurdjevic et al., (2017). The scale included items like “I have a great deal of prestige in my organization,” “I occupy a respected position in my organization,” and “I possess a high level of prominence in my organization” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .97).

**Incivility.** As a measure of incivility, participants responded to the Workplace Incivility scale developed by Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout’s (2001). The measure asked individuals to assess the degree to which they agreed with a number of items. For example, “While employed at your organization, you have been in a situation where members of your organization paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest your opinion” ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .92).

## **Data Analysis Strategy**

In order to examine the relationships between the constructs it was necessary to account not only for random and specific error, but also transient error (Shaffer et al., 2016). In order to do this, I utilized both the disattenuation formula along with confirmatory factor analysis with two separate time periods following the procedures developed by Schmidt, Le, and Ilies (2003) and incorporated by Shaffer et al., (2016). First, I split the scales into half-scales for each measure in order to create two equivalent parallel measures. Per Becker's (2002) suggestions I was careful to make sure that similar factors were evenly distributed and when possible, reverse items were equivalent across the groupings. I then used the parallel measures to solve for the coefficient of equivalence and stability (CES), to establish the amount of transient error over observed score variance and the degree to which the coefficient of equivalence and stability was overestimated by the coefficient of equivalence.

I then estimated the true score correlation between the constructs. In order to examine the constructs through CFA, I paired each construct separately examining the relationship between the models when the covariance between the focal variables was constrained to 1.0 or left unconstrained. Because multiple indices provide a more holistic view of the relationship between variables, I incorporated a number of different indices to examine the divergent validity of the constructs. Researchers suggest that "even if only one index (chi-squared, change in CFI, the factor correlation, or the disattenuated correlation) exceeds the associated threshold specified in [the] study, researchers should question the discriminant validity of the study constructs" (Shaffer et al., 2016, p.104).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities for Study 2

	Time 1			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Alpha	Mean	SD								
1 Appreciated	0.98	5.11	1.31		0.91	0.80	0.78	0.80	0.88	0.90	0.85
2 Respect	0.94	5.56	1.01	0.87		0.82	0.72	0.72	0.84	0.86	0.78
3 Organization-based self-esteem	0.95	5.61	0.92	0.77	0.84		0.72	0.72	0.81	0.77	0.73
4 Organizational identification	0.95	4.38	1.50	0.72	0.63	0.61		0.90	0.84	0.82	0.87
5 Affective commitment	0.94	4.54	1.62	0.74	0.68	0.65	0.88		0.85	0.84	0.89
6 LMX (organizational based)	0.92	5.05	1.17	0.85	0.81	0.79	0.76	0.77		0.90	0.86
7 Perceived organizational support	0.97	4.93	1.36	0.86	0.81	0.77	0.80	0.80	0.92		0.85
8 Satisfaction	0.94	5.10	1.30	0.80	0.73	0.69	0.83	0.83	0.79	0.83	
9 Social exchange relationship	0.87	5.01	1.16	0.74	0.66	0.70	0.72	0.71	0.78	0.79	0.74
10 Affective trust	0.94	4.86	1.40	0.85	0.78	0.78	0.83	0.84	0.89	0.92	0.84
11 Trust (willingness to be vulnerable)	0.76	4.55	1.00	0.68	0.61	0.61	0.73	0.75	0.72	0.74	0.76
12 Positive affect	0.94	5.09	1.36	0.77	0.72	0.70	0.77	0.76	0.77	0.81	0.90
13 Status	0.97	4.05	1.57	0.55	0.53	0.55	0.57	0.51	0.56	0.56	0.52
14 Incivility	0.93	2.74	1.52	(0.48)	(0.46)	(0.39)	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.44)	(0.46)	(0.47)

Time 1 below the diagonal. Time 2 above the diagonal

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities for Study 2  
Continued...

9	10	11	12	13	14	Time 2		
						Mean	SD	Alpha
0.77	0.87	0.73	0.82	0.66	(0.49)	4.99	1.30	0.97
0.76	0.82	0.71	0.79	0.65	(0.50)	5.45	1.08	0.95
0.76	0.80	0.66	0.74	0.68	(0.35)	5.58	0.88	0.93
0.75	0.84	0.71	0.80	0.65	(0.32)	4.31	1.49	0.95
0.75	0.86	0.76	0.81	0.63	(0.39)	4.54	1.60	0.94
0.82	0.89	0.77	0.82	0.69	(0.46)	4.96	1.18	0.92
0.80	0.90	0.76	0.81	0.63	(0.45)	4.90	1.34	0.96
0.78	0.87	0.77	0.91	0.60	(0.46)	5.06	1.30	0.95
	0.79	0.69	0.74	0.61	(0.37)	5.03	1.19	0.90
0.80		0.77	0.85	0.65	(0.40)	4.76	1.41	0.94
0.67	0.76		0.74	0.47	(0.46)	4.48	1.04	0.79
0.66	0.80	0.72		0.57	(0.44)	5.05	1.41	0.95
0.56	0.56	0.36	0.49		(0.25)	3.98	1.61	0.97
(0.33)	(0.43)	(0.51)	(0.48)	(0.19)		2.50	1.27	0.91

## Results

The purpose of this study was to first analyze how feeling appreciated is a bridge construct, highly related to a number of fundamental OB constructs, and second observe whether those focal variables met the empirical requirements for establishing discriminant validity. I expected that feeling appreciated would be highly related to each of the focal constructs and that the twelve constructs would be highly correlated with each other. In Table 4 I report the means, standard deviations, coefficient alphas, and observed correlations for both Time 1 and Time 2, with Time 1 correlations listed below the diagonal and Time 2 correlations listed above. Internal consistencies are high for both time periods ranging from .76 to .98 across the two times with an average coefficient alpha of .93. Observed correlations at time one ranged from .92 with LMX and POS and affective trust and POS to -.19 with status and incivility. At Time 2 the correlations ranged from .91 with positive affect and satisfaction and feeling appreciated and respect to -.25 with status and incivility.

Table 5 indicates the degree to which the coefficient of equivalence and stability was overestimated by the coefficient of equivalence or in other words it is the extent to which the coefficient of equivalence overestimated the reliability of the various measures. In Study 2 I found a similar range of overestimates found by Shaffer and colleagues (2016) underscoring the import of including transient error in the empirical model. Overestimates ranged from 3.55% for trust (willingness to be vulnerable) to 21.29% for incivility.

Table 5. Percentage that the Coefficient of Equivalence and Stability is Overestimated by  
Coefficient of Equivalence for Study 2

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>CES</b>	<b>TEV</b>	<b>% Overestimate</b>
Feeling appreciated	0.97	0.86	0.11	12.79%
Respect	0.94	0.80	0.15	18.75%
Organization-based self-esteem	0.94	0.79	0.14	18.00%
Organizational identification	0.95	0.90	0.05	5.53%
Affective commitment	0.94	0.90	0.04	4.88%
LMX (organizational based)	0.92	0.82	0.09	11.28%
Perceived organizational support	0.96	0.90	0.07	7.30%
Satisfaction	0.95	0.88	0.06	7.01%
Social exchange relationship	0.89	0.74	0.15	20.07%
Affective trust	0.94	0.87	0.07	7.80%
Trust (willingness to be vulnerable)	0.78	0.75	0.03	3.55%
Positive affect	0.95	0.88	0.07	7.56%
Status	0.97	0.82	0.15	17.27%
Incivility	0.92	0.76	0.16	21.29%

*Note.*  $N = 202$ . *CE* = average coefficient of equivalence ( $\alpha$ ) across Time 1 and Time 2; *CES* = coefficient of equivalence and stability; *TEV* = transient error variance over observed scores variance; *% Overestimate* = percentage that *CES* is over-estimated by *CE*.

Following the recommendation of Shaffer and colleagues (2016) I report on four different assessments of discriminant validity in order to present a more holistic view of the relationships between these focal constructs. Table 6 reports each of the discriminant validity indices including the true score correlation (incorporating the CES not just the CE), factor correlation, Chi-squared difference test, and the change in CFI. Following the 4 indices is a column tabulating the number of indices in which the relationship between the variables failed to show discriminant validity. Again, scholars (Shaffer et al., 2016) have suggested that failing a single benchmark warrants sufficient evidence for scholars to begin to question the discriminant validity of the construct. In the sections below, I discuss the results from each index in greater detail.

Table 6. Four Indices of discriminant validity

	<b>True score correlations (Cutoff <math>x &gt; .85</math>)</b>	<b>Factor correlation (Cutoff <math>x &gt; .85</math>)</b>	<b>Chi-squared difference (Cutoff <math>x &lt; 3.841</math>)</b>	<b>CFI difference (Cutoff <math>x &lt; .003</math>)</b>	<b>Indices suggesting lack of discriminant validity</b>
Appreciated-Respect	0.95	0.96	-	-	<b>4</b>
Appreciated-OBSE	0.87	0.85	8.86	0.012	<b>2</b>
Appreciated-Organizational identification	0.81	0.84	0.01	-	<b>2</b>
Appreciated-Affective commitment	0.84	0.86	0.85	-	<b>3</b>
Appreciated-LMX	0.94	0.95	0.67	0.005	<b>3</b>
Appreciated-POS	0.94	0.96	5.89	0.005	<b>2</b>
Appreciated-Satisfaction	0.90	0.92	1.13	-	<b>4</b>
Appreciated-Social exchange relation	0.87	0.88	1.42	-	<b>4</b>
Appreciated-Trust (Affective)	0.91	0.94	4.67	0.004	<b>2</b>
Appreciated-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.74	0.85	5.38	0.007	<b>1</b>
Appreciated-Affect (Positive)	0.84	0.90	1.18	0.001	<b>3</b>
Respect-OBSE	0.92	0.93	11.85	0.016	<b>2</b>
Respect-Organizational identification	0.72	0.81	3.85	0.005	<b>0</b>
Respect-Affective commitment	0.74	0.83	1.66	0.001	<b>2</b>
Respect-LMX	0.89	0.95	1.54	-	<b>3</b>
Respect-POS	0.91	0.94	0.01	-	<b>4</b>
Respect-Satisfaction	0.83	0.89	2.05	0.001	<b>3</b>
Respect-Social exchange relation	0.83	0.89	6.71	0.013	<b>1</b>
Respect-Trust (Affective)	0.86	0.93	0.00	-	<b>3</b>
Respect-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.71	0.86	13.93	0.031	<b>1</b>
Respect-Affect (Positive)	0.79	0.88	1.30	-	<b>3</b>
OBSE-Organizational identification	0.69	0.76	12.22	0.016	<b>0</b>
OBSE-Affective commitment	0.76	0.82	4.81	0.005	<b>0</b>

Table 6. Four Indices of discriminant validity  
Continued...

	<b>True score correlations (Cutoff <math>x &gt; .85</math>)</b>	<b>Factor correlation (Cutoff <math>x &gt; .85</math>)</b>	<b>Chi-squared difference (Cutoff <math>x &lt; 3.841</math>)</b>	<b>CFI difference (Cutoff <math>x &lt; .003</math>)</b>	<b>Indices suggesting lack of discriminant validity</b>
OBSE-LMX	0.84	0.91	8.39	0.012	<b>1</b>
OBSE-POS	0.81	0.86	6.58	0.007	<b>1</b>
OBSE-Satisfaction	0.77	0.83	10.43	0.017	<b>0</b>
OBSE-Social exchange relation	0.83	0.89	10.80	0.021	<b>1</b>
OBSE-Trust (Affective)	0.83	0.91	1.83	0.001	<b>3</b>
OBSE-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.63	0.81	26.16	0.065	<b>0</b>
OBSE-Affect (Positive)	0.74	0.84	7.21	0.011	<b>0</b>
Org. identification-Affective commitment	0.93	0.97	32.28	0.034	<b>2</b>
Org. identification-LMX	0.90	0.91	0.88	-	<b>4</b>
Org. identification-POS	0.87	0.86	0.51	0.001	<b>3</b>
Org. identification-Satisfaction	0.91	0.91	3.56	0.003	<b>4</b>
Org. identification-Social exchange relation	0.87	0.84	0.78	-	<b>3</b>
Org. identification-Trust (Affective)	0.90	0.89	3.63	0.003	<b>4</b>
Org. identification-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.76	0.84	2.96	0.003	<b>2</b>
Org. identification-Affect (Positive)	0.80	0.87	1.30	-	<b>3</b>
Affective commitment-LMX	0.89	0.93	3.10	0.003	<b>4</b>
Affective commitment-POS	0.85	0.88	2.98	0.001	<b>4</b>
Affective commitment-Satisfaction	0.91	0.94	9.72	0.011	<b>2</b>
Affective commitment-Social exchange relation	0.86	0.88	0.03	0.002	<b>4</b>
Affective commitment-Trust (Affective)	0.90	0.92	10.20	0.010	<b>2</b>
Affective commitment-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.78	0.90	0.04	-	<b>3</b>
Affective commitment-Affect (Positive)	0.79	0.88	3.97	0.004	<b>1</b>
LMX-POS	0.96	0.96			<b>4</b>

Table 6. Four Indices of discriminant validity  
Continued...

	<b>True score correlations (Cutoff <math>x &gt; .85</math>)</b>	<b>Factor correlation (Cutoff <math>x &gt; .85</math>)</b>	<b>Chi-squared difference (Cutoff <math>x &lt; 3.841</math>)</b>	<b>CFI difference (Cutoff <math>x &lt; .003</math>)</b>	<b>Indices suggesting lack of discriminant validity</b>
LMX-Satisfaction	0.88	0.93	0.058	-	<b>4</b>
LMX-Social exchange relation	0.89	0.96	0.227	0.001	<b>4</b>
LMX-Trust (Affective)	0.94	0.97	4.333	0.003	<b>3</b>
LMX-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.72	0.88	7.014	0.013	<b>1</b>
LMX-Affect (Positive)	0.82	0.91	0.090	0.002	<b>3</b>
POS-Satisfaction	0.90	0.91	1.313	-	<b>4</b>
POS-Social exchange relation	0.89	0.93	0.062	0.002	<b>4</b>
POS-Trust (Affective)	0.95	0.97	13.200	0.013	<b>2</b>
POS-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.75	0.88	2.533	0.003	<b>3</b>
POS-Affect (Positive)	0.83	0.89	1.246	0.001	<b>3</b>
Satisfaction-Social exchange relation	0.84	0.87	1.478	0.001	<b>3</b>
Satisfaction-Trust (Affective)	0.87	0.92	2.302	0.001	<b>4</b>
Satisfaction-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.81	0.89	2.620	0.002	<b>3</b>
Satisfaction-Affect (Positive)	0.93	1.00	22.196	0.025	<b>2</b>
Social exchange relation-Trust (Affective)	0.86	0.95	0.929	0.001	<b>4</b>
Social exchange relation-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.70	0.86	8.537	0.021	<b>1</b>
Social exchange relation-Affect (Positive)	0.73	0.84	1.769	0.002	<b>2</b>
Trust (Affective)-Trust (Vulnerability)	0.75	0.88	1.820	0.001	<b>3</b>
Trust (Affective)-Affect (Positive)	0.84	0.93	5.440	0.005	<b>1</b>
Trust (Vulnerability)-Affect (Positive)	0.79	0.85	3.574	0.004	<b>2</b>

## **True Score Correlations**

While scholars have not defined a cut off score to set the boundaries for where two correlated constructs become empirically indistinguishable from each other, several scholars have suggested that correlations of .80 or .90 between constructs may signal construct redundancy (Field, 2009; Parent, Moradi, Rummell, & Tokar, 2011; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). I chose .85 as a cutoff score to determine whether the measure passes the threshold for discriminant validity. Others have provided examples of indistinguishable constructs. For example, John and Benet-Martinez (2000) give a correlation of .90 as indistinguishable, while Le et al. (2010) reported that the correlation of .91 was indistinguishable “in any practical sense” (p.122).

I first examined feeling appreciated and its relationship with the 11 other focal constructs. The average true score correlation for the constructs was above .85 with 7 of the 11 relationships exceeding the .85 benchmark. The true score correlations for feeling appreciated and the other focal constructs ranged from .74 for its relationship with trust (willingness to be vulnerable) to .95 with its relationship with respect. The true score correlations between all 11 focal variables ranged from .63 between organization-based self-esteem and trust (willingness to be vulnerable) to .96 between LMX and POS. The average true score correlation between all the focal constructs was .84 with thirty-two of the sixty-six relationships exceeding the .85 cutoff.

## **Factor Correlations**

The second index reported in Table 6 is the factor correlations between the constructs. Using SEM and multiple time periods to account for transient error (Le et al., 2009), I calculated factor correlations for each of the 11 focal variables. Scholars suggest that when a factor correlation exceeds .85 or higher the construct fails to show adequate construct validity (van

Mierlo, Vermunt, & Rutte, 2009; Kenny, 2016). As a result, I adopted .85 as the cut off score for this index. Factor correlations for feeling appreciated ranged from .84 with organizational identification to .96 with both respect and POS. Feeling appreciated had an average factor correlation of .90 with the other focal constructs. Additionally, it was empirically identical with all other constructs except organizational identification. Factor correlations for all the constructs ranged from .76 with organization-based self-esteem and organizational identification to 1.00 with satisfaction and positive affect. The average correlation between all the focal constructs was .89 with fifty-five of the sixty-six relationships exceeding the .85 cutoff.

### **Chi-squared Difference**

The third index reported in Table 6 is the chi-squared difference test. Again, utilizing SEM and multiple time periods to account for transient error (Le et al., 2009), I calculated chi-squared differences between a constrained and unconstrained model. In the constrained model the covariance between constructs was set to 1.0. The constrained and unconstrained models were then compared to assess whether the unconstrained model provides a better fit. The cutoff score for this index was 3.841 because there was one degree of freedom difference between the models. The change in chi-squared for feeling appreciated varied from 0 to 8.86 with 7 of the 11 relationships failing to establish discriminant validity from feeling appreciated. I then ran chi-squared difference tests on all the focal constructs. The constructs were statistically indistinguishable in forty of the sixty-six relationships.

### **Change in CFI**

The final index reported is change in CFI. Scholars suggest that a change in CFI of .002 or less suggests that two constructs are empirically identical (Meade, Johnson, & Braddy, 2008). Using a constrained and unconstrained model, I measured fit between the models. Scholars

suggest that CFI may be less susceptible to changes in sample size compared with change in chi-squared. Change in CFI for feeling appreciated ranged from 0.000 to 0.031. Six of the 11 relationships failing to exhibit discriminant validity from feeling appreciated. I then ran chi-squared difference tests on all the focal constructs. The constructs were statistically indistinguishable in half of the sixty-six relationships.

### **Summary**

The results of these multiple indices suggest that feeling appreciated is not only highly related, but empirically indistinguishable from ten of the eleven other constructs. Of the focal constructs, only status passed all four tests suggesting that the other constructs or measures lack sufficient empirical distinction to show that these constructs are empirically unique. More than half of the constructs were indistinguishable in at least 3 or the 4 tests. Across all of the focal constructs, the constructs failed to meet validity cutoffs 57.58% of the time.

### **Discussion**

My overarching goals for this chapter were twofold. First, I intended to theoretically propose and provide empirical evidence that feeling appreciated bridges numerous core constructs in the OB literature. Second, I intended to provide a tool that could be used by researchers and practitioners alike to measure feeling appreciated while simultaneously informing researchers about a number of other core OB constructs reflecting individuals' interpersonal and self-evaluations.

SCM suggests that individuals evaluate both others and themselves based on two general dimensions, warmth and competence. These two dimensions account for most of the variance (82%) in interpersonal evaluations (Wojciszke et al., 1998). Using gratitude and social exchange theories I hypothesized that because feeling appreciated strongly affects both of these

dimensions, feeling appreciated bridges many of the constructs that perform similar functions or are closely linked within these theories.

The results of the study strongly supported both overarching goals. Given the high correlations that feeling appreciated had with each of the core OB constructs there is strong evidence that feeling appreciated empirically bridges these core constructs. Additionally, the measure for feeling appreciated showed itself to be a parsimonious solution to understanding the constructs related to interpersonal and self-evaluations that occur within a relationship. The strong results of the study also suggest that many of these core constructs may lack the discriminant validity that scholars have suggested is necessary to operate as unique constructs.

As Judge et al. (2017) noted, while “researchers have taken great pains to separate each new construct theoretically from existing, more familiar constructs, frequently, the theoretical arguments for separation are more persuasive than the subsequent empirical efforts to demonstrate discriminant validity.” The results from this study supported this statement. The empirical evidence suggested that feeling appreciated did indeed share significant overlap with each of the variables so much so that when accounting for transient error over time, the differences between almost all of the focal constructs became negligible. Moreover, the relationships between each of the focal constructs were highly related as well. After accounting for transient error, all of the constructs (with the exception of status) failed to show adequate discriminant validity across each of the four benchmarks.

Several explanations could be given for the results. First, the high overlap could be the result of methodological issues within the study. For example, responses may have been influenced by common method bias. Though I took several precautions to reduce the effects of common method variance, suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003) including conducting the survey

at two separate time points, it is possible that common method bias affected the results. I discuss this issue at greater length in the next section. Second, the results could be the effect of a unique sample. The sample was composed of Amazon Mechanical Turk employees. Though I took precautions to both engage participants and screen individuals not thoroughly engaged in the study, it is possible that this sample may not be generalizable to a larger population.

Other explanations require greater research and are more disconcerting. For example, the high overlap may suggest that the various measures are not sensitive enough to adequately measure the different underlying constructs. Alternatively, the high degree of empirical overlap may be a function of construct redundancy. If either of the latter explanations is correct, given that feeling appreciated's close relationship spans each of the focal constructs, it provides a parsimonious way for researchers to assess individuals' intrapsychic assessment of a relationship or their involvement in the relationship. Moreover, it helps provide additional support for the criticality of both explicit expressions of gratitude or token symbols of one's gratitude within a relationship.

### **Limitations and Future Direction**

Although this work begins to address the importance of feeling appreciated within organizational behavior, there are several limitations to the study. This study consists of only one sample of Mechanical Turk participants and while the number of participants was large enough to have sufficient power for the study and these participants worked in a variety of industries with diverse tenure, scholars have suggested that drawing strong conclusions based on one sample is almost always ill-advised. As a result, more work examining the relationships between these variables should be conducted.

Past work examining the relationships between constructs in this nomological net do not always have the same high correlations found in this study. While the divergent findings could be due to a number of factors, studies examining these constructs have typically failed to address one or more of the following issues that may have led to biased results. First, Cote and Buckley (1987) found that 32% of the variance across over 70 studies was due to error. Since then, Le and colleagues (2010) showed that transient error along with scale specific factor error (Le et al., 2009) have been largely ignored. As a result, studies have largely underestimated construct-level relationships (Le et al., 2010).

Second, researchers often failed to match the targets when assessing constructs within the nomological net (e.g. instead matching LMX and POS), while the relationships between these various constructs may be theoretically interesting, empirically speaking, the differences found between the variables may be explained more by the change in targets than by the change in constructs (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). When both the phenomenon of interest and the target are changed simultaneously, it becomes impossible to truly assess whether it is the change in target or the change in construct that truly drive the effect. Third, the temporal relationship of the constructs is typically not considered (Mitchell & James, 2001). Without accounting for time studies may have failed to accurately assess the true relationship between constructs. As a result, I suggest that these results call for greater attention to be given to the relationships between these variables.

Another limitation to this study is that the results may have been influenced by common source of data. Although I took several precautions to reduce the influence of common method variance (CMV), it is still possible that the results were affected by CMV. Though CMV may artificially influence (either raising or lowering) the relationship between variable, Fuller,

Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, and Babin, (2016) presented simulation data that demonstrated that typically CMV does not present a “grave threat to the validity of research findings” and that “a relatively high level of CMV must be present to bias true relationships among substantive variables at typically reported reliability levels” (p.3192). Still, I sought to eliminate these biases by following suggestions offered by Podsakoff et al., (2003) by examining the constructs at multiple time points, randomizing the order of the constructs while keeping the individual constructs together (thus increasing the relationship within the constructs but not between the constructs; Podsakoff et al., 2003), and by inserting activities and attention checks within the study to increase participant engagement. In the next study of my dissertation, I further address this limitation while finding very similar results to this initial study.

Finally, the study looked only at the organization as the target of the source of the individuals’ feelings of being appreciated, while I suggest that these findings are generalizable across targets and the relationship between feeling appreciated by the organization and POS or commitment to the organization is similar to feeling appreciated by the team or leader and equivalently targeted variables (e.g. perceived team or leader support), future research should examine these additional targets to ascertain whether these proposed relationships exist. In addition, I suggest that future research should look to either more clearly establish divergent validity for this set of constructs or to reconsider current theories on social self-perception. The results of this study suggest that each of these foundational constructs failed to provide sufficient evidence of discriminant validity showing that they are empirically unique. Kelley (1927) suggested that the proliferation of redundant constructs contaminated clear thinking while stultifying scientific progress.

## CHAPTER 5 – STUDY 3

My final dissertation chapter extends Chapter 4 in two fundamental ways. First, it further tests the assertion that feeling appreciated is a bridge construct tying a number of core OB constructs together. In doing so, this chapter attends to some of the limitations from the previous study, primarily addressing concerns of common-method bias and limited generalizability. The chapter also further examines the relationships between the focal constructs, again looking at these relationships across time while accounting for transient error in order to gain a more accurate assessment of the true relationships between these constructs.

Second, the chapter examines the effects feeling appreciated has on a number of important organizational outcomes. Because feeling appreciated is a central component affecting individuals' interpersonal, social, and self-evaluations of warmth and competence, I hypothesize that feeling appreciated also affects outcomes associated with both dimensions of the social self-evaluative process. In order to test this, I conducted a 3-week diary study to examine behavioral outcomes related to both warmth and competence dimensions.

Using gratitude and social exchange theories as a lens through which to examine feeling appreciated, Study 2 showed that feeling appreciated is a bridge construct linking many core organizational constructs that are associated with individuals' social self-evaluative process. Again, utilizing these theories, Study 3 extends the previous findings to show first that both warmth- and competence-based behavioral outcomes inherent in these cyclical processes are affected by feeling appreciated, and second that through self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), feeling appreciated affects individuals' workplace behaviors. This triggers a sensemaking process (Grant et al., 2008) in which individuals then interpret and generalize those behaviors and those behaviors shape their workplace identities as well.

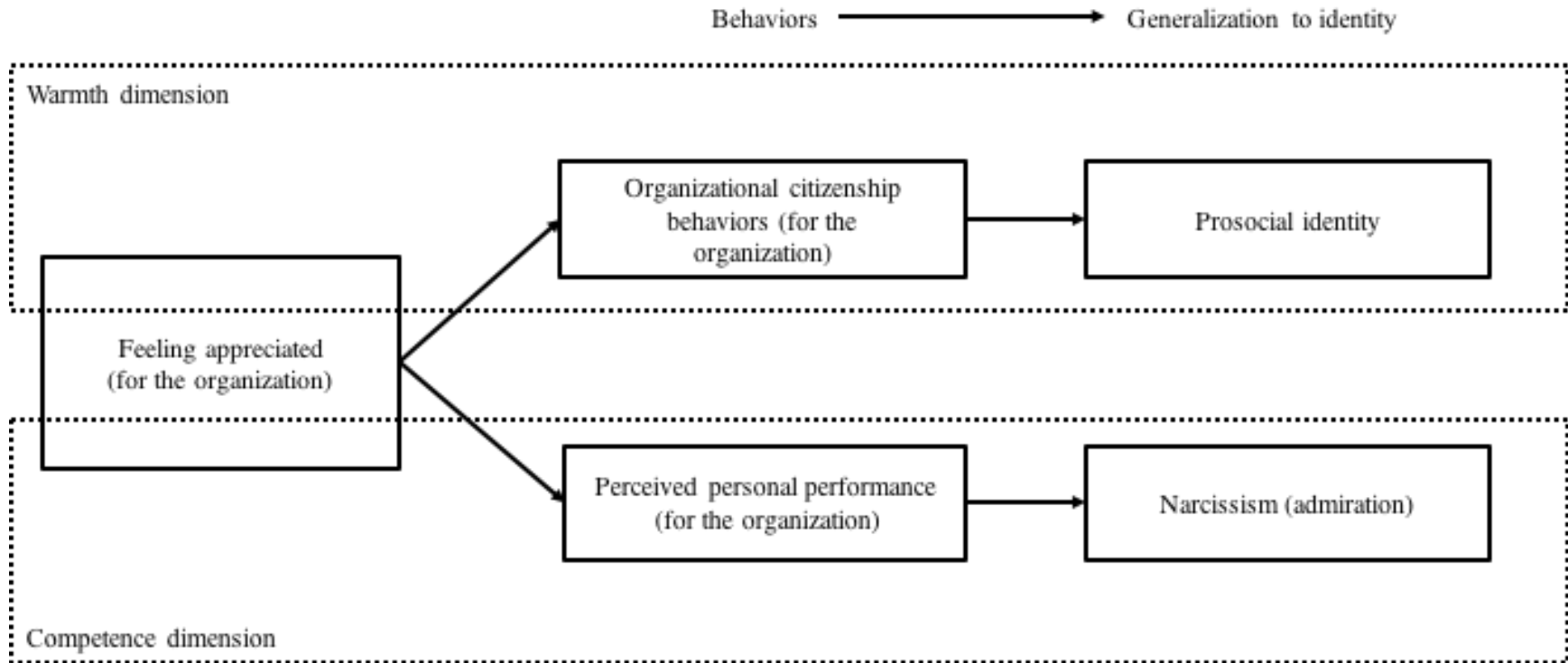
## **Effects of Feeling Appreciated**

Because feeling appreciated affects both warmth and competence dimensions within social self-evaluations, I suggest that feeling appreciated also affects behavioral outcomes and identity outcomes related to both dimensions. Cuddy and colleagues (2008) noted that “warmth represents an accommodating orientation that profits others more than the self, whereas competence represents self-profitable traits related to the ability to bring about desired events (Peeters, 1983; p.63).” As a result, by bridging both dimensions, I suggest that feeling appreciated affects behavior and identities that are both other-oriented (warmth) and self-concerned (competence).

Scholars have long argued that other-orientation and self-concern represents two ends of a continuum (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009). Furthermore, theory on self-construal, self-determination, and leadership have each assumed that individuals view themselves as either interdependent or autonomous (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, more recently, De Dreu and Nauta (2009) suggested that self-concern and other orientation are independent to each other. SCM argues that the dimensions of warmth and competence are also orthogonal (Fiske et al., 2002).

Because feeling appreciated bridges constructs related to warmth and competence, I propose that feeling appreciated positively affects both other-oriented and self-concerned outcomes that may initially seem to be theoretically disparate. Utilizing self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), I argue that feeling appreciated affects self-concerned and other-oriented aspects of the individuals’ identity as individuals generalize their other-oriented behavior and self-concerned behavior to their identity. A visual representation of the model is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Model of the Outcomes of Feeling Appreciated



The behavioral variables within this model stem from social exchange and gratitude theory, while the resultant effects on these employees' identities are explained by self-perception theory. As individuals feel appreciated social exchange and gratitude theory suggest they will engage in some sort of reciprocal behavior. In this study, and within the context of the warmth dimension of SCM, I argue that as employees feel appreciated by the organization, they will respond in ways that strengthen the relationship with the organization. Specifically, they will engage in organizational citizenship behavior towards the organization (OCBO). This action, according to self-perception theory, will then trigger efforts to explain and interpret these actions, to form inferences about their own identities. As a result, I propose that engaging in OCBOs will lead to individuals to adopt a prosocial identity.

Similarly, within the context of the competence dimension of SCM, as individuals feel appreciated, social exchange and gratitude theory suggest that they will respond in ways to display their competence and value. I argue that this will specifically lead to stronger job performance. Drawing from the tenants of self-perception theory I suggest that as individuals see themselves perform well, this performance will then affect how they perceive themselves, specifically increasing their level of narcissistic admiration.

In discussing the model, I begin by explaining why feeling appreciated by an organization affects employee's organizational citizenship behavior and performance. I then follow by theoretically linking these behaviors to self-concerned and other-oriented identities, specifically prosocial identity and narcissism. Drawing on the tenants of self-perception theory I finally explain how OCBs and performance mediate these relationships as individuals interpret their actions and generalize their behavior in shaping the warmth and competent components of their identities.

## **Feeling Appreciated Increases Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Social exchange and gratitude theory suggest that relational loops exist between parties involving both individuals' perceptions and behaviors. Cropanzano and colleagues (2017) explained the cyclical nature of social exchange theory by stating that as a source feels value in a relationship, the source will then engage in some reciprocating response towards the target. Similarly, theory on gratitude (Gordon et al., 2012) proposes that after individuals feel appreciated by the target they will engage in reciprocal relational maintenance behavior. These theories suggest that as individuals feel appreciated, they will engage in other oriented behavior that further develops the relationship between parties.

Psychologists have long argued that feeling appreciated or valued by others is a fundamental human emotion (Grant & Gino, 2010; de Montmorency, 1921; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). As individuals provide worth to others, they experience a sense of belongingness or communion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), fulfilling this need to be of worth to others. Grant and Gino (2010) noted that individuals may withhold help because they are uncertain that the target of the aid will value their help; however, as individuals feel that their efforts are appreciated, they become more motivated to improve the social and psychological well-being of the target (Batson, 1998). I suggest that within the organizational context, as employees feel appreciated by their organization, they will respond by exhibiting organizational citizenship behavior towards the organization.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers to employee behavior that goes beyond typical role requirements and has been defined by Organ (1997) as “performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place” (p. 95). This performance, typically less formally linked to formal organizational rewards, consists of

discretionary actions that benefit the organization or individuals within the organization (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991; Podsakoff, Aherne, & MacKenzie, 1997). These actions include individuals going beyond the explicit requirements of their job to help the organization or individuals within the organization, to train and mentor others, to speak up in favor of the organization, encourage others, to tolerate less than ideal conditions without complaining, and so on (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009; Whiting, Podsakoff, & Pierce, 2008).

OCBs benefit the organization by “lubricating” the social exchange process (Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002; Organ et al., 2006; P. M. Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997), increasing customer satisfaction, organizational efficiency, and making organizations a more attractive workplace (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2009). I suggest that because the level of interest in this paper is the organization, OCBs directed towards the organization (OCBO) are more relevant to the current inquiry than OCBI or OCBs directed towards individuals within the organization. Thus, I propose that as employees feel appreciated by their organization, they will be more motivated to engage in organizational citizenship behavior directed towards the organization (OCBO).

*Hypothesis 1: Feeling appreciated by the organization will increase individuals’ organizational citizenship behavior for the organization.*

### **Feeling Appreciated Increases Job Performance**

Increasing job performance has been recognized as a prime objective for management scholarship (Grant, 2008; Staw, 1984). Scholars have defined job performance as individual behaviors that advance organizational goals (Campbell, 1990; Dalal, Bhawe, & Fiset, 2014). Researchers have long realized that changing perceptions of the job can significantly alter one’s

performance (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Turner & Lawrence, 1965). Similarly, scholars have argued that changing individuals' perception about their ability to complete the job can change performance as well (Pierce et al., 1989).

Bandura (1982) argued that individuals' belief that they are able to accomplish a task (or their self-efficacy) is associated with their actual ability to perform the task. In a meta-analysis with over 114 studies Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) found that the weighted correlation between self-efficacy and work-related performance was .38. In another meta-analysis, Judge and Bono (2001) found there was a .26 corrected correlation between general self-esteem and performance. Finally, Gardner, Van Dyne, and Pierce (2004) argued and empirically demonstrated that as the specificity of individuals' self-esteem becomes more relevant to a given task or context, the relationship between performance and the confidence in their ability to perform becomes stronger and more stable.

Feeling appreciated by a target provides evidence of one's competence and ability to successfully provide value to a target. In feeling appreciated by a target, individuals received third-party evidence that their efforts have been valued. As they recognize that their actions have been gratefully received, confidence in their ability to perform and provide value for the target increases. In an organizational setting as individuals feel that the organization appreciates their efforts, employees will be confident in their efforts at work. This close relationship between feeling appreciated and self-esteem was evidenced in Study 2 as feeling appreciated for the organization was correlated with OBSE had a true score correlation of .87.

Feeling appreciated however does not only change individuals' levels of confidence in their work. Because feeling appreciated is a relational binder, it also changes individuals' perception of their relationships, as well. Scholars have recognized that employees' perceptions

of their relationships with their coworkers (Ozer, 2011), their leaders (Gerstner & Day, 1997), or those they serve (Grant, 2008) can also affect job performance. As a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; de Montmorency, 1921; Grant & Gino, 2010), feeling appreciated or valued by others motivates individuals to contribute to others (Harkins & Petty, 1982; Rosen, Mickler, & Collins, 1987). As individuals see that their efforts are valued by others, they are more likely to invest additional time and energy into their work (Grant, 2008). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) theorized that feeling valued by the organization should not only increase employees' motivation to care for the organization's welfare and to increase their efforts to help the organization reach its objectives, but it should also increase individual's belief that the organization will further recognize and reward positive performance. Thus, I suggest that as individuals feel appreciated, their job performance will improve.

*Hypothesis 2: Feeling appreciated by the organization will positively influence individuals' perceived job performance.*

### **Organizational Behavior Mediates Feeling Appreciated's Effect on Prosocial Identity**

Research suggests that individuals have multiple identities (Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006) and that as these identities become salient, people's behavior and attitudes differ in powerful ways (Grant, Molinsky, Margolis, Kamin, & Schiano). Scholars (Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Shamir, 1990) have shown that individuals are motivated through processes of self-affirmation and self-verification to authenticate valued identities. One such identity is prosocial identity. Prosocial identity refers to the perception that individuals see themselves as helpful, caring, and benevolent (Grant, 2007). Scholars have found that most individuals not only value prosocial identities, but also tend to hold a prosocial identity of themselves (Grant et al., 2009; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

Bem (1972) proposed self-perception theory, in which he argued that individuals observe their own actions in order to infer their inner states. Researchers have argued (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007) this self-perception process is stronger as the action taken is volitional and as generalizations about one's inner state have yet to be determined. Grant and colleagues (2008) found evidence for this process both in a number of qualitative interviews and a quantitative study with employees from a Fortune 500 retail company. As employees gave to employee support programs, their behavior initiated a prosocial sensemaking process in which their identities changed. They began to adopt prosocial identities. Drawing from self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) Grant and colleagues (2008) explained how engaging in helping behavior triggered this prosocial sense-making process. As individuals saw themselves helping others, they began to adopt for themselves a prosocial identity, seeing themselves as individuals who were caring and benevolent.

Interestingly however, despite the fact that most employees spend their time at work creating value for others, such efforts often do not activate this prosocial sense-making process. This may occur for several reasons, two of which are worth mentioning here. First, in many positions, it may be unclear how others benefit from their efforts. For example, a programmer may write a program to benefit users, but may not consider the actual impact that it has on them (Grant, 2007). As employees give in response to feeling appreciated, how individuals benefit from their efforts become more salient as the employees receive evidence in terms of symbolic or explicit gratitude that their past work has made a positive impact on others.

Second, employees may be unclear about who benefits from their actions (Grant & Gino, 2010). For example, factory line workers or accountants in large organizations may not always be aware of how their efforts affect the end user. As a result, prosocial identities may not be

activated as individuals may not be aware of who they are benefiting. Thus, I suggest that when feeling appreciated drives the individual's organizational citizenship behaviors, it frames the behavior in terms of prosociality and activates the prosocial process. As individuals feel their work is appreciated, they become cognizant of the individuals they serve and perceive the difference that they make in their lives. Consequently, I hypothesize that through a process of prosocial sensemaking, individuals that feel valued and appreciated will increasingly activate a prosocial identity.

*Hypothesis 3: Engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization will positively influence individuals' activation of their prosocial identity.*

*Hypothesis 4: Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between feeling appreciated by the organization and an individual's prosocial identity.*

### **Job Performance Mediates Feeling Appreciated's Effect on Narcissism**

Interest in narcissism in organizational behavior research has increased as scholars have more thoroughly examined the destructive behaviors of leaders and politicians (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2010). While narcissism has been conceived of as a self-centered, aggrandizing, inflated, manipulative, and dominant orientation (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro & Rusbult, 2004) related to a number of negative outcomes including selfish, hostile, and arrogant behaviors (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998), it has also been tied to more positive outcomes including charming and self-assured behaviors (Back et al., 2013).

Importantly, two recent developments have occurred in regard to research on narcissism in relation to this inquiry. First, in disentangling the bright and dark sides of narcissism, Back and colleagues (2013) developed a 2-dimensional conception of narcissism, where admiration and rivalry characterize two distinct pathways. Though both pathways are self-focused aimed at

maintaining a grandiose self, narcissistic admiration is based on assertive self-enhancing rather than antagonistic self-protection. Second, while scholars have long proposed that narcissism is a relatively stable individual difference, more recent studies have shown that there is significant non-random within-person variability observed with narcissism. Scholars have shown that narcissism is more transient than previously hypothesized and exhibits state-like characteristics (Giacomin & Jordan, 2014).

Though the relationship between narcissism and performance has been mixed, the research has almost exclusively examined narcissism's effect on performance (Judge, Lepine, & Rich, 2006; Gabriel, Critelli, & Ee, 1994; John & Robins, 1994). A number of scholars, however, have suggested that the relationship between narcissism and performance might be reversed. As examples, Wallace and Baumeister (2002) and Faleson (1993) both suggested that a history of repeated success may lead to higher self-regard. In recognizing a link between emergent leaders and narcissism, Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, and Marchisio (2011) suggested that leadership position may increase narcissism, though they note that such a link has yet to be tested.

Per Bem's (1972) self-perception theory, I argue that as individuals believe that they have performed successfully, this triggers a sensemaking process in which they generalize their high performance on internal evaluations of their self-concept. Additionally, I argue that this effect originates as individuals feel appreciated within the organization.

Despite evidence that suggests the prosocial aspects of feeling appreciated, there are reasons to believe that such feelings would also lead to higher levels of state narcissism as well. The high correlation between feeling appreciated and organization-based self-esteem suggests that as individuals feel that their work is valued by the organization, their self-esteem within the

organizational context increases as well. Cho and Fast (2011) found supporting evidence for this, as insecure leaders who received expressions of gratitude felt their competence as a leader affirmed.

Unsurprisingly, scholars have also found a strong link between narcissism and self-esteem. Over a series of five studies Sedikides and colleagues (2004) found that narcissism and self-esteem were highly correlated. Miller, Lynam, Hyatt, and Campbell (2017) noted that it would be difficult for one who was arrogant, self-promotional, and attention seeking, prototypical characteristics of a narcissist not to endorse signs of high self-esteem (Miller, Campbell, Young, Lakey, & Reidy 2009).

Over a 10-day period examining daily events, Giacomini and Jordan (2014) found that self-esteem led to narcissism. Surprisingly to the authors, but in line with my hypothesis, they also found that “receiving communion” (e.g. receiving symbolic expressions of appreciation) led to higher levels of narcissism. Because feeling that one is appreciated is not only associated with increased levels of self-esteem, but also feelings of competence, I hypothesize that feeling appreciated will increase individuals’ levels of narcissism.

*Hypothesis 5: Individuals’ high perceived job performance will positively influence individuals’ levels of narcissism.*

*Hypothesis 6: Individuals’ high perceived job performance mediates the relationship between feeling appreciated by the organization and the admiration dimension of narcissism.*

### Study 3

#### Design

I conducted a diary study involving 10 surveys over 10 days, with a final additional survey administered during the following week. A primary purpose of this study was to alleviate concerns around common method variance (variance that results from the measurement method rather than the constructs the measures represent). In order to address these concerns, I followed Podsakoff and colleagues (2003) suggestion to create temporal separation between the measures. This temporal separation eliminated the salience of contextually provided retrieval cues and allowed the information to leave short-term memory (Podsakoff et al., 2003). It also made previous responses less relevant, available, and salient reducing both demand characteristics and issues with consistency (Podsakoff et al., 2003). While Study 2 took place over two time periods, creating some temporal separation, all the constructs were measured at both time periods. As a result, it is possible that participants were influenced by the other measures while responding to the surveys. In this study, instead of administering all fifteen constructs simultaneously, only two measures were given daily.

Participants responded to two constructs or around 16 items each day for ten days (on two of the days they responded to three constructs). The median time taken by respondents to complete the over 1900 daily surveys was a little under 2 minutes. The constructs were randomly grouped and counterbalanced across participants. For example, some participants responded to the constructs respect and POS on a given day while other participants responded to the constructs respect and OBSE. In order to account for transient error individuals received each measure twice, one week apart. Finally, after the diary portion of the study was completed,

participants were asked to complete a final survey where they were asked to respond to measures regarding the mediating and dependent variables.

## **Participants**

Participants came from two separate samples. In the first sample, 162 individuals from a small tech firm in the western United States were asked to participate. From that initial group, 82 participated in some part of the study and 56 completed the entire study. Of the participants used, all were employed full-time (57% women, 43% men). The average tenure was 3.69 years. Participants were given work time to complete the surveys, and three individuals were selected at random to receive a \$100 gift card. The second sample consisted of 160 working adults on MTurk living throughout the United States. From that initial sample, 121 individuals completed the study. The majority, 81%, of the participants were employed full-time (57% women, 43% men). The average tenure was 4.72 years. I conducted independent samples t-tests to assess whether there were differences between the 2 samples across all focal variables. Out of the twenty-two focal constructs (from Time 1 and Time 2) only one of them differed significantly at a .05 level between the two samples (POS at Time 1,  $p = .049$ ). As a result, I combined the two samples (though I coded them separately, so I could control for the sample).

Finally, because I account for transient error, and in order to account for possible history effects, it was important to remove participants who felt that there were events during the two-week span that affected their relationship with the organization. I asked if there was anything significant that happened at work that affected their relationship with the organization. Of the 177 participants completing both studies 120 individuals or 67.80% reported no significant change. This is similar to the previous study where 64.33% of those completing the initial study had usable data.

## Measures

In investigating the constructs of interest, the independent variables were collected twice, once during the first week, then once again during the second week. The dependent variables were collected during the week following the last diary survey. As in earlier studies, the actor was at the individual level and the target was the organization. Independent variables included 11 of the focal variables from Study 2 including feeling appreciated, respect, organization-based self-esteem, organizational identification, affective commitment, exchange quality (OMX), perceived organizational support, satisfaction for the organization, social exchange relationship, trust, and positive affect for the organization. This study utilized the same instruments for the focal variables that were used in the previous study except for trust. I utilized a different measure for trust because scholars noted that the prior measure had reliability issues that this updated measure helped resolve. The coefficient alphas for each of the independent variables are listed in Table 7. Below is the measure for trust along with measures for the other dependent variables.

**Trust.** In measuring trust, participants responded to Mayer and Gavin's (2005) 10-item measure. The measure developed from the definition that trust is the willingness to make oneself vulnerable to another (Mayer et al., 2005). The 2005 measure was designed in response to reliability issues of previous measures. I used a 7-item Likert format from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The measure included items like, "I would be comfortable giving my organization a task or problem which was critical to me, even if I could not monitor its actions," "I would tell my organization about mistakes I've made on the job, even if they could damage my reputation", and "If my organization asked me for something, I respond without thinking about whether it might be held against me" ( $\alpha$  averaged across the two time periods = .80).

**Organizational citizenship.** In order to measure organizational citizenship, participants responded to Lee and Allen's (2002) 16-item measure. Recognizing the confounding impact that the target may have on measuring the phenomenon, McNeely and Meglino (1994) suggested that researchers should use a measure specifying the target to whom the citizenship is directed. Some targets fail to discriminate between targets (e.g. Smith, Organ & Near, 1983), I specifically chose Lee and Allen's measure because the measure clearly includes both OCBs directed to the organization (OCBO) and those directed towards individuals (OCBI).

While I gathered data for both scales, my hypotheses looked specifically at OCBO because of its direct correspondence with target of interest (i.e. the organization). The scale uses a 5-item Likert format from 1 (*to a very little extent*) to 5 (*to a very great extent*). Participants were asked in both subscales to assess how often they engaged in the following items over the past week. The OCBO subscale included items like "Attend functions that are not required but that help the organizational," "Defend the organization when other employees criticize it," and "Take action to protect the organization from potential problems" ( $\alpha = .89$ ). The OCBI subscale included items like "Help others who have been absent," "Show genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations," and "Willingly give your time to help others who have work-related problems" ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

**Job performance.** In order to measure job performance, participants responded to MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Fetter's (1993) performance scale. In the scale individuals are asked the degree to which they agree with 3 items on a 7-point Likert scale. The items included "I am one of the best employees," "All things considered, as an employee I am outstanding," and "All things considered, I perform my job the way my manager likes to see it performed" ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

**Prosocial identity.** In measuring prosocial identity, the participants responded to Grant, Dutton, & Rosso's (2008) 3-item measure. Each item measured individuals' perception of their own prosocial identity. The participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement. Items for the measure were anchored using a 7-item Likert format anchored at 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items in the measure were "I see myself as caring," "I see myself as generous," and "I regularly go out of my way to help others" ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

**Narcissism.** In order to measure narcissism, participants completed Back and colleague's, (2013) Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ) scale. Participants responded to the 9-item admiration dimension of the scale. Back and colleague's model of narcissism suggests that narcissism is pursued through 2 separate pathways. Assertive self-enhancement leads to narcissistic admiration while antagonistic self-protection leads to narcissistic rivalry. Scale items for the admiration include items like, "I am great," "I show others how special I am," "I manage to be the center of attention with my outstanding contributions" ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### **Results of Feeling Appreciated as a Bridge Construct**

The purpose of this study was three-fold. First, this study was designed to strengthen prior evidence that feeling appreciated bridges a number of fundamental OB constructs. Second, it addressed some of the methodological limitations of the previous study, specifically accounting for common method variance. Third, the study examined whether feeling appreciated had predictive validity affecting important organizational outcomes.

By temporally separating the constructs from each other, I was able to address issues of common method variance. Podsakoff and colleagues (2003) suggest that temporal separation eliminates the salience of contextually provided retrieval cues allowing the information to leave

short-term memory (Podsakoff et al., 2003). It also makes previous responses less relevant, available, and salient reducing both demand characteristics and issues with consistency (Podsakoff et al., 2003). I expected that feeling appreciated would again be highly related to each of the focal constructs and that the focal constructs would also be highly related to each other. Results from this study are similar to the results from Study 2. Table 7 compares the true score correlations between feeling appreciated in Study 2 and Study 3.

*Table 7. Feeling Appreciated True Score Correlations for Study 2 & 3*

	<b>Study 2</b>	<b>Study 3</b>
Respect	0.97	0.95
Organization-based self-esteem	0.90	0.87
Organizational identification	0.80	0.81
Affective commitment	0.72	0.84
LMX (organizational based)	0.93	0.94
Perceived organizational support	0.95	0.94
Satisfaction	0.81	0.90
Social exchange relationship	0.88	0.87
Trust (willingness to be vulnerable)	0.72	0.74
Positive affect	0.78	0.84

In Table 8 I report the true score correlations of the focal constructs accounting for transient error. The means, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas for each of these are also included in the table. I again used .85 as a cutoff score to assess whether the measures exhibited adequate discriminant validity. The true score correlation for feeling appreciated ranged from .72 with trust and affective commitment to .97 with respect. Five of the 11 focal constructs had a true score correlation that exceeded the .85 benchmark. Additionally, the average true score correlation for feeling appreciated was .85. The average true score correlation between all the focal constructs was .81. Two other constructs OMX and POS also had mean correlations of .85 or higher. The true score correlations ranged from .56 between trust and organizational identification and .97 with feeling appreciated and respect. Twenty-one of the fifty relationships exceeded the .85 cutoff.

The results from Study 3 not only strengthened the argument that feeling appreciated is a bridge construct, but they also suggest that feeling appreciated can serve as an empirical proxy for these core constructs. Five of the 11 constructs are empirically indistinguishable from feeling appreciated with an average true score correlation of .93 and the other 6 constructs have a true score correlation of .77. With such high correlations among all the constructs I suggest that this measure can be used as a proxy for these core constructs under a number of different conditions. This measure provides an easy way to assess how individuals generally feel about a given relationship (e.g. their trust, commitment, satisfaction, and identification in the relationship), how they feel about their worth and competence within the relationship, and even how invested the individual perceives the other party to be in the relationship.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics, True Score Correlations and Reliabilities for Study 3

	Time 1			Time 2			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Alpha	Mean	SD	Alpha	Mean	SD											
1 Feeling appreciated	0.97	5.02	1.41	0.96	4.94	1.36											
2 Respect	0.94	5.56	1.10	0.93	5.45	1.02	0.97										
3 OBSE	0.92	5.71	0.90	0.93	5.56	0.93	0.90	0.89									
4 Org. identification	0.93	4.58	1.36	0.95	4.39	1.46	0.80	0.68	0.63								
5 Affective commitment	0.91	4.42	1.57	0.91	4.42	1.52	0.72	0.75	0.75	0.86							
6 LMX (org. based)	0.86	5.00	1.01	0.88	4.94	1.07	0.93	0.93	0.88	0.75	0.82						
7 POS	0.93	4.92	1.38	0.92	4.90	1.30	0.95	0.87	0.80	0.78	0.83	0.87					
8 Satisfaction	0.92	5.07	1.19	0.92	4.96	1.21	0.81	0.87	0.71	0.78	0.81	0.83	0.82				
9 Social exchange	0.87	4.93	1.19	0.88	5.01	1.15	0.88	0.82	0.72	0.80	0.88	0.87	0.88	0.88			
10 Trust	0.79	4.29	0.87	0.81	4.35	0.93	0.72	0.75	0.60	0.56	0.77	0.75	0.80	0.87	0.68		
11 Positive affect	0.94	4.74	1.44	0.95	4.56	1.51	0.78	0.85	0.79	0.84	0.78	0.89	0.85	0.91	0.84	0.72	

This study also demonstrated the importance of accounting for transient error in the study of these constructs. In Table 9 I report the degree to which the coefficient of equivalence overestimated the coefficient of equivalence and stability. This study found overestimates similar to those of the Study 2, again highlighting the importance that accounting for transient error has in correctly estimating relationships within an empirical model. Overestimates by the CE ranged from 7.23% for feeling appreciated to 32.85% for respect.

*Table 9. Percentage that the Coefficient of Equivalence and Stability is Overestimated by Coefficient of Equivalence for Study 3*

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>CE</b>	<b>CES</b>	<b>TEV</b>	<b>% Overestimate</b>
Feeling appreciated	0.96	0.9	0.07	7.23%
Respect	0.93	0.7	0.23	32.85%
Organization-based self-esteem	0.92	0.76	0.16	21.60%
Organizational identification	0.94	0.87	0.07	7.70%
Affective commitment	0.91	0.83	0.08	10.28%
LMX (organizational based)	0.87	0.77	0.09	12.05%
Perceived organizational support	0.92	0.83	0.1	11.80%
Satisfaction	0.92	0.82	0.1	12.23%
Social exchange relationship	0.88	0.67	0.21	30.90%
Trust (willingness to be vulnerable)	0.8	0.71	0.09	13.04%
Positive affect	0.95	0.82	0.12	15.12%

*Note. N = 120. CE = average coefficient of equivalence (alpha) across Time 1 and Time 2; CES = coefficient of equivalence and stability; TEV = transient error variance over observed scores variance; % Overestimate = percentage that CES is overestimated by CE.*

## **Summary**

Results again suggest that feeling appreciated is highly correlated with these other constructs. Indeed, looking between all the focal constructs, the correlations are so high that these measures are empirically indistinguishable. Not one of the 11 constructs proved itself to be empirically indistinguishable from the other 10 constructs, with most of the constructs related to several other constructs. While these results indeed support the hypothesis that feeling appreciated bridges these focal constructs together, the evidence goes beyond simply supporting the hypothesis to repeatedly suggest either (1) the measures for these focal constructs are inadequate to truly ascertain the core theoretical differences that scholars have suggested exist among these constructs or (2) the constructs are in fact identical and the proposed theoretical differences between constructs do not in actuality exist.

## **Results of Feeling Appreciated's Effect on Workplace Behavior and Identity**

The second purpose of this chapter was to examine feeling appreciated's effect on behavioral and identity-based outcomes. Table 9 shows the correlations between feeling appreciated and the mediating and dependent variables including means and standard deviations. I conducted a mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012) to examine both the direct and indirect effects of the constructs. All indirect effects were subjected to follow-up bootstrap analyses with 5,000 bootstrap samples at 95% confidence intervals.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Reliabilities for Study 3 Mediators and Dependent Variables

	Alpha	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Feeling appreciated	0.96	4.98	1.34				
3 OCBO	0.89	5.97	0.92	0.35**			
2 Prosocial identity	0.87	2.65	0.94	0.14	0.29**		
4 Job performance	0.83	5.21	1.18	0.21*	0.24*	0.22**	
5 Narcissism (admiration)	0.90	4.01	1.12	0.30**	0.40*	0.38**	0.61**

First, I examined the warmth dimension of the model. Feeling appreciated was significantly related to the mediator, organizational citizenship behavior toward the organization  $b = .24$   $t(118) = 4.03$ ,  $p < .001$  with the 95% confidence intervals excluding 0 between .124 and .363. The mediator OCBO was also significantly correlated to the dependent variable, prosocial identity,  $b = .27$   $t(117) = 2.92$ ,  $p < .01$ . The 95% confidence intervals excluded zero (.087, .455). I then tested to see whether there was a significant indirect affect from feeling appreciated to prosocial identity through OCBO. The 95% confidence intervals excluded zero for the indirect path (.028, .121). As a result, the data support Hypothesis 1 that feeling appreciated for the organization is positively related to organization citizenship towards the organization, Hypothesis 3 that engaging in OCBO will positively increase individuals' prosocial identity, and Hypothesis 4 that OCBO mediates the relationship between feeling appreciated and prosocial identity. It is important to note however that the direct path between feeling appreciated and prosocial identity was not significant  $b = .032$ , 95% confidence interval (-.097, .156). See Figure 2 for the mediated model.

Next, I examined the competence dimension of the model. Feeling appreciated was significantly related to the mediator, perceived job performance  $b = .19$   $t(118) = 2.37$ ,  $p = .02$

with the 95% confidence intervals excluding 0 between .031 and .343. The mediator perceived job performance was also significantly correlated to the dependent variable, narcissistic admiration,  $b = .54$   $t(117) = 7.75$ ,  $p < .01$ . The 95% confidence intervals excluded zero (.404, .681). I then tested to see whether there was a significant indirect affect from feeling appreciated to prosocial identity through OCBO. The 95% confidence intervals excluded zero for the indirect path (.021, .203). The direct path between feeling appreciated and narcissism was also significant. The results support Hypothesis 2 that feeling appreciated for the organization is positively related to perceived job performance, Hypothesis 5 that perceived job performance is positively related to individuals' narcissistic admiration, and Hypothesis 6 that perceived job performance mediates the relationship between feeling appreciated and narcissistic admiration. See Figure 3 for the mediated model.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I also examined both (1) feeling appreciated's effect on perceived performance through narcissism and (2) narcissism's effect on perceived performance through feeling appreciated. In (1) the indirect effect was significant with upper and lower confidence intervals at (.050, .287). The direct path was not significant (-.102, .165). In (2) the direct effect was significant (.466, .786), however the indirect path was not significant (-.030, .070).

Figure 2. Warmth Dimension of Feeling Appreciated

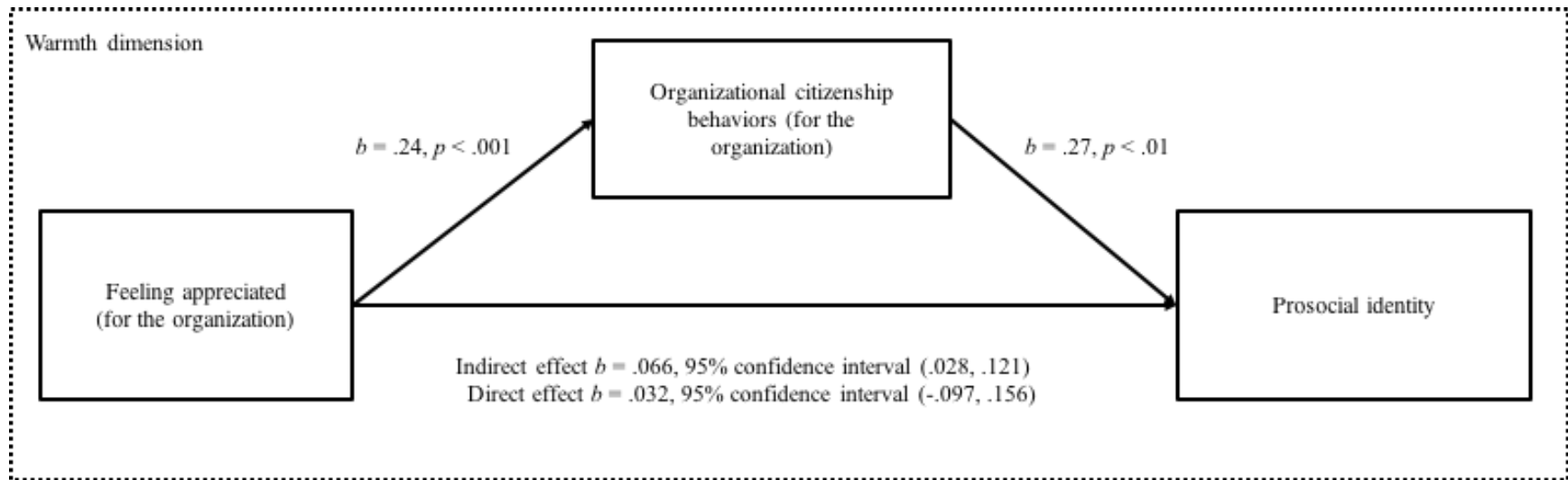
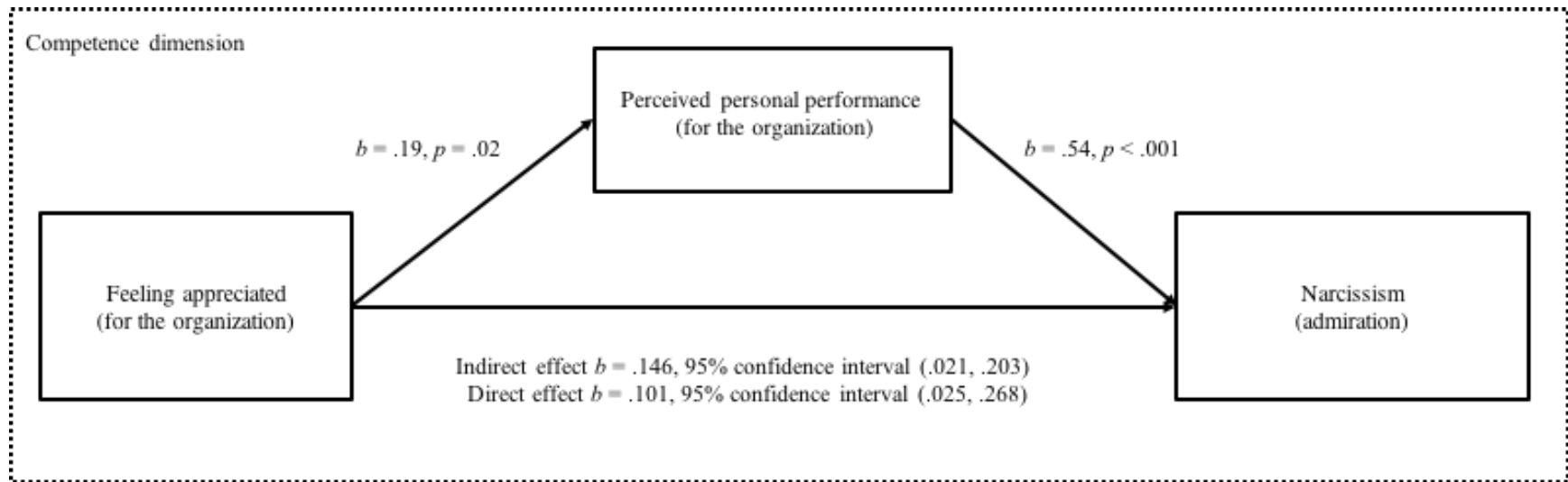


Figure 3. Competence Dimension of Feeling Appreciated



## Discussion

Chapter 5 had a three-pronged purpose. The first purpose was to provide additional support that feeling appreciated is a bridge construct spanning a number of core constructs related to both warmth and competence dimensions of SCM. The second purpose was to address limitations from Study 2, and the final purpose was to examine how feeling appreciated affected employees' behaviors and identities within the workplace.

In addressing the first purpose, Study 3 provided additional evidence that feeling appreciated is not only highly correlated with many of the other constructs but is empirically identical to them. This additional evidence is particularly compelling given the extra care and precautions to reduce and eliminate concerns of common method bias, a potential limitation of Study 2. By administering the 11 constructs separately twice over the 2-week time period, I was able to reduce and perhaps eliminate any such bias that might have occurred. Additionally, by exploring these questions both within an organization and with a paid pool I was able to increase the generalizability of the findings.

Finally, this study showed that feeling appreciated not only is related to a number of focal constructs, but also affects important behavioral and identity-based outcomes. Applying the tenants of social exchange, gratitude, and self-perception theories, Study 3 links feeling appreciated to both other-oriented and self-concerned outcomes namely prosocial behavior and narcissism. In doing so, the study supported the assertion that feeling appreciated affects individuals interpersonal and self-evaluations regarding both warmth and competence. With that said, because both narcissism and prosocial identity were measured at a single point in time, this data provides relatively weak support of their causal paths. However, given the theoretical tie to self-perception theory, this reasoning is strengthened.

Finally, this study was subject to some limitations. First, because the study relied on survey methods to ascertain causal and correlated relationships, the findings could be strengthened through experimentation where feeling appreciated could be both measured and manipulated. Second, while this study occurred over time with dependent and independent variables temporally separated from each other, future examinations could also provide temporal separation between the mediators and dependent variables. Lastly, many of the measures were self-report measures. While these measures were appropriate for the questions being asked and the type of investigation (Podsakoff et al., 2003), they have a number of shortcomings. In order to reduce the effects of self-report measures, we anonymized the surveys, however future research could collect data from other sources to strengthen the findings as well.

## CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUDING REMARKS

Given the import in management science of the core constructs identified in this dissertation, understanding their true empirical relationships and how they are tied together through a single construct is highly significant. Though past research has examined the relationships between many of these constructs, the true relationships between these constructs has been masked or misrepresented because they (1) have not accounted for transient error, (2) confounded correlations between variables by also shifting the correspondence between the constructs, and (3) failed to account for the effects of time. In three studies I have begun to address these significant concerns and assess the constructs true relationships with each other.

In Study 2 and Study 3 I addressed these limitations. Study 2 showed that the relationships between each of the constructs were not just strong, but many of the constructs were empirically identical across multiple assessments. Each of the constructs (with exception of status) failed to show discriminant validity across all four assessments. In Study 3 I also accounted for common method bias by carefully temporally separating the constructs from each other. After taking this added precaution, the results were similar to the results from Study 2. Between both studies the evidence showed that feeling appreciated was not only highly empirically related to these core constructs, but with an average true score correlation of .85 (Study 2) and .87 (Study 3) between all the focal constructs, the data confirmed that feeling appreciated could be empirically identical with each of the core constructs listed.

These findings either call into question the discriminant validity of many of the most important constructs in OB—constructs like trust, satisfaction, commitment, and identification, or they suggest that the measures of these constructs fail to adequately establish any discriminant validity in the field. Either way, the data suggests that further examination of these constructs is

required. Additionally, these data issue a very strong initial call to researchers to reexamine these fundamental constructs to determine whether new theory needs to be developed to account for the empirical redundancy that exists between these core constructs or whether scholars need to develop new measures that exhibit adequate discriminant validity between measures.

This dissertation provides a preliminary solution to dealing with these theoretically disparate yet empirically identical constructs. Because these constructs are all evaluations, whether of others, of the relationship, of the self, or of what individuals perceive others to feel, I draw upon the tenants of stereotype content model (Cuddy et al., 2008) to suggest that these evaluations are grouped by individuals into broad dimensions of warmth or competence. Because feeling appreciated affects both warmth and competence, feeling appreciated bridges these constructs.

This dissertation not only showed evidence that feeling appreciated may be empirically identical to as many as 10 of the focal constructs (constructs that failed to show discriminant validity across multiple indices), but also that feeling appreciated affects important organizational outcomes. Using self-perception theory, I argued and provided data showing that feeling appreciated affects constructs encompassed by individuals' perceptions of both competence and warmth. Feeling appreciated affected individuals' behaviors and their personal identity. As individuals felt appreciated they more frequently engaged in behavior that benefited the party that expressed gratitude. This in turn triggered a prosocial sensemaking process (Grant et al., 2008) leading them to generalize their actions and adopt a prosocial identity. While feeling appreciated affected individuals other-oriented behavior and identity, it also positively affected individuals' self-concerned behavior and identity. The study showed that as individuals felt

appreciated they then performed better and this higher performance in turn led to increased narcissistic admiration.

### **Contributions**

This study contributes to management science in a number of ways. First it recognizes feeling appreciated as an unappreciated construct in management science and extends research examining gratitude and gratitude expression. While research on gratitude has expanded quickly and begun to examine the effects of expressing gratitude (Fehr et al., 2017; Kaplan et al., 2014; Lambert & Fincham, 2011; Waters, 2012), research exploring the effects of gratitude expression on others (Grant & Gino, 2010) is still very young. By establishing feeling appreciated as a construct and investigating its relationship to other constructs, this dissertation helps to develop a foundation from which other gratitude scholars can build. Grounding feeling appreciated to SCM (Cuddy et al., 2008) and social exchange theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017) additionally provides a framework from which future scholarship can further develop the conceptual bounds of the construct.

This research also extends our current understanding of gratitude. While research on gratitude has begun to examine how expressing gratitude affects those that express the gratitude, research has yet to truly explore the different ways in which gratitude may be expressed and whether expressing gratitude symbolically or explicitly affects the degree to which individuals feel appreciated. Similarly, in creating a measure for feeling appreciated, researchers can examine how repeated expressions of gratitude affect feeling appreciated or how the timing or specificity of the expressed gratitude affect feeling appreciated. Finally, while it has been generally assumed that prosocial outcomes result from gratitude expressions, this study may suggest that the outcomes are more nuanced, that expressions of gratitude not only affect other-

orientation outcomes like perspective taking, but that it also affects self-concerned outcomes like narcissism.

Second this dissertation provides a tool with which feeling appreciated can be explored and its relationships examined. Because feeling appreciated is so tightly related to these focal constructs, the measure for feeling appreciated can be used to not only assess feeling appreciated, but also constructs including trust, respect, organization-based self-esteem, and a number of others. The measure will be especially useful when researchers need a general tool to assess the evaluations individuals make within a relationship, whether that be evaluations of others, of the relationship, of themselves within the relationship, or of their perception of what others feel about them or the relationship.

While at times it may be advantageous to specifically measure constructs like trust or commitment, as researchers need to quickly and generally assess individual evaluations within a relationship, the measure for feeling appreciated is a simple yet powerful tool to make such evaluations. Additionally, because both the target and the source can be varied, research can carefully control and measure their primary interest whether it be the change in target, the relationship between constructs, or a change in level. Like other target free constructs (Klein et al., 2014) this added flexibility gives researchers added precision and focus when assessing their particularized research questions.

Utilizing this tool in Study 2 and 3, this dissertation extended past research warnings regarding construct proliferation (e.g. Le et al., 2010; Shaffer et al., 2016) by providing critical evidence exhibiting how pervasive this problem is. Past scholars suggested that proliferation leads to countless hours of highly redundant research that fails to expand our knowledge or organize the field more affectively (Newman et al., 2016). If the relationships in this study hold

in future replications, better theory and tools will be needed to account for the massive amount of redundancy between these constructs. This research also suggests that similar redundancy may exist across other literatures in management science. Shaffer et al., (2006) indeed show that the leadership domain is rife with such redundancy. Future scholars could greatly benefit the field by uncovering, acknowledging and resolving such redundancies.

Third, this research provides initial evidence that feeling appreciated not only bridges a number of critical constructs, but also impacts a number of unexplored outcomes. Individuals crave feeling appreciated (de Montmorency, 1921). It shapes relationships and internal self-evaluations and affects how individuals behave. Indeed, it shapes who individuals perceive themselves to be. As a result, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of a number of focal constructs while inviting a number of new questions about them. For example, while the trust literature has predominantly looked at trust in terms of individuals' willingness to be vulnerable with the expectations that the party will perform certain actions regardless of control or monitoring (Baer et al., 2015; Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Levin, Whitener, & Cross, 2006; Mayer et al., 1995; Mayer & Gavin, 2005), scholars might ask how gratefully receiving or rejecting another's efforts affect trust regardless of ability, benevolence, or integrity (Mayer et al., 2015). This research suggests that as individuals feel less appreciated, the trust they have in those they help will also decrease, not because those individuals are less trustworthy, but because feeling appreciated is inextricably linked to trust.

Similarly, this research provides greater insight to our understanding of particularized respect. While research has suggested that particularized respect is a function of the extent to which prototypical standards are enacted (Rogers & Ashforth, 2017), this research may offer an alternative suggestion for why or when individuals feel respected. It may suggest that even when

employees engage in atypical behavior, if they perceive their behavior to be gratefully received, the respect they feel will increase as well. Because the results of this study show that the ties between these focal variables are much tighter than previously conceived new questions may arise examining these relationships, exploring whether each of these focal constructs truly are separate constructs or whether they are actually reflections of an individuals' evaluation of how much others gratefully receive their efforts.

### **Practical Implications**

The results of this study have practical implications both for researchers and managers as well. For researchers, this study suggests that feeling appreciated bridges a number of foundational constructs, and that the focal constructs are manifestations of an individual feeling that their work is appreciated by the target. By accounting for transient error and matching the target and source, researchers are able to more clearly see the relationships between these constructs.

Past research has often ignored transient error and confounded changes in the target with changes in the construct. This study builds upon Study 2 by accounting for these important factors. Additionally, Study 3 suggests that there is either a high degree of construct redundancy and that theory needs to be redeveloped to reflect empirical realities or that the measures for these constructs need to be improved to adequately measure the theoretical differentiation that exists. At the very least, researchers need to further examine the relationships between many of these variables while (1) accounting both for transient error and matching sources; and (2) considering more than just change in Chi-squared to establish the constructs' divergent validity. Finally, the high degree of unrecognized empirical redundancy across decade old constructs

suggests that other such redundancies may exist. Supporting this assertion, Shaffer et al., (2016) show that in fact similar redundancy does exist in the domain of leadership.

For managers, the results of the study suggest that the degree to which employees feel appreciated is not only related to a number of other variables including trust, commitment, satisfaction, positive affect, respect, etc., but that it also affects employee behaviors and identities. Feeling appreciated affects job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. In light of this research it is unsurprising that U.S. Department of Labor data reported that the primary reason individuals leave their job is because “they do not feel appreciated” (Rath & Clifton, 2004). This study also suggests to managers that helping employees feel appreciated may have some intuitively unexpected consequences, specifically it may increase their employees’ levels of narcissistic admiration.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations to this dissertation. First, the studies relied heavily on MTurk participants, and while those participants were employed in a variety of industries from a large number of different companies, concerns about generalizability may linger. Landers and Behrend (2015) however convincingly argue that nearly all samples are convenient samples and that MTurk samples, like organizational samples or college student samples have their own strengths and weaknesses. To simply reject a sampling strategy based on “myth” or “simple rules of thumb” not only stifles science but slows progress as well (Landers & Behrend, 2015).

What is important is to consider the sample and its potential strengths and weaknesses, to understand how being an MTurk worker may affect the study and assess whether it negatively impacts the study (Cheung, Burns, Sinclair, & Sliter, 2017). Some scholars for example may have concerns about repeated participation, however just as repeated participation is unlikely to

adversely alter individuals' responses to a personality test, so too it is unlikely to negatively affect individuals' responses to the relationship between their organization (Landers & Behrend, 2015). Others may have concerns over compensation, however this is a concern only if financial motives are theoretically tied to effect size (Landers & Behrend, 2015).

Finally, Burmester and colleagues (2011) showed that research conducted with MTurk participants was not only psychometrically sound but comparable to other samples. Horton et al., (2011) similarly found that experiments conducted with MTurk participants were both externally and internally as valid as other kinds of experiments. Additionally, by pairing Study 2 with Study 3 where some participants were not part of a paid pool but were rather employed at a tech firm, concerns about generalizability may be mitigated. Still, further research could be conducted in a number of other organizations and industries to further examine these relationships and how cultural differences differentially affect the relationships between these constructs.

Second, the results of these studies are limited by their reliance on survey methodology. While accounting for time strengthened the studies, future research would benefit by conducting both laboratory and field experiments. These future studies could examine how expressing gratitude differentially affects other members of a team. Research suggests both positive and negative outcomes, with some third-parties experiencing feelings of guilt or inferiority and others basking in the reflected glory. Future studies could also assess how different expressions of gratitude (symbolic or explicit) differentially affect feeling appreciated. There also may be a number of moderating conditions that affect individuals' feelings of appreciation. Companies often have appreciation awards, scholars may examine how feelings of appreciation are affected when gratitude is expressed publicly verses privately or it is given universally (i.e. to every employee) or conditionally (e.g. based on performance or tenure).

Finally, it is important to examine some of the negative outcomes that are related to feeling appreciated. Past research on feeling appreciated does not provide any conclusive evidence of a dark side of feeling appreciated; however, the current research suggests that some of the negative outcomes associated with narcissism may also be downstream effects of feeling appreciated. It also may be that feeling appreciated leads to a number of other negative outcomes. For example, as individuals feel more appreciated they may also feel a greater sense of entitlement. Similarly, as feeling appreciated increases the relational ties between parties, those parties may feel that they can take greater advantage of those relational ties.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research echoes William James's insight regarding individuals' craving to be appreciated. Feeling appreciated affects all aspects of our lives. It shapes our relationships—whether we invest in them or end them. It shapes our perception of relationships, our behavior towards others, and even our perceptions of who we are. Indeed, this research has shown that as people feel appreciated, they express greater trust, have more self-esteem, exhibit more respect, perceive the other party to be more caring and supportive, and are generally more satisfied in the relationship. Given these outcomes, it is important to more fully understand this construct, and understand when and why we feel appreciated. Despite growing interest in gratitude and the power that gratitude has in people's lives, it is surprising that more research has not already examined how gratitude affects individuals and their perceptions of the world around them. I call on researchers to foster a greater appreciation for this construct and more thoroughly examine it. By comprehending it more fully, we can help those around us feel more appreciated.

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