COUNTY LEVEL 4-H AGENTS' PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT: A PREDICTIVE CORRELATIONAL STUDY

Laura Brumbaugh Robertson

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COUNTY LEVEL 4-H AGENTS’ PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT:

A PREDICTIVE CORRELATIONAL STUDY

by

Laura Brumbaugh Robertson

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Kendrick “Parker” Robertson, who joined our family in the middle of my doctoral journey. Parker, please know, your arrival helped me to understand that I am stronger than I perceived and could do anything. You inspired me to finish this piece of work. May all your dreams and aspirations be imagined, just as you helped me achieve mine. Love you, Momma
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Abstract

The cooperative extension service (CES) is facing a county-level 4-H agent retention problem. Over the last decade, national retention rates of county-level extension agents have decreased at an alarming rate. CES organizations nationwide have identified retention of 4-H agents as a problem because turnover costs to extension organizations are high. County 4-H program productivity is interrupted, and program sustainability is uncertain. Retaining county-level 4-H agents helps sustain local educational programming for 4-H youth and their families. The lack of CES research exacerbates this problem in identifying specific strategies to keep county-level 4-H agents from the view of the Southern region, county-level 4-H agents themselves. County-level 4-H agent retention was examined through the lens of organizational support theory (OST) and its construct, perceived organizational support (POS). This cross-sectional survey, predictive correlational study explores if any relationships exist between 4-H agents' gender identity, tenure, perceived organizational support, perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The predictor variables used in this study were antecedents of POS, including perceptions of organizational politics and perceived supervisor support. The dependent, or criterion, variables were POS and outcomes of POS, including affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The data collected was analyzed using both hierarchal multiple regression and linear regression analyses to determine the predictive power of several variables. The study found that Southern region 4-H agents' perceived organizational support can predict affective commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The study also discovered three new factors of perceived organizational politics among Southern regional county-level 4-H agents. The
implications of practice from this study include recommendations for the Southern region CES administration to strengthen POS among county-level 4-H agents. Focusing on new hires is essential, as POS is established early in a career. Also, the CES administration is encouraged to examine their organizational culture for political behaviors that may negatively impact employees' POS, affecting their turnover intention. Lastly, the administration is encouraged to administer the SPOS instrument to examine the current level of POS among county-level 4-H agents in their state. The CES field is encouraged to continue investigating POS among county-level 4-H agents to determine what antecedents affect agents' POS. Also, the CES administration should evaluate the psychometric properties of the POPS instrument with the county-level 4-H agent population to further explore the factors that emerged in this study.

**Keywords:** retention, 4-H agents, perceived organizational support, turnover intention
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List of Abbreviations

Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC)

Cooperative Extension Service (CES)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Exploratory Factory Analysis (EFA)

Hierarchal Multiple Regression (HMR)

Human Resource (HR)

Organizational Support for Development (OSD)

Organizational Support Theory (OST)

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POP)

Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS)

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Variant Influence Factors (VIF)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the 4-H program is one of the largest youth development organizations, presently reaching 6 million young people (4-H, 2021). 4-H is a national youth outreach program administered by the land-grant universities' Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA; National 4-H Council, 2017). As 4-H participants, youth have opportunities to learn about their interests, individually or in a group, using experiential learning contexts in the areas of healthy living, science, agriculture, civic engagement, and leadership (4-H, 2021). 4-H learning experiences are research-based and engage youth through various methods, including "school and community clubs, in-school and after-school programs and 4-H camps" (4-H, 2021, 1st paragraph).

4-H programs are in every county in the United States (4-H, 2021). County-level offices, supported by each state's land grant university's CES, ensure that youth who live in urban, suburban, and rural areas have access to 4-H programs (4-H, 2021). 4-H programs in each county are managed by salaried 4-H professionals, known as 4-H agents (USDA, 2021). Three thousand five hundred salaried 4-H agents deliver research-based 4-H programs across the United States (4-H, 2021). National 4-H leadership has called on its 4-H youth development agents to assist with increasing the program's current reach. In 2017, National 4-H released a strategic vision. They made a promise to America to have 1 in 5 youth engaged in a 4-H program by 2025 to increase diversity through the engagement of more urban and suburban youth (National 4-H Council, 2017). The retention of 4-H agents is vital to reaching National 4-H's goal because of their essential role in recruiting 4-H participants and sustaining county-level programming. Unfortunately, county-level extension agent retention is an ongoing concern for 4-H programs.
(Benge et al., 2015; Harder et al., 2021; Martin & Kauffman, 2013; Russell & Liggans, 2020; Shanahan & Sheehan, 2020; Vines et al., 2018). Over the last decade, national retention rates of county-level extension agents have decreased at an alarming rate (Benge et al., 2015; Russell & Liggans, 2020, Vines et al., 2018). CES organizations nationwide have identified retention of 4-H agents as a problem of practice because turnover costs to extension organizations are high in terms of program productivity and sustainability (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Vines et al., 2018). Russell and Liggins (2020) made a plea for CES leadership to "emphasize supporting and developing educators as they help further secure the future of Extension" (p. 9).

**Theoretical Framework**

Organizational support theory (OST) provides an appropriate theoretical framework to examine the retention of 4-H agents within the CES literature. “According to OST, employees develop a general perception concerning the extent to which their work organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being” (Eisenberger et al., 2020, p. 101); which is perceived organizational support (POS), the construct of OST (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Two themes ground OST: social exchange and self-enhancement (Eisenberger et al., 2020: Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). An employee’s POS develops a social exchange between the employee and organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). The employee, who feels supported by the organization because it treats them favorably, gives back by putting forth an effort to help the organization reach its goals (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). In exchange for this effort given to the organization, the employee expects reciprocation
of their effort by giving enhanced rewards to the employee (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). In addition to social exchange, OST assumes that an employee's POS helps them fulfill their socioemotional needs (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When socioemotional needs are met, employees begin to identify with the organization and increase their commitment to helping the organization reach its goals (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). The employee starts to believe the organization cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). OST assumes that these factors help increase employee retention (Rhoades et al., 2001).

OST is constructed by an employee's POS, formed through three antecedents: fairness, leadership, and HR practices and working conditions (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The first antecedent is leadership (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). If an employee perceives favorable treatment from members of the organization, they also perceive that the organization (as an entity) views them favorably (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). The second antecedent is fairness (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). OST assumes that when employees feel they are being treated fairly by the organization, they will have a high level of POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The third antecedent is human resource (HR) practices and job conditions (Kurtessis et al., 2017 & Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Human resource practices and job conditions are under the organization's control. Employees' perceptions of these practices and conditions determine how
much the organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

POS outcome categories are oriented toward the organization and work, behavioral outcomes, and employee well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Examples of POS outcomes included affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Klein et al., 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Mercurio, 2015; Mowday et al., 1978; Newman et al., 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020). Most importantly, POS, its antecedents, and outcomes are all strongly related to retention (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Hussin & Asif, 2012; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Mercurio, 2015; Mowday et al., 1978; Newman et al., 2011; Rhoades et al., 2001; Skelton et al., 2020).

Problem of Practice Statement

The problem of practice in CES is the retention of county-level 4-H agents. The lack of CES research exacerbates this problem to identify specific strategies to retain county-level 4-H agents from the view of the agents themselves (Benge et al., 2015). Benge et al. (2015) purport that not enough data has been gathered from agents themselves on their needs and thoughts on retention. More needs to be understood about those who stay and their POS, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. A gap in the CES literature confounds the problem as well. This gap creates an opportunity to study POS, affective organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, as each has a negative, strong relationship with turnover
intention among other populations and are underrepresented in the CES research (Benge et al., 2015; Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 1993; Mowday et al., 1978; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001; Skelton et al., 2020; Shanahan & Sheehan, 2020; Vines et al., 2018).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey, predictive correlational study is to explore if any relationships exist between 4-H agents' gender identity, tenure, POS, perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, organizational support for development, affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The study will explore predictive relationships between gender identity, tenure, perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, and organizational support for development with POS (criterion variable). The study will also explore predictive relationships between gender identity, tenure, and POS with affective organizational commitment (criterion variable). Next, the study will explore predictive relationships between gender identity, tenure, and POS with job satisfaction (criterion variable). Lastly, the study will explore the predictive relationships between gender identity, tenure, POS, affective organizational commitment, and job satisfaction with turnover intention (criterion variable). The results of the study will provide recommendations for future research if any strong, predictive relationships are found, to further explore understanding turnover intention among 4-H agents. Also, the results will help CES administration examine existing policies, procedures, and training opportunities that affect agent POS.
Question(s)

The research questions for this study include the following:

RQ1: While controlling for gender identity and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can county-level 4-H agents’ perceptions of organizational politics (general political behavior, go along and get ahead, and pay and promotion factors), direct supervisor support, and organizational support for development predict the county-level 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support (POS; criterion variable)?

RQ1.1: How, if at all, do county-level 4-H agents’ gender identify and tenure predict the county-level 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support (POS; criterion variable)?

RQ1.2: How, if at all, do county-level 4-H agents’ perceptions of organizational politics (general political behavior, go along and get ahead, and pay and promotion factors) predict perceived organizational support (POS)?

RQ1.3: How, if at all, do 4-H county-level agents’ perceptions of direct supervisor support predict perceived organizational support (POS)?

RQ1.4: How, if at all, do 4-H county-level agents’ perceptions of organizational support for development predict perceived organizational support (POS)?

RQ2: While controlling for gender identity and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can county-level 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support (POS) predict county-level 4-H agents’ affective organizational commitment (criterion variable)?

RQ3: While controlling for gender identity and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can county-level 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support (POS) predict county-level 4-H agents’ job satisfaction (criterion variable)?
RQ4: While controlling for gender identity and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can county-level 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and job satisfaction predict county-level 4-H agents’ turnover intention (criterion variable)?

RQ4.1: How, if at all, do county-level 4-H agents’ gender identify and tenure predict county-level 4-H agents' turnover intention (criterion variable)?

RQ4.2: How, if at all, do the county-level 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support (POS) predict county-level 4-H agents' turnover intention (criterion variable)?

RQ4.3: How, if at all, do county-level 4-H agents' affective organizational commitment predict county-level 4-H agents' turnover intention (criterion variable)?

RQ4.4: How, if at all, do county-level 4-H agents’ job satisfaction predict county-level 4-H agents' turnover intention (criterion variable)?

Null Hypotheses(s)

The null hypotheses for this study are:

**Null Hypothesis 1.** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variables (county-level 4-H agent's gender identify and tenure, perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, and organizational support for development) and county-level 4-H agent's perceived organizational support (POS; criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 1.1** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's gender identify and tenure and county-level 4-H agent's POS (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 1.2** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's perceptions of politics and county-level 4-H agent's POS (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 1.3** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's direct supervisor support and county-level 4-H agent's POS (criterion variable).
**Null Hypothesis 1.4** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's organizational support for development and county-level 4-H agent's POS (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 2.** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variable (county-level 4-H agent's gender identity, tenure, perceived organizational support) and affective organizational commitment (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 3.** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variable (county-level 4-H agent's gender identity, tenure, perceived organizational support) and job satisfaction (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 4.** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variables (county-level 4-H agent's gender identity and tenure, perceptions of organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and job satisfaction) and county-level 4-H agent's turnover intention (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 4.1** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's gender identity and tenure and county-level 4-H agent's turnover intention (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 4.2** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's POS and county-level 4-H agent's turnover intention (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 4.3** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's affective organizational commitment and county-level 4-H agent's turnover intention (criterion variable).

**Null Hypothesis 4.1** There is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county-level 4-H agent's job satisfaction and county-level 4-H agent's turnover intention (criterion variable).
Definitions

4-H. One of the premier programs of USDA's cooperative extension system (CES) is the most significant positive youth development organization in the United States, reaching approximately 6 million youth (4-H, 2021; Castro, 2016; USDA, 2021.) through county-level programs led by salaried staff and volunteers.

4-H Extension Agent. Professional salaried staff employed by land-grant universities in each state that leads county-level 4-H programs.

Affective Organizational Commitment. An individuals' emotional attachment to an organization, usually because of the high level of interpersonal factors, such as an emotional attachment to the organization that can be described as the "identification with" and "involvement in" the organization (Klein et al., 2012; Mercurio, 2015, p. 397).

Cooperative Extension System (CES). The federal government's cooperative extension system is an informal educational program that delivers county-level education activities throughout the United States (USDA, 2021.).

Employee Training/Professional Development. An organization implements structured instructional learning opportunities to increase knowledge and develop and practice skills (Bulut & Culha 2010; Mercurio, 2015).

Job Satisfaction. Employees' thoughts and feelings about their and toward job (Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Maan et al., 2020; Rico et al., 2018).
Organizational Support Theory (OST). The thorough examination of the processes involved in an employee forming their perceptions of their organization's support and commitment to them and how this perceived support and commitment influences an employee's commitment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS). The assumption is that employees form global views about how much an organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Turnover Intention. "The probability that an employee will leave an organization" (Skelton et al., 2020, p. 103).
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Perceived organizational support (POS), the construct of organizational support theory (OST), is the guiding framework of this literature review. An analysis of the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) literature revealed that the retention of county-level professionals is an ongoing problem of practice that threatens the sustainably of county-level 4-H programming (Russell & Liggans, 2020). The study explores low retention rates of county-level 4-H professionals, the costs of turnover to Extension, and details the low retention rates found in the cooperative extension service literature. An overview of POS follows, including its definition, key antecedents, and outcomes. Next, a review of empirical works on POS, its antecedents, and outcomes are offered to justify choosing the variables in this study. The conclusion presents a rationale for using this framework for studying retention in Extension.

Cooperative Extension System Retention

Organizational retention focuses on employees staying with the organization for an extended time (Kossivi et al., 2016; Mears, 2017). Retention among county-level CES professionals has been a challenge analyzed in the CES literature for over 35 years (Safrit & Owen, 2010). Retention was established as a CES problem of practice when Whaples (1983) claimed that turnover persists in CES programs throughout the United States (Mears, 2017; Safrit & Owen, 2010). St. Pierre (1984) proposed that agent turnover may be due to the complex roles associated with county-level extension agents which leads to a lower quality of life (Safrit & Owen, 2010). Manton and van Es (1985) stated that turnover rates of agents in Illinois could be improved by more robust supportive employee networks (Safrit & Owen, 2010). Kutilek (2000) studied extension agents in Ohio and implored extension organizations to address work/life
issues to improve retention rates (Safrit & Owen, 2010). In 2005, the Extension Committee on Policy leadership council identified retention as a significant challenge for human resources because of the threat to organizational productivity (Benge et al., 2015; Mears, 2017; Safrit & Owen, 2010). In 2009, Strong and Harder pointed out that retention problems persisted even though CES has continuously studied the issue (Safrit & Owen, 2010).

In 2010 the first CES conceptual model of retention was introduced by Safrit & Owen (2010). The RETAINS conceptual model for retaining county-level professionals included seven themes presented as applied research to help the extension field keep top talent at the county level (Safrit & Owen, 2010). The first theme in the model is recruiting county-level agents with authentic messaging about the work and job expectations (Safrit & Owen, 2010). The next theme in the model was to expand on new employees' experiences and abilities through hands-on learning opportunities (Safrit & Owen, 2010). Training was the third theme, focused on the onboarding process and continuing learning throughout extension agents' careers (Safrit & Owen, 2010). The next theme was for CES administration to advocate for both county-level extension agents and the position, so the role is considered a positive experience for employees (Safrit & Owen, 2010). Having the organization invest in strategies that inspire and empower employees is the fifth theme in the model (Safrit & Owen, 2010). Nurture is the next theme, as CES administrators were encouraged to create connections between employees, such as mentoring programs, to increase retention (Safrit & Owen, 2010). The last theme was to show appreciation through effective recognition strategies relevant to county-level extension agents (Safrit & Owen, 2010).
More recent CES retention research has focused on sustainability of local county CES educational programs; which are threatened without consistent programming done by county-level extension agents (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Rousan & Henderson, 1996; Russell & Liggins, 2020). Benge et al. (2015) explored solutions to retention through a qualitative study that explored county-level extension agents experiences. These researchers encouraged other CES organizations to focus on organizational support efforts, such as increasing support for agent development and supervisor support to help overcome the persistent problem of retaining county-level agents (Benge et al., 2015). More recently, Russell et al. (2019) urged the field to research CES retention to identify turnover predictors to understand the phenomenon better. In 2020, Russell and Liggins (2020) issued a plea for CES leadership to focus efforts on supporting country-level extension agents through developmental activities. Actions that are implemented to support and develop agents can help lessen the effects of agent turnover and sustain the future of CES (Russell & Liggins, 2020).

Low retention rates of county-level professionals are problematic to CES organizations. Turnover is expensive for both the organization and the county programs they leave (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Mears, 2017; Strong & Harder, 2009; Vines et al., 2018). CES organizations make financial investments in every employee, including onboarding training and resources in the county (Martin & Kaufman, 2013). When employees leave, the organization suffers a loss on investment with the departing employee—replacing a county-level extension professional costs approximately 150% of the exiting employee's salary (Benge et al., 2015). Increases in retention could have a significant economic impact nationwide (Kutilek, 2000; Young & Jones, 2015; Young et al., 2013). Young and Jones (2015) concluded that CES
organizational expenses nationwide could be reduced by 6.4 million dollars each year with just a one-percent increase in county-level extension agent retention.

Another concern caused by low CES retention rates is the departure of organizational knowledge and skills when agents leave (Benge et al., 2015; Russell et al., 2019). New hires can take a long time to replace and train (Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Russell et al., 2019). Also, CES's challenge with retention has lasting adverse effects on county-level programs (Vines et al., 2018). Programming stops, and the needs of citizens go unmet (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013). CES's relationships within the community lose value (Benge et al., 2015; Mears, 2017). This evidence identifies retention as a critical threat to CES county-level programming sustainability (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013).

Numerous studies have sought to understand retention among extension professionals. Most of these studies have examined job satisfaction, performance, and motivation as influencers on CES turnover (Bowen et al., 1994; Russell & Liggans, 2020; Strong & Harder, 2009). However, additional themes of retention have emerged over the past thirty years as to what contributes to low extension agent retention rates. Inadequate compensation has been identified as one reason why agents leave (Benge et al., 2015; Strong & Harder, 2009). Another reason for retention problems is an organization's hiring practices, where a more in-depth interview process would ensure if an individual were the best fit for the position (Benge et al., 2015; Vines et al., 2018). Organizational support for agent development (training/professional development) has been echoed as a need to keep high-quality extension agents with the organization. (Benge et al., 2015; Strong & Harder, 2009; Vines et al., 2018). Another provision needed is organizational
support from administration (supervisor support) to reduce agent turnover (Benge et al., 2015; Benge et al., 2020; Benge & Harder, 2018; Mears, 2017; Russell et al., 2019; Safrit & Owen, 2010). Organizational support from colleagues has been explored to retain agents, including mentoring programs and learning communities (Benge et al., 2015; Russell et al., 2019; Vines et al., 2018). Young and Jones (2015) found that community size where extension agents are employed contributes to turnover. Extension agents working in the most rural and urban communities included in the study reported low job embeddedness rates, which is an indicator of turnover intention (Young & Jones, 2015).

Extension agents have identified themes on why individuals leave or think about leaving the organization. A lack of recognition for agents' work, program reporting, lack of resources, and lack of challenging and meaningful work are all factors that cause departure from CES organizations (Benge et al., 2015; Benge & Harder, 2018; Russell et al., 2019; Strong & Harder, 2009). Workload and the lack of work-life balance have also been identified as reasons for leaving, particularly as it relates to gender identity (Benge et al., 2015; Castro, 2016; Strong & Harder, 2009; Vines et al., 2018). Extension's promotion and advancement policies and unfair agent accountability practices were cited as additional reasons extension agents depart (Benge et al., 2015; Castro, 2016; Russell et al., 2019; Strong & Harder, 2009). Other factors identified as reasons agents leave include another job, moving, or having a baby (Benge et al., 2015).

These themes have been identified to help CES organizations develop organizational strategies to improve retention. Despite this wealth of research, retention trends across the country have not improved (Benge et al., 2015; Harder et al., 2021; Martin & Kauffman, 2013;
Mears, 2017; Russell & Liggans, 2020; Shanahan & Sheehan, 2020; Vines et al., 2018). In 2000, Ohio reported a 5% turnover rate among extension agents (Kutilek et al., 2002). The issue of agent retention is especially prevalent with 4-H agents in North Carolina, as a review from January 2006-April 2009 concluded that 31% of 4-H agents had left the organization (Safrit & Owen, 2010). In 2017, the turnover rate for extension agents in Florida was 8.7% (Benge & Harder, 2018). Texas reported an even higher turnover rate for extension agents in 2017, as 10%-12% of extension agents (Mears, 2017). Dr. Griffeth with the University of Georgia extension service indicated that the organization lost approximately 25% of extension agents within the first three years of being hired (NAEPSDP Member Connect, 2021). The retention crisis is still prevalent in CES.

Harder et al. (2014) said, "Extension touts that research-based information is the foundation that makes it different from other information and education sources. As Extension addresses internal employee retention issues, research should be used to make decisions on this topic" (Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations section, para 5). Past CES retention studies have explored job satisfaction, motivation, and job performance as theoretical frameworks for research. However, one theoretical framework largely absent in the literature is organizational support theory. CES organizational research should leverage additional frameworks, such as OST, to help address the retention problem of practice (Harder et al., 2014).

**Design Framework: Organizational Support Theory**

Organization Support Theory (OST) states that employees create perceptions about how much their work organization voluntarily values their contributions and cares about their well-
being (perceived organizational support, or POS) (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017). The theory thoroughly examines the processes involved in an employee forming POS and how these beliefs influence an employee's commitment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). OST processes are facilitated by three tenets: attribution, social exchange, and self-enhancement. (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades et al., 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This framework is beneficial to the field of CES because this unique theoretical lens has not been widely considered in extension retention research.

The study of POS began during a conversation in the 1980s between a professor and their students about the lack of research on organizations' commitment to their employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020). More than 30 years later, over 1,200 POS studies have been published, establishing it as a prominent organizational psychology and management theoretical framework (Eisenberger et al., 2020). POS is still relevant, as the "average level of POS has modestly increased over the past three decades in the United States" (Eisenberger et al., 2020, p. 101).

OST explores how POS is developed between employees and organizations, POS antecedents and factors, and the consequences of POS (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Baran et al., 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Shore, 1995). OST and POS are unique because it examines the employee's perceptions and points of view of their organizations' voluntary support, commitment, and treatment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001). This theoretical framework's approach is of particular interest to CES research, as Benge et al. (2015) called for
more studies that collected data from county-level extension agents' points of view. Researching socioemotional organizational factors of OST and POS could be vital to increasing retention rates of county-level professionals. POS is strongly correlated with high affective commitment and job satisfaction, which are indicative of increased retention rates among employees (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Harder et al., 2021; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Kraimer et al., 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001).

**Attribution**

OST believes that employees consider the motives behind the organization's treatment they receive (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Maan et al., 2020; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees want to perceive the treatment given to them from their organization as discretionary (Eisenberger et al., 2020). This consideration is an employee's attribution of the organization's intent (Kurtessis et al., 2017). If employees believe that they are being treated favorably at the organization's discretion, then their POS is predicted to be high (Hussan & Asif, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017). If an employee attributes the organization's respect and favorable treatment as being conducted in good faith, that attribution enhances POS (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

An additional component of attribution is the personification of the organization (Levinson, 1965; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). “OST posits employees view the organization as a living being, having purpose and intention” (Eisenberger et al., 2020, p. 102). The personification of the organization helps researchers understand the relationship between
employees' and organizational members' actions. As CES grapples with low retention among county-level extension professionals, this OST concept highlights the potential of supervisors' actions influencing perceptions of organizational support. CES administration, who influence organizational work factors, would benefit from understanding personification.

**Social Exchange**

OST is an application of social-exchange theory that examines employee-organization relationships (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). OST assumes that employees develop a relationship with their organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This relationship is a series of exchanges between both entities to establish commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees give their effort and loyalty to the organization in the form of employment and expect the organization to reward them by treating them favorably because they value their contributions and care about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees expect rewards based on their commitment to the organization through their work, while organizations consider the employee's performance and loyalty before distributing benefits and resources to them (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

OST assumes that employees view employment with an organization in terms of an exchange of tradeoffs and benefits. Employees exert effort to achieve the organization’s goals
and objectives in return for the organization’s help and favorable treatment (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). The social exchange creates the norm of reciprocity, which leads the employee to develop a felt obligation to want to help the organization (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). Employees with high POS display great effort to achieve organizational goals, which results in increased job performance (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This social-exchange process also affects commitment to the organization (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Mowday et al., 1978; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001).

According to OST, employees seek balance in the social-exchange relationship, as organizations show favorable treatment and give out rewards for positive job performance, the employee develops a felt obligation to reciprocate their affection by staying committed to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Mowday et al., 1978; Rhoades et al., 2001). Thus, POS is positively related to affective organizational commitment (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Meyer et al., 1993; Mitchell et al., 2001; Mowday et al., 1978; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades et al., 2001). Although social exchange theory is foundational to OST, it is not the sole tenet. Self-enhancement is another foundation of OST that explores the relationship between an employee's socioemotional needs and POS.

Self-Enhancement

Self-enhancement looks at the methods of how POS meets an employee's socioemotional needs (Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Self-enhancement is the process of an
employee developing a high POS resulting in positive outcomes for the employee because the organization’s treatment helped meet their social-emotional needs (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtesiss et al., 2017). Examples of socio-emotional needs of employees that may be met include "approval, esteem, affiliation, and emotional support" (Kurtesiss et al., 2017, p. 1856). When employees' needs are met, OST theorizes that the employee begins to identify with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtesiss et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). The relationship between employee and organization becomes more enhanced than a social exchange, but the employee gains esteem within the organization (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtesiss et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The relationship is deepened beyond the rewards an employee can gain from the organization (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtesiss et al., 2017). The employee begins to share the organization's values and beliefs and gains emotional support from the organization (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtesiss et al., 2017). These relationships help strengthen affective commitment (Meyer et al., 1993).

Also, self-enhancement is created when employees engage in intense, supportive relationships with agents of the organization, such as supervisors and administration (Baran et al., 2012; Kurtesiss et al., 2017). Baran et al. (2012) stated that organizations are a prominent component of an individual's life. "OST acknowledges that a healthy employee-employer relationship fulfills important socio-emotional needs for workers and thus may enhance employee well-being…"(Baran et al., 2012, p. 126). Employees seek opportunities to have their socio-emotional needs met through their work relationships and organization (Baran et al., 2012). Employees not only stay because they know they are valued, but they are getting their socioemotional needs met and making self-improvements along the way. POS creates self-
enhancement processes that help fulfill employees' socio-emotional needs and increase their identification with the organization, thus increasing practical organizational commitment (Armeli et al., 1998; Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Perceived Organizational Support

In addition to the three tenets of OST, the theory has a central construct, perceived organizational support (POS). POS assumes that employees form global views about how much an organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). An employee's global view is that individual members' actions and treatment of the employee also come from the entire organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This tenet is powerful because it highlights employees infer meaning about the motives underlying the organization's numerous actions. These meanings influence employee perceptions (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The employee's point-of-view influences their perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). CES administration would benefit from understanding county-level professionals' perceived organizational support because they control many of the organizational actions that employees experience.

Perceived Organizational Support

Employees consider POS as something that organizations and their agents have control over (Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS is essential for CES because employees’ socioemotional needs are examined to determine if they are being met, specifically regarding work experiences that the organization can change or improve (Eisenberger et al., 2001). POS is also necessary for CES to
consider because it has a strong, positive relationship with affective organizational commitment, thus increasing retention (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001).

POS research has identified antecedent categories used to determine relationships among various variables and POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The antecedents of POS identify various organizational factors that are assumed to contribute positively to POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The antecedents have evolved over the years, most recently updated in 2017 by Kurtessis et al. (2017) during a meta-analytic evaluation of OST and POS literature. The three POS antecedents are treatment by organization members, employee-organization relationship quality, and Human Resource practices and job conditions (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

**Treatment by Organization Members**

Treatment by organization members concludes that if employees perceive they are receiving favorable treatment from the organization, they believe the organization views them favorably and will receive something in exchange for this favorable orientation (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). Employees assign a value to their interactions with organization members based on the member’s ranking within the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002) to determine to what degree they value their contributions and how much they care about their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees consider all levels of supervision to form POS. However, more emphasis is placed on direct supervisors’ perceptions of the employees because these supervisors
report to upper management, which would be regional and state administration (Benge & Harder, 2018; Eisenberger et al., 2002). As members of an organization show favorable treatment to employees, these actions should increase employees’ feelings that the organization, as an entity, views them satisfactorily (Kurtessis et al., 2017). In the CES, that would be their state CES organization.

Kurtessis et al. (2017) found several factors associated with the treatment by organization members antecedent that was strongly and moderately related to POS. These factors included supervisor support, coworker support, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and leader-member exchange (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Supervisor support is related to POS because employees view their supervisor as an agent of the organization whose actions are on behalf of the organization (Armstrong et al., 2010; Baran et al., 2012; Eisenberger et al., 2012; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Nguyen, 2011; Rhoades et al., 2001; Thompson, 1995). Transformational leadership, per OST, is when leaders display feelings of care about employees’ needs and inspire those employees to commit to reaching organizational goals (Asgari et al., 2008; Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS has a strong relationship with transactional leadership ($p = 0.56$; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Transactional leadership is when a leader uses rewards to motivate employees to improve their performance and use remedial actions to prevent or lessen employee errors (Asgari et al., 2008; Rahn, 2010). Kurtessis et al. (2017) found the relationships between POS and transactional leadership moderate ($p = 0.21$). Leader-member exchange is a factor of OST when the relationship between the leader and employee is facilitated by reciprocation of trust and respect between the two (Asgari et al., 2008; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Waul, 2007). POS and leader-member exchange are strongly related ($p = 0.53$) (Kurtessis et al., 2017).
**Supervisor Support**

Supervisor support is an employee’s perception of how much their supervisor acknowledges their contributions to the organization and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Eisenberger et al. (2002) found that employees’ perceptions of supervisor support led to positive, progressive variations in POS over time. However, POS has not been proven to lead to perceived supervisor support (Baran et al., 2012; Rhoades et al., 2001). According to OST, as employees view their supervisors and their actions as agents of the organization, their treatment of individuals, either favorable or unfavorable, is symbolic of the entire organization’s support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Supervisor support has a positive relationship with POS and the retention of employees as well (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Benge & Harder (2018) studied the impact of supervisory management on extension agents and found that positive relationships between supervisors and extension agents can increase the retention of agents. Perceived supervisor support’s correlation with POS and retention is essential to future CES retention research. Benge and Harder (2018) cite the lack of CES studies examining the relationship between extension agents and supervisors, calling for more research.

**Employee-Organization Relationship Quality**

The second POS antecedent category was employee-organization relationship quality (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employee-organization relationship quality examines different factors employees consider, determining how the organization views them (Kurtessis et al., 2017). The relationship quality between the employee-organization can be
favorable or unfavorable, or respectful or disrespectful (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Kurtessis et al., 2017). The employee-organization relationship quality antecedent can help determine areas the organization can improve to increase employee POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Organizational congruence, justice, and organizational politics are some factors identified to have strong or moderate relationships with POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Lee & Peccei, 2011; Rich et al., 2010; Roch & Shanock, 2006). Value congruence with the organization occurs when employees find their personal beliefs and values align with the organization; they feel supported by the organization (Erdogan et al., 2004; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rich et al., 2010; Wahab, 2010).

Justice was another factor of employee-organization relationship quality identified to have a strong relationship with POS (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005; DeConinck, 2010; Tekleab et al., 2005). Organizational justice measures employees’ perceptions of fairness of how organizations distribute resources measured using different constructs (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; DeConinck, 2010). The three primary constructs are distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001, Kurtessis et al., 2017). Distributive justice examines an employee’s perceptions of how fair an organization’s decision consequences are (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). Procedural justice explores an employee’s perception of how fair the decision-making process is that the organization uses (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). Interactional justice examines how fair an employee’s treatment receives from organizational agents throughout the decision-making process (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). Interactional justice has two dimensions (Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). The first is interpersonal justice, which
looks at respect and sincerity shown by organizational agents throughout the decision-making process (Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). The second dimension is informational justice which examines how organizational agents truthfully and sufficiently explain the decision-making process to employees (Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). Each construct has a relationship with POS, with procedural justice having the most substantial relationship (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

An organization’s actions perceived as fair contribute to an employee’s POS because these actions are decisions that organizations have control over (Christopher, 2000; DeConinck, 2010; Eisenberger et al., 1997). The perceptions of how organizations use fairness to arrive at decisions are used by employees to determine if they are treated favorably or not (Eisenberger et al., 1997). Organizational politics is an antecedent factor that has a very strong, negative relationship with POS (Brubaker, 2012; Carver et al., 2011; Cropzanzano et al., 1997; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Lee & Peccei, 2011; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Organizational politics, a factor that was strongly, negatively correlated with POS, includes an employee’s perceptions of things such as favoritism being shown to an employee by the organization and its agents or cliques that treat others with disrespect (Cropzanzano et al., 1997; Lee & Peccei, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Witt & Nye, 1992).

Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Perceptions of organization politics (POP) is the view of an employee that the organization they work for allows other members to act in a way deemed political, as other employees act to serve their interests to get ahead, frequently circumventing organizational
policies and procedures (Lee & Peccei, 2011; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Allowing this type of environment to exist creates an unjust and unfair environment for employees who do not act in this manner (Lee & Peccei, 2011; Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). POP supposes that the workplace is an environment where social exchanges occur between individual employees engaging in various transactions, or investments, seeking to get a positive return on their investments (Lee & Peccei, 2011). When employees begin to feel that their transactions are not giving them positive returns, they can perceive that organizational politics are present in their work environments (Lee & Peccei, 2011). These doubts are caused when employees feel like other employees are rewarded for other factors rather than their performance or meeting organizational goals and objectives (Caner et al., 2009; Lee & Peccei, 2011). These factors include cliques yielding power over decision-making within the organization, individuals circumventing the chain of command for a promotion, and employees not being held to the same standards (Lee & Peccei, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017). When the organization allows these political behaviors, employees’ POP is affected (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001), which is problematic to POS. Organizations that fail to address these behaviors may risk appearing to not care about employees’ well-being (Harris et al., 2007; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Lee & Peccei, 2011). POP includes the organization and those acting on behalf of the organization, such as other employees, supervisors, and administration (Lee & Peccei, 2011). According to POS, these agents act on behalf of the organization, so employees perceive the politics influence recognition and rewards determined by the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Lee & Peccei, 2011). POP has relationships with affective commitment and turnover intention (Caner et al., 2009; Ferris et al., 2002; Lee & Peccei, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). a
Factors associated with POP are general political behavior, go along and get ahead, and pay and promotion (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). General political behavior is when an employee acts selfishly to achieve desired results they are seeking (Kacmar & Carlso, 1997). Political behavior seems to intensify when no policies and procedures are in place to communicate expected and appropriate employee behavior (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Unclear expectations lead to employees developing their own set of rules to achieve their desired results within the organization (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). General political behavior is also impacted when organizational decisions are made in an environment of uncertainty (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). When decisions are made when policies and procedures are unclear, employees develop their elucidations of acceptable behavior and face few negative consequences for engaging in such political behaviors (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Lastly, general political behavior involves competition for limited resources within the organization (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Organizational agents that control these limited resources are most likely to be targeted to be included in an employee’s political behavior maneuvers (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997).

Organizational politics has another factor called to go along and get ahead. This factor occurs when employees do not take any actions to secure their desired outcomes (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). This factor is also referred to as an employee “remaining silent” (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997, p. 629). When employees engage in this behavior, they want to avoid conflict, not wanting to “rock the boat” or appear combative within the organization that may not achieve their desired outcomes (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997, p. 630). This behavior is self-serving because
when the employee chooses not to get involved in a conflict, they make that choice so they will not be punished by the organization (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997).

The final factor of organizational politics is pay and promotion. Pay and promotion recognize that organizations can create a political work environment through the policies and procedures and what kinds of employee behaviors are rewarded (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993). If an organization rewards those who engage in political behaviors, this can create a culture where political behaviors are required to advance (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Employees who may not have acted politically in the past may start to engage in such behaviors to get ahead because they see others are being rewarded (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993).

County-level 4-H professionals are bounded by many systems within their state CES organization, ranging from county offices, regional districts, and state 4-H program offices housed at the state’s land-grant university. Several players in the field create many opportunities for county-level 4-H agents to act in their best interest to get ahead. According to POS, employees are most concerned with the organization acting in good faith and fairness over things it has control over (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). When organizations repeatedly appear fair, employees interpret that as caring for their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In Castro’s (2016) dissertation research, county-level 4-H professionals expressed concern and unhappiness with decisions made by the organization, especially with agent accountability. 4-H agent participants in the study stated they perceive
those other agents are not being held accountable to reach the state 4-H department’s job expectations (Castro, 2016). Castro’s (2016) study also revealed a lack of accountability procedures to deal with the consequences of agents who were not meeting expectations. Political actions typically occur in organizations that do not have policies and procedures to guide decision-making, in this case, for dealing with agent accountability issues (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Castro, 2016; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). There is limited CES research on county-level 4-H professionals’ perceptions of organizational politics. Castro’s (2016) study identifies how important it is for CES to understand the county-level professionals’ perceptions of fairness through perceived organizational politics (POP), which the organization can take action to resolve if needed.

**Human Resources Practices and Job Conditions**

Human resources and job conditions are factors that the organization controls (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Human resources (HR) practices and job conditions are the third antecedent category of POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Factors in this antecedent category represent HR practices, role characteristics, and job conditions that the organization can improve or change for employees to have a more enjoyable work experience (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This belief connects with the OST tenet that employees seek favorable treatment from the organization to have high POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001). Human resources and job conditions factor examples include developmental opportunities, enriching job characteristics, autonomy, and employee participation in decision making (Edwards, 2009; Hamwri, 2010; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Reeves, 2011; Rhoades &
Developmental opportunities are pieces of training offered by the organization for improvement and have a strong, positive relationship with POS (Bambacas & Bordia, 2009; Carver et al., 2011; Kraimer et al., 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Schmitt-McQuitty et al., 2019; Shanhan & Sheehan, 2020; Smith et al., 2017; Waseem, 2010). Work role characteristics that have a strong correlation with POS include job enrichments to improve skills or learn new ones, autonomy to be able to work independently and participate in decision making (Bleicken, 1990; Edwards, 2009; Hamwi, 2010; Kauatepe, 2011; Kittredge, 2010; Reeves, 2011; Stup, 2006; Worley, 2006). These correlations may be strong because the organization controls these factors, as they provide enriching job characteristic opportunities, allow for autonomy within an employee’s role, and give decision-making power to employees (Bleicken, 1990; Edwards, 2009; Hamwi, 2010; Kauatepe, 2011; Kittredge, 2010; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Reeves, 2011; Stup, 2006; Worley, 2006).

Organizational Support for Development

Organizational support for development (OSD) is the employee’s belief about how much the organization is concerned about their career needs (Kraimer et al., 2011). OSD is high when an organization is perceived to provide employee development experiences and support individuals to participate in such experiences (Carver et al., 2011; Kraimer et al., 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Waseem, 2010). Employees who perceive their organization supports their development translate into concern for their well-being (Castro, 2016; Kraimer et al., 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001). Gathering OSD data from county-level CES 4-H professionals is essential because of its connection to lower turnover (Kraimer et al.,
A problematic discovery by Vines et al. (2018) found that “agents were confused about the meaning of professional development, as well as about how and when to participate in it” (Table 1, Category 6, Professional development plans). Employees confused about professional development may construe that as unfavorable treatment by the organization. County-level professionals in Colorado felt that their organization could offer more professional development and training opportunities to solve burnout (Benge et al., 2015). This finding is significant because burnout is strongly connected to low retention in the CES literature (Benge et al., 2015).

OSD is a significant factor because Safrit & Owen’s (2010) RETAINS conceptual model for retaining county extension program professionals identifies training as an essential component of the model. Professional development for extension agents is critical for retaining professionals and helps to enhance the organization’s existing human capital and should be increased in CES organizations nationwide (Safrit & Owen, 2010). CES administration, human resources, and professional development instructional designers would benefit from understanding the perceptions of county-level 4-H agents so that training can be sustained or increased, depending on the findings of this study.

**Demographic Considerations**

Historically, demographic descriptive variables have not been found to have strong relationships with POS (Baran et al., 2012). Kurtessis et al. (2017) examined gender as a moderator of POS outcomes and found it no variance of POS outcome relationships based on age or gender (Kurtessis et al., 2017, p. 1877). However, Maan et al. (2020) suggested to consider gender when examining POS, as job satisfaction has been shown to differ between males and
females (Crossman & Abou-Zaki, 2003). Tenure has shown signs of acting as a moderator of POS, however that research is limited (Lei & Chen, 2020). However, there is evidence that tenure significantly correlates with job satisfaction, which is a criterion and predictor variable being used in this study (Kallith et al., 2018; Maan, et al., 2020). Owens et al. (2016) found that the tenure of new hires can have an impact on POS, as their excitement and energy for the organization is high as they begin a new job. Although there is not strong evidence of gender and tenure having significant relationships with POS, these variables were controlled in this study because there is some evidence of relationships among the predictor variables being examined.

**Outcomes of POS**

Positive orientation toward the organization and work, subjective well-being, and behavioral outcomes are strongly related to POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Orientation toward the organization and work examines different variables that could cause an employee's favorable orientation toward the organization to result in affective organizational commitment (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Subjective well-being occurs when employees have their socioemotional needs met, thus increasing job satisfaction (Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Maan et al., 2020; Schmiesing et al., 2003; Scott et al., 2005). Behavioral outcomes of POS reduce turnover intention (Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Skelton et al., 2020).

**Affective Organizational Commitment**

Affective organizational commitment (AOC) is an individual's emotional attachment to an organization (Klein et al., 2012; Mercurio, 2015). An employee's attachment is influenced by
high levels of interpersonal factors, which are the "identification with" and "involvement in" the organization (Klein et al., 2012; Mercurio, 2015, p. 397). Affective organizational commitment has consistently been proven as an outcome of perceived organizational support; and has each been established as two empirically distinct variables (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001, p. 825). Employees tend to respond with commitment to the organization when they perceive favorable treatment (Rhoades et al., 2001).

Affective organizational commitment has a positive relationship with retention in organizations (Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Mercurio, 2015; Mowday et al., 1978; Newman et al., 2011; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020). Of significant importance to the CES field, employees with firm POS beliefs reciprocate the perceived support with increased affective organizational commitment, increasing retention (Harder et al., 2021; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This consequence of POS is based on the norm of reciprocity, where an employees' high POS should elicit a felt obligation to the organization; the employee exhibits care for the organization's welfare and wants to help the organization achieve its goals by remaining with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Harder et al. (2021) states, "organizational commitment is important to Cooperative Extension because of its history of challenges with agent retention" (p. 83). In CES research, organizational commitment has been investigated in studies focusing on relationships between job satisfaction, mentoring, and coworker relationships (Benge & Harder, 2018; Martin &
Kaufman, 2013). Martin and Kaufman (2013), studying extension agents in the Southern region, found that agents with six or fewer years of experience reported a moderate organizational commitment and no intention to quit soon. Harder et al. (2021) found that early-career extension agents in their study "slightly agreed they felt organizational commitment" (p. 92). A notable gap in the CES literature is the exploration of affective commitment using POS factors directly linked to organizational environments and job conditions. The extension field should continue to explore organizational commitment best practices, as committed employees are retained and put more effort into supporting the organization to achieve its goals (Harder et al., 2021). The results will help the field by identifying the variables with the most significant relationships with affective commitment, which can begin the identification of best practices of those POS antecedents.

**Job Satisfaction**

Gonzalez-Rico et al. (2018) described job satisfaction in the holistic sense of conceptualization of one's job. Job satisfaction includes an employee's thoughts and feelings about their and toward job (Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Maan et al., 2020; Rico et al., 2018). Job satisfaction is positively associated with, and an outcome of, POS (Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Eisenberger et al., 1997; Maan et al., 2020). Job satisfaction also has a negative, strong relationship with turnover intention (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Skelton et al., 2020). Per OST, as a social exchange begins with an employee's POS and support for the organization, employees begin to reciprocate the support to help the organization reach its goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Maan et al., 2020). Employees expect to be rewarded for their effort in the
organization (Maan et al., 2020). Job satisfaction is created through this exchange. As employees begin to have positive thoughts and feelings towards the organization, they affiliate these feelings with the organization's support (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Maan et al., 2020). The feelings and thoughts of satisfaction create a socioemotional attachment with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Maan et al., 2020). More recently, research on the relationship between POS and job satisfaction has discovered that the association can be mediated by psychological empowerment and moderated by proactive personality. These findings underscore OST's assumption that organizations must care about employees' well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Maan et al., 2020).

In CES research, agents' job satisfaction has been studied (Benge & Harder, 2018; Schmiesing et al., 2003). Supervisor support, a factor of POS, has been established to positively affect job satisfaction for a group of extension agents in Florida (Benge & Harder, 2018). An interesting discovery of this study was that 4-H agents' overall job satisfaction had the lowest mean (M=3.39) compared to those agents who focused on agriculture (M=3.46), family, and consumer sciences (M=3.92), and horticulture (M=3.66) (Benge & Harder, 2018). Extension agents in Ohio reported a positive relationship between job satisfaction and POS factors interactional justice, procedural justice, and systemic justice (Schmiesing et al., 2003). A group of Mississippi extension agents identified positive relationships between job satisfaction and gender and race (Scott et al., 2005). Eighty percent of Colorado extension agents reported that they experience some degree of satisfaction with their job, while fifteen percent reported that they were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their jobs (Harder et al., 2014). Job
satisfaction remains an essential outcome for CES to study because of its relationships with POS and turnover intention.

### Turnover Intention

Within organizational research, turnover intention has been one of the most widely studied phenomena (Hom et al., 1984). CES has studied turnover for over 30 years as an answer to its retention problem (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Russell & Liggans, 2020; Safrit & Owen, 2010; Vines et al., 2018). "Turnover intention is the probability that an employee will leave an organization" (Skelton et al., 2020, p. 103). There are two types of turnover, voluntary and involuntary (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Hussain & Asif, 2012). Turnover intention measures an employee's desire to voluntarily leave the organization (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). The turnover intention is a behavioral outcome of POS (Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Skelton et al., 2020). It is the variable with the most substantial predictive power of POS (Hussain & Asif, 2012). POS has a negative, strong relationship with turnover intention (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Skelton et al., 2020). Affective organizational commitment also strongly relates to turnover intention (Hussin & Asif, 2012; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades et al., 2001). Turnover intention is a powerful indicator of actual turnover (Botham & Roodt, 2012; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2001; Skelton et al., 2020).

Organizations should leverage the negative, strong relationship between POS, affective organization commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention to create policies, procedures, experiences, and training opportunities where employees are encouraged and motivated to
develop these factors so that they feel ownership within the organization and establish themselves as a valuable resource for the organization (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades et al., 2001; Skelton et al., 2020). OST states that if an employee has POS, they are more likely to cultivate a positive orientation toward the organization and exhibit positive behaviors toward the organization and its agents (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This positive orientation decreases an employee's departure behaviors (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). However, when a situation within the organization seems unmanageable and the employee is not supported, turnover is a coping strategy the employee uses to escape the dire situation (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). Turnover intention is a mental decision influencing employees' behavior when they must weigh the options of staying with the organization or leaving (Hussain & Asif, 2012). Other factors influence turnover intention, including the individual's options if they leave their job (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Michell et al., 2001).

**Conclusion**

Turnover is a threat to CES fulfilling its duties within counties across the country (Benge et al., 2015; Harder et al., 2021; Vines et al., 2018). CES organizations nationwide need to move retention research from focusing on just job satisfaction and performance to examining perceptions of variables that the organization has direct control over. Martin & Kaufman (2013) urge more research so that human resources can identify the best practices to increase retention among county-level extension agents. One such practice absent from CES research is using OST as a framework. The POS framework focuses on employee well-being and situates the study
around organizational work factors, such as environments and conditions. This study can determine if the variables explored have a relationship with POS among county-level 4-H professionals. The results of this study have the potential to inform more effective practices that increase POS. These new practices might increase affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction through enhanced work environments and conditions, thus positively impacting retention rates among CES county-level professionals.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The researcher sought to answer the research questions posed in the predictive correlational study and reject and or accept the null hypothesis. The conceptual model being tested can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1

*Study Conceptual Model*

The Investigation Plan

This study will use a cross sectional survey and predictive correlational design. Cross-sectional surveys collect data at one point in time (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This design was selected to collect data within a short time frame (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). A prediction design is used when researchers are looking for a way to predict an outcome from a
set of predictor variables (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 344). This design was most appropriate for this study because it sought to predict 4-H professional’s perceived organization support, affective commitment, turnover intention, and job satisfaction (criterion variables) using multiple predictor variables (gender identity, tenure, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of organizational politics, and perceived support for development; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Urdan, 2017; Warner, 2021). Although CES literature is limited in predictive studies, correlational studies have been conducted to determine relationships between job satisfaction, job stress, and turnover intention (Ezell, 2003; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Mowbray, 2002).

There were some limitations of using a predictive correlational study design. First, a predictive study cannot determine causation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Urdan, 2017). This limitation was managed in this study’s results sections by focusing the write up on the nature of the relationships found among the predictor and criterion variables and avoided making claims of causation about those relationships. Using cross sectional study design limits the control the researcher has in getting participants to respond to the survey, otherwise known as non-response (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Warner, 2021). Non-response is considered non-ignorable and was managed by running multiple imputation in SPSS during analysis to rectify bias due to missing data (Warner, 2021). Lastly, cross section design creates common method bias, as the data is being collected at the same point in time (Warner, 2021). This limitation must be accepted, as the time frame for this study limits collecting data at another point in time.
Participants/ Learner Characteristics

The target population for this study was county based 4-H professionals who are currently employed by CES 1862 and 1890 land grant universities in the United States and have a percentage of 4-H county-level responsibilities. The non-random sample was drawn from county based 4-H professionals working in the CES Southern region’s 15 universities (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). These professionals work in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virgin Islands, and Virginia. County-level 4-H agents are employed by the land-grant university in the state that they work in and are housed in a county office. Most agents are required to have at least an undergraduate degree and usually the degree must be in agriculture, family and consumer sciences, education, and/or youth development. Their main responsibility is to manage the 4-H youth development program in the county. The sample size was determined by calculating 15 observations per 11 predictor variables for a goal of 165 survey participants (Gall et al., 2015; Mertens, 2020).

Setting

The cooperative extension system (CES) is an informal educational program of the federal government that delivers county level education activities throughout the United States (Cooperative Extension System, n.d.). CES programs deliver research-based information straight to communities through informal, educational programs and activities to generate positive transformations of rural, suburban, and urban communities (Cooperative Extension System, n.d.). CES is partnered with land-grant universities in all fifty states, which allows for exclusive access to research and resources of the university (Cooperative Extension System,
n.d.). Each extension program is represented by a state extension director who provides administrative leadership to all levels of the program, including state, regional/district, and county-level staff (National Research Council, 1995). CES is conducted at the local, county-level in regional and/or county extension offices, which house salaried, professional staff that work for the land-grant university (Cooperative Extension System, n.d.). Professional staff at the local level are referred to as “extension agents”. Extension agents focus on educational program delivery in informal settings about agriculture and natural resources, family, child, and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and/or community economic development (Cooperative Extension System, n.d.).

The 4-H youth development program in each county across the United States is open to children ages 5-18. Each state’s 4-H youth development department’s administration is housed at the land-grant university. The 4-H department head is the lead administrator of the state’s program and works with specialists and associates to provide resources and training to county-level 4-H agents. The county 4-H program is managed by one or more extension agents that work out of an office located in the county/region where they are employed. The office is typically provided by the local county government, who shares in the funding of the county level CES program with the state’s land-grant university. 4-H agents manage an entire county program and frequently interact with youth 4-H participants, adult volunteers, and 4-H family members. 4-H agents plan, develop, and/or deliver informal, educational programming through club, school enrichment, after-school, special interest, camping, and technology settings. 4-H professionals typically do not have standard business operating hours, as many work nights and weekends to provide experiences for participants in their county.
4-H agents’ roles are complex (Mears, 2017). Extension agents have been described as having many roles, such as teacher, organizer of events/activities/contests, trainer, marketing specialist, grant writer, fundraiser, manage volunteers, writing lesson plans, change agent that inspires social justice, evaluator, mentor to their 4-Her’s, and subject matter technician (Benge et al., 2015; Benge et al., 2020; Bowen et al., 1994; Castro, 2016; Harder et al., 2014; Mears, 2017; Russell et al., 2019; Sanders et al., 1966). Rasmussen (1989) went as far as to call extension agents “unsung heroes of the nation” (p. 3).

**Instrumentation / Data Collection Methods**

The survey used in this study included 50 questions and was a combination of several validated instruments that had been used in published research (Appendix A). Creating a survey using several validated instruments measuring different variables is common practice for POS and affective organizational commitment research (Baran et al., 2012; Kraimer et al., 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Each instrument was appropriate for adult samples (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kraimer et al., 2011; Meyer et al., 1993; Rhoades & Eisenbeger, 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Skelton et al., 2020; Worley et al., 2009).

The instrument had ten sections (See Appendix B for instrument summary). Section 1 included the introduction and informed consent notification. Section 2 gathered descriptive information, including age, race, ethnicity, and employment state. The questions related to gender identity and tenure (number of years in current position) were used to measure two covariates in the study. The descriptive informational questions were designed by the researcher.
Section 3 is the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), which included 8 items (Eisenberger et al.’s, 1986). SPOS measures the perceived organizational support variable, a unidimensional construct (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001; Worley et al., 2009). SPOS has four versions that include 1, 8, 16, and 36 items in the instrument. Worley et al. (2009) performed a thorough investigation of the various SPOS instruments and recommended the use of the 8-item scale, given the strength of the relationship between the 16 and 8 item scales, and because of its efficiency (p. 116). The composite ($\alpha=.93$) was used in this study and found to have acceptable reliability (Warner, 2021; Worley et al., 2009). For the sample population in this study, internal consistency and reliability of responses was calculated using Cronbach’s alpha (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The item total correlation was used to measure the reliability of the instrument which ranged from 0.70 to 0.84, indicating a score well above 0.30 which verifies reliability of the scale (Worley et al., 2009). The concurrent validity of the 8-item instrument was measured by conducting a multiple regression analysis for each of the 4 versions of the instrument separately (Worley et al., 2009). The total score of the 8-item instrument was regressed on a linear combination with three variables that have established relationships with POS: affective commitment, organizational communication, and organizational participation (Worley et al., 2009, p. 115). The 8-item instrument, with the 3 predictors entered, was statistically significant ($F(3,255)=74.69, p < 0.001$) and accounted for 46.8% of the variance (Worley et al., 2009, p. 115). Each question in the instrument is measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Because SPOS is unidimensional, the overall mean for this variable was used to measure an individuals’ POS, with higher values reflecting a high level of perceived organizational support.
Section 4 measured the organizational politics variable using the perceptions of organizational politics scale (POPS) instrument (Kacmar and Carlson’s, 1997). The multidimensional instrument included 15 questions that measures general political behavior (items 1 and 2), go along and get ahead (items 3-9), and pay and promotion factors (items 10-15). Collins & Paul (2020) recommend using the POPS instrument to assess POP in an organization. The instrument has acceptable reliability with coefficient alphas of 0.81 to 0.91 reported (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Maslyn & Fedor, 1998). Andrews and Kacmar (2001) reported an internal consistency of 0.87 in their study of water management district employees in the South. Brubaker (2012) found an average internal consistency to be 0.85, for seventeen studies set in the United States. The instrument was found to be a valid measure, Kacmar & Carlson (1997) used exploratory factor analysis to determine that using a 15-item instrument represented three distinct factors. The dimensionality of the POPS instrument was tested using a structural equation modeling approach which indicated that the best fit statistics were a three-factor model (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). The 15 questions in this instrument were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Each factor’s scores were averaged to create a mean score for each one. An overall mean score was created by averaging the scores for the 15 items, with higher totals reflecting a high level of perceived organizational politics that exist within the state’s 4-H extension system.

Section 5 included the perceptions of direct supervisor support instrument. This instrument measured the unidimensional direct supervisor support variable. This study used a four-item instrument that is adapted from Eisenberger et al.’s (1986) survey of perceived organizational support (SPOS), replacing the word “organization” with “supervisor” used in
other studies by Rhoades et al., 2001; Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988, and Hutchinson, 1997. These four questions were selected because they produced the highest acceptable reliability scores on the SPOS with coefficient alphas ranging from .74 to .84 (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001). Rhoades et al. (2001) found that the internal reliability of the 4-question supervisor support instrument was 0.90, which is highly reliable. Rhoades et al. (2001) established discriminant validity of the instrument by performing a CFA, where all items loaded at .80 or higher. The instrument used a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The items in this instrument were averaged to create an overall mean score for this variable, with higher scores reflecting a high level of perceived direct supervisor support.

Section 6 included the organizational support for development (OSD) instrument. This unidimensional instrument measured the perceived organizational support for development variable. The Cronbach alpha score was $\alpha = 0.92$, indicating a highly reliable instrument (Kraimer et al., 2011). Kraimer et al. (2011) assessed the discriminant validity of OSD by conducting a CFA using the OSD instrument as factor one and perceived career opportunity as factor to see if the results indicated two distinctly different constructs existed, with the OSD instrument accounting for 67% of the variance (eigenvalue = 6.71). A CFA was also conducted and the 6 items of the OSD had values of .58-.87 (Kraimer et al., 2011). This instrument included 6 questions, using a 7-point Likert-like scale, with 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Each question’s scores were averaged to create an overall mean for this variable, with higher scores reflecting a high level of perceived organizational support for development.

Section 7 measures affective organizational commitment. Affective organizational commitment is the criterion variable in this study. The affective organizational commitment
scale was created by Meyer et al. (1993). This scale has been used in many organizational commitment studies (Mercurio, 2015). The scale consisted for 6 items using a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The items in this scale were averaged to create an overall mean for this variable. The higher the respondents score the greater organizational commitment they feel (Meyer et al., 1993).

Section 8 included a turnover intention instrument (Skelton et al., 2020). The unidimensional instrument measured the turnover intention variable. The instrument has been found to be reliable, with Skelton et al. (2020) reporting a Cronbach alpha score of $\alpha=.84$. Additionally, Salman et al. (2016) reported a Cronbach alpha score of $\alpha=.91$ in their study of turnover intention. The validity of the scale has been established by Chen et al. (2014), by providing evidence of a correlation between actual employee turnover one year after study participants completed a survey about turnover intention (Skelton et al., 2020). The instrument included 3 questions using a 5-point Likert-type scale. An individual's mean score is used in analysis. A high score on this instrument reveals a high likelihood the individual intends to leave the organization (Skelton et al., 2020).

Section 9 includes the Michigan Organizational Assessment instrument. The unidimensional instrument measured the job satisfaction variable. Bowling and Hammond (2008) found the scale to yield acceptable levels of relativity, with a mean sample-weighted internal consistency of 0.84 and a mean sample-weighted test-retest reliability of .50. Bowling and Hammond (2008) used 22 hypothesized correlations of job satisfaction to determine construct validity. They found widespread evidence of construct validity within relationship patterns of the 22 variables and job satisfaction that were analyzed (Bowling & Hammond,
The instrument consisted of 3 questions and used a 5-point Likert-type scale (Allen, 2001; Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Grandey, 2003). The overall score is the mean of an individual’s responses (Bowling & Hammond, 2008). A higher score indicates job satisfaction.

Section 10 was the conclusion section of the survey that invited participants to enter a drawing for a gift card by clicking on an external link.

**Procedures**

An IRB application was completed, and approval was granted before beginning the study (See Appendix C). The survey was administered over a six-week time frame using the online survey system Qualtrics© (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Before distributing the instrument to the study sample, a pilot test was conducted with five 4-H professionals employed outside of the CES southern region to identify time needed to complete the survey. The participants’ email addresses were collected from each CES southern region’s online employee directory and/or the county office website. Participants’ emails were only included if the agent was identified in the online employee directory and/or on the county office website as having a county-level agent/educator role, had a 4-H responsibility, and was currently employed with the organization. The participants were pre-notified, via email, of the survey invitation to ensure a higher response rate (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Prenotification was conducted by each of the CES southern region state 4-H program leader/director notifying participants of the study and encouraging their state’s agents to participate. I followed a three-step process using “follow-up procedures” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 400). Two weeks after the prenotification email was sent, I sent the first invitation email to study participants that included a letter of informed consent and a direct link to the survey (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Two weeks after the first invitation was
emailed to study participants, a second email with the survey link was sent, with a reminder of the opportunity to be entered into the drawing to win one of ten $25.00 gift cards (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Two weeks after the second invitation to participants was emailed, a final follow up email was sent to study participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The survey was closed after eight weeks. After the survey was closed, the data was downloaded and exported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analysis was conducted (Gall et al., 2015). Also, after the survey closed, the ten $25.00 gift cards were given away in a random drawing to those participants who entered the random drawing by completing a second Qualtrics survey. The drawing occurred one week after the survey closed, and winners were notified via email and the gift cards were mailed to the address provided in the google form.

This study may have included individuals belonging to vulnerable populations, but it likely would not alter the outcomes of the study. All participants were adults (at least 18 years of age) with the ability to consent to participate in the research study. Ethical considerations that were taken in this study were to maintain confidentiality of survey respondents by removing any “identifiers” and utilizing the data collected solely for research purposes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 412). The data was collected and stored securely on the encrypted Qualtrics website. To ensure privacy, the data collected for this study was housed on a password protected computer and password protected and encrypted cloud drive. The files will be completed destroyed in accordance with Federal guidelines for keeping data.
Analysis

Demographic characteristics including: age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, state employed in, and tenure in current position were analyzed using descriptive statistics. These statistics were used to provide an appropriate description of the study participants. Descriptive statistics are reported in Chapter 4 as means, standard deviations, and/or frequencies and percentages (Urdan, 2017; Warner, 2021). A correlation matrix was used to identify associations between descriptive variables and criterion variables. All statistics were reported in Chapter 4.

Explanations of the data analyses used for each research question follows.

RQ1: While controlling for gender identify and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can 4-H agents’ perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, and organizational support for development predict county level 4-H agent’s perceived organizational support (POS; criterion variable)?

RQ4: While controlling for gender identify and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can 4-H agent’s perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and job satisfaction predict county level 4-H agents’ turnover intention (criterion variable)?

A multiple regression analysis method was used to answer research questions 1 and 4 because multiple predictor variables were used with one criterion (dependent) variable (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Urdan, 2017). Specifically, a hierarchal multiple regression (HMR) method was selected because this analysis allows predictor variables to be grouped together in models to be able to understand how each new variable added can better predict the perceived organizational support, the criterion variable being examined (Warner, 2021). As models were formed, new variables were added to the existing variables to form a new block (Warner, 2021).
See Figure 2 for research question 1 HMR model and Figure 3 for research question 4 HMR model.

Model 1
Descriptive Covariants (Gender Identity and Tenure) = Perceived Organization Support

Model 2
Descriptive Covariants + Perceived Organizational Politics = Perceived Organization Support

Model 3
Descriptive Covariants + Perceived Organizational Politics + Perceived Direct Supervisor Support = Perceived Organization Support

Model 4
Descriptive Covariants + Perceived Organizational Politics + Perceived Direct Supervisor Support + Organizational Support for Development = Perceived Organization Support

Figure 2
Research Question 1 Regression Models Used in HRM Analysis
Figure 3

Research Question 4 Regression Models Used in HRM Analysis

Figure 4 describes the steps followed to conduct an HRM analysis (Warner, 2021). All steps were conducted using the SPSS analysis program. Results of each step in the HRM analysis are reported in Chapter 4.

Model 1
Descriptive Covariants (Gender Identity and Tenure) = Turnover Intention

Model 2
Descriptive Covariants + Job Satisfaction = Turnover Intention

Model 3
Descriptive Covariants + Job Satisfaction + Affective Organizational Commitment = Turnover Intention

Model 4
Descriptive Covariants + Job Satisfaction + Affective Organizational Commitment + Perceived Organizational Support (POS) = Turnover Intention
A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted for all variables included in the study (Warner, 2012). Descriptive statistics were reported as means, standard deviations, and/or frequencies and percentages (Urdan, 2017; Warner, 2012). Correlational coefficients tests were conducted to determine p-values and Pearson correlations ($r$) (Urdan, 2017). A p-value of .05 or below was determined to be statistically significant (Urdan, 2017). A Pearson correlation value of .5 or greater indicated a large or strong relationship (Urdan, 2017).

Six assumption tests that were performed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The first assumption test performed was independent of observations analysis. The Durban-Watson statistic, which needs to be between 1-3 for assumption reasonableness, was used to ensure the independence of observations (Warner, 2021). Partial regression plots, scatterplots, were created. 
to test linearity to decrease the chance of errors (Warner, 2021). One scatterplot was created for the residuals and one for each pairwise association between the predictors and criterion variables (Warner, 2021). Multicollinearity was examined using a coefficient table generated in SPSS and collinearity statistics, tolerance, and variant influence factors (VIF) were evaluated (Warner, 2021). If tolerance values were less than 0.1 and VIF values were greater than 10, then multicollinearity exists (Warner, 2021). Next, Cook’s distance test was used to determine that no significant outliers existed (Warner, 2021). Finally, histograms and p-p plot for residuals were used to examine for normality (Warner, 2021).

After conducting the six tests of assumption, then a HMR analysis was conducted. For each model an ANOVA table will be created, and each model will be examined to determine significance and R2 will be used to report the effect size (Warner, 2021). Next, to determine if a statistically significance variance improvement occurred, the R Square Change values and the Sig. F Change values were examined for each model (Warner, 2021). Lastly, the individual contribution of each variable in the final model were evaluated (Warner, 2012) by examining the coefficients table and evaluating the values in the significance columns (Warner, 2021). The last step in conducting the HRM analysis was to determine how well each of the predictor variables contributed to the final outcomes for research question 1 in Model 4 and for research question number 4 in Model 4 (Warner, 2012). This was determined by looking at the coefficients table and evaluating the values in the significance columns. The Bonferroni correction method was used to determine significant contributions of variables and adjust for Type 1 errors (Warner, 2021). The formula used for research question 1 was the original p-value divided by the number of tests performed (0.05/4=0.0125; Warner, 2021). The corrected p-value used to determine
significance was \( p = 0.0125 \). The formula used for research question 4 was the original \( p \)-value divided by the number of tests performed \( (0.05/3=0.0167; \) Warner, 2021). The corrected \( p \)-value used to determine significance was \( p = 0.0167 \). These results are reported in Chapter 4.

Research questions 2 and 3 will use the same statistical analysis.

The questions were:

RQ2: While controlling for gender identity and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can 4-H agent’s perceived organizational support (POS) predict county level 4-H professional’s affective organizational commitment (criterion variable)?

RQ3: While controlling for gender identity and tenure, to what extent, if at all, can 4-H agent’s perceived organizational support (POS) predict county level 4-H professional’s job satisfaction (criterion variable)?

A simple linear regression was conducted for each research question to determine the predictive ability of the predictor variable (Urdan, 2017). A scatterplot was created in SPSS to examine if a relationship exists between the two variables, paying close attention to the slope of the regression line, and residuals that may exist in the data (Urdan, 2017). The mean and standard deviation were calculated for each research questions variables (Urdan, 2017). Also, a correlation table was produced to examine the significance of the relationships between the variables (Urdan, 2017). Other statistics that are considered during this step were the effect size and the R2 and Adjusted R Square values (Urdan, 2017). Lastly, the statistics found in the
ANOVA table that were considered include sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean square, F value, and corrected p value (Urdan, 2017). The Bonferroni correction method was used to determine significant contributions of variables and adjust for Type 1 errors (Warner, 2021). The formula used for research question 2 and 3 was the original p-value divided by the number of tests performed (0.05/2=0.025; Warner, 2021). The corrected p-value used to determine significance was p = 0.025. These results are reported in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey, predictive correlational study is to explore if any relationships exist between Southern region county level 4-H agent’s gender identity, tenure, POS, perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, organizational support for development, affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. This study also aimed to add to the existing extension agent retention research by focusing on perceived organizational support and its constructs. The survey was emailed to 1,262 county level 4-H agents. After the first notification email was sent with the survey link, one state’s 4-H program leader opted out of the survey (n=130). These individuals were not sent reminder emails, thus not included in the response rate equation. 351 participants submitted survey responses. Out of the 351 responses, 46 responses either opted out or failed to complete more than 60% of the survey. Thus, these responses were removed from analysis, leaving a total of 305 surveys used in data analysis. The response rate was 26.9% (305/1132).

Descriptive Statistics

Demographics

The participants were majority female (n=243, 79.7%) and white (n=270, 88.5%). Southern Region 4-H agents (n=302) ranged in age from 20 to 77 years-old as of January 1, 2022, with a mean age of 41.92 (SD = 12.422). Participants represented 14 states and one territory, with Tennessee (n=49, 16.2%), Texas (n=33, 10.9%), and Louisiana (n=30, 9.9%) having the highest number of participants. Study participant (n=295) years of employment in
their current county 4-H extension agent role (tenure) ranged from 0 (less than 12 months of employment) to 44 years, with a mean tenure of 11.41 years (SD=9.76). Age (n=302). The descriptive data is summarized in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1**

*Frequency Count of Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable, Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Currently Employed In</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Islands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Gender Identity (n=305),  b Race/Ethnicity (n=305), c State Currently Employed In (n=302)*
Table 2

Continuous Interval Demographics Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age(^d)</td>
<td>41.92</td>
<td>12.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>9.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tenure)(^e)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^d\) Age (n=302), \(^e\) Years in Current Position (Tenure) (n=295)

Table 3 includes the descriptive statistics of the instruments used to measure the six variables of the study. All instruments used in the study were reliable, with Cronbach alpha values as such, POS (\(\alpha = .920\)), Perceptions of Organizational Politics Factor 1 (\(\alpha = .881\)), Perceptions of Organizational Politics Factor 2 (\(\alpha = .722\)), Perceptions of Organizational Politics Factor 3 (\(\alpha = .861\)), perceptions of supervisor support (\(\alpha = .952\)), AOC (\(\alpha = .861\)), job satisfaction (\(\alpha = .872\)), and turnover intention (\(\alpha = .823\)).

Table 3

Psychometric Characteristics for Variables (N=305)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>(\alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Organizational Politics</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Supervisor Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intention</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploratory Factor Analyses

All instruments were examined using exploratory factor analysis to determine the number of constructs each scale measured with this population. EFA was selected because there were minor revisions made to the instruments to fit the study population, such as adding “direct” supervisor to the perceptions of supervisor support section. All but one scale resulted in measuring one construct, which was expected from past research and literature. The Perceived Organizational Politics scale statements did not factor as in previous research. Factor 1 included 9 items, that when factored together explained 34.8% of variance ($\alpha = .881$). Factor 2 included 2 items, which explained 13% of variance ($\alpha = .722$). Factor 3 included 4 items, which explained 5.4% variance ($\alpha = .861$). All three factors explained 53.2% of variance in perceived organizational politics with this population. Both construct and variance reliability statistics indicate that separating this scale into 3 factors in this study is a legitimate usage with this population.

Statistical Analyses

Research Question 1

The purpose of research question 1 was to determine if Southern region county 4-H agents’ perceptions of organizational politics and supervisor support can predict their POS, while controlling for gender identity and tenure. A third POS construct that was intended to be measured was agents’ perceptions of organizational support for development. After reviewing the data, responses were not collected for this construct in Qualtrics. It is speculated that the
survey was not published after editing this question, and so responses are not available for analysis. This variable was not analyzed because of this data omission.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics for the criterion variable (POS) and predictor variables (Tenure, Gender, 3 constructs of perceived organizational politics, and perceived supervisor support are reported in Table 4. The mean and standard deviation are reported for each variable.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics (N = 295)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support (Criterion Variable)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure (Predictor Variable)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>9.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Politics (Predictor Variable)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Supervisor Support</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A correlation matrix demonstrating the association among the variables was completed. The correlation coefficients reported in Table 5 mostly yielded moderate to strong linear relationships using Pearson correlation values (Cohen, 1988).
Table 5

Correlation Matrix (N=295)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>OP1</th>
<th>OP2</th>
<th>OP3</th>
<th>PSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>-.714*</td>
<td>-.404*</td>
<td>-.403*</td>
<td>.432*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.340*</td>
<td>.382*</td>
<td>-.466*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.399*</td>
<td>-.233*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.283*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .0167. * p < .001

Assumptions Tests

Assumptions tests were conducted to ensure accurate regression analysis (Warner, 2021). The tests performed were independence of observations, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and normality. The fist assumption test performed was the independence of observations analysis, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.038, which indicates the assumption of independence of observations is reasonable and the residuals are uncorrelated (Warner, 2021). Linearity was tested using scatterplot to decrease the chance of errors (see Figure 5). After inspecting the scatterplot there were no visible curves in the graph, which indicates linearity is not being violated (Field, 2018). Homoscedasticity was also assessed using Figure 5. Inspection of the scatterplot revealed no funneling of the graph, providing no evidence of homoscedasticity violations (Field, 2018).
Multicollinearity was examined using a coefficient table generated in SPSS and collinearity statistics. Tolerance and variant influence factors (VIF) were evaluated (Warner, 2021). The tolerance values were greater than 0.1 (the lowest is .750) and the VIF values are less than 10 (the greatest is 1.484), resulting in confidence that the assumption of multicollinearity is not violated (Warner, 2021). Next, Cook’s distance test was used to determine that no significant outliers existed (Warner, 2021). The Cook’s distance values were less than 1, ranging from .000 to .392, which indicates no significant outliers exist (Cook & Weisberg, 1982). There was no concern for a violation of the normality assumption because of the large sample size (N=295). Therefore, this assumption was not checked for this question (Field, 2018).
HMR Analysis

After determining that all assumptions were met, a hierarchal multiple regression was conducted to analyze null hypotheses 1.1-1.3 for this study. Research question 1’s primary null hypothesis ($H_01$) states there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variables (perceptions of organizational politics behavior, perceptions of organizational politics policies, perceptions of organizational politics raises & promotions and direct supervisor support) and county level 4-H agent’s POS, while controlling for gender identity and tenure. The three subsequent hypotheses for research question 1 address the predictive association of each predictor variable with the criterion variable used in this analysis. The three models used in the hierarchal multiple regression analysis to accept or reject the primary null hypothesis ($H_01$) can be found in Figure 6.
Figure 6

Research Question 1 HMR Models

Model 1
Descriptive Covariants (Gender Identity and Tenure) = Perceived Organization Support

Model 2
Descriptive Covariants + Perceptions of Organizational Politics Behaviors (Factor 1) + Perceptions of Organizational Politics Policies (Factor 2) + Perceptions of Organizational Politics Raises and Promotions (Factor 3) = Perceived Organization Support

Model 3
Descriptive Covariants + Perceptions of Organizational Politics Behaviors (Factor 1) + Perceptions of Organizational Politics Policies (Factor 2) + Perceptions of Organizational Politics Raises and Promotions (Factor 3) + Perceived Direct Supervisor Support = Perceived Organization Support

Model 1 in the HMR model was used to analyze null hypothesis (H0.1.1) which stated there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variables gender identity and tenure and perceived organizational support. Model 1 contained the descriptive covariants of gender identity and tenure. This model did not statistically predict perceived
organizational support, $R^2 = .013$ (adjusted $R^2 = .006$), $F(2, 292) = 1.877, p = .155$. There is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The gender identity or tenure of Southern Region 4-H agents did not significantly contribute to the explanation of the variance in their perceived organizational support score.

Model 2 was used to analyze null hypothesis (H$_{01.2}$) which stated there is no statistically significant predictive relationships between perceptions of organizational politics behaviors, organizational politics policies, and organizational politics raises and promotions. Model 2 is a statistically significant predictor of POS, $R^2 = .548$ (adjusted $R^2 = .540$), $F(5, 289) = 70.049, p = .000$. All three factors of perceptions of organizational politics of Southern Region 4-H agents significantly contributed to the explanation of the variance in their perceived organizational support score. There is evidence to reject the null hypotheses.

The $R^2$ change from Model 1 to Model 2 was $.535$ [$F(2,289)=114.044, p=.000$], reflecting a significant increase in explained variation when the three factors of perceptions of organizational politics were added to the model. The variance explained in the dependent variable, POS, increased by 53.5% with the addition of the three factors of perceived organizational politics. This increase was found to be statistically significant. There is sufficient evidence to reject null hypothesis 1.2.

Model 3 was used to analyze null hypothesis (H$_{01.3}$) which stated there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between perceptions of direct supervisor support and perceived organizational support. The predictor variable, perceptions of supervisor support, was added to the model. As a set, the predictors accounted for significant variation in perceived
organizational support, $R^2 = .557$ (adjusted $R^2 = .548$), $F(6, 288) = 60.405, p = .000$.

Organizational politics behaviors ($b = -1.005$, s.e. = .083, $p = .000$), organizational politics policies ($b = -.208$, s.e. = .062, $p = .001$), and organizational politics raises and promotions ($b = -.143$, s.e. = .071, $p = .046$) were negative, significant predictors of perceived organizational support. Perceived supervisor support ($b = .094$, s.e. = .038, $p = .014$) was also a positive, significant predictor of POS.

The $R^2$ change from Model 2 to Model 3 was .009, $F(5,288)=6.055, p=.014$, reflecting a significant increase in explained variation when the three factors of perceptions of organizational politics were added to the model. The variance explained in the dependent variable, POS, increased by .9% with the consideration county 4-H extension agents perceived supervisor support. This increase was found to be statistically significant. There is sufficient evidence to reject null hypothesis 1.3.

Lastly, the individual contribution of each variable in the final model was analyzed using the significance values in the coefficient table (See Table 6). Using the Bonferroni correction method, the value sought was .0167 or less to establish significance. Perceptions of organizational politics behaviors ($p = .000$), perceptions of organizational politics policies ($p = .001$), and perceived supervisor support ($p = .014$) are considered statistical significance variables in model 3. Gender identity (.429), tenure ($p = .726$), and perceptions of organizational politics raises and promotions ($p = .046$) did not have individual significant contributions to model 3. The results suggest that the best model to predict POS among Southern region, county
4-H agents include perceptions of politics behaviors, perceptions of politics policies, and perceived supervisor support variables.

Table 6

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results for POS (N=295)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>95% CI for B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>(\beta)</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
<th>(\Delta R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LL</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.653**</td>
<td>4.199</td>
<td>4.887</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>-.077</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.535**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>8.978**</td>
<td>8.477</td>
<td>9.479</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Politics Behaviors</td>
<td>-1.084**</td>
<td>-1.237</td>
<td>-.931</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>-.621**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Factor 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Factor 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Politics Policies</td>
<td>-.214**</td>
<td>-.337</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-.153**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Factor 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Factor 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (Continued)

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results for POS (N=295)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>95% CI for ( B )</th>
<th>( SE ) ( B )</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Politics Raises and Promotion (Factor 3)</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>-.303</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>-.104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>.557</td>
<td>.009*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>8.124**</td>
<td>7.279</td>
<td>8.969</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.018</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Politics Behaviors (Factor 1)</td>
<td>-1.005**</td>
<td>-1.169</td>
<td>-.841</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>-.575**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Politics Policies (Factor 2)</td>
<td>-.208**</td>
<td>-.331</td>
<td>-.086</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>-.149**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Politics Raises and Promotion (Factor 3)</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>-.283</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Direct Supervisor Support</td>
<td>.094*</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.111*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*: CI = confidence interval; LL – lower limit; UL = upper limit

*Note*. Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .0167. * \( p < .0167 \), ** \( p < .001 \)
Research Question 2

Research question two explored, while controlling for gender identify and tenure, county level 4-H agent’s perceived organizational support (POS) as a predictor of their affective organizational commitment (AOC).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for AOC and POS are reported in Table 7. The scale, mean, and standard deviation are reported for each variable.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics (N = 295)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment (Criterion Variable)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support (Predictor Variable)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure (Control Variable)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>9.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A correlation matrix (Table 8) demonstrating the association among the variables was completed. The correlation coefficients yielded a strong linear relationship between AOC and POS using Pearson correlation values (Cohen, 1988). Gender and tenure resulted in extremely small relationships. The correlations are reported in Table 8.
Table 8

**Correlation Matrix (N=295)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POS</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>POS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.600*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .025. * p < .001

**Assumptions Tests**

Durbin-Watson’s test of independence of observations was 1.89, which is a value between 1-3, indicating the assumption of independence of observations is reasonable and the residuals are uncorrelated (Warner, 2021). Linearity and homoscedasticity were not violated, as there were no visible signs of curves or funneling in Figure 7 of the scatterplot examined (Field, 2018).
The tolerance values were greater than 0.1 (the lowest is .993) and the VIF values are less than 10 (the greatest is 1.013), indicating no signs of multicollinearity (Warner, 2021). The Cook’s distance values were less than 1, ranging from .00 to .376, which indicates no significant outliers exist (Cook & Weisberg, 1982, Warner, 2021). The sample size (N=295) affirmed no concern for a violation of the normality assumption and therefore was not checked for this question (Field, 2018).
Linear Regression Analysis

After establishing all assumptions were met, a linear regression was conducted to analyze null hypothesis ($H_0$) for this study. Research question 2’s primary null hypothesis ($H_0$) states there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between county level 4-H agent’s perceived organizational support and affective organizational commitment, when controlling for gender identify and tenure. POS accounts for 37.2% of the variation in affective organizational commitment, $F(3,291) = 57.44$, $p = .000$, with $R^2 = .372$, $R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .365$. The regression prediction equation used was $\hat{y}_i = b_0 + b_1X_i$. Participants’ predicted affective organizational commitment score is equal to $\hat{\text{AOC}}_i = 1.816 + (.385 \text{ perceived organizational support}_i)$. For every one unit increase on POS, the predicted affective organizational commitment score for Southern region 4-H agent’s increases by .385. The $\beta_1$ value is .610, which indicates the relationship between county 4-H agents’ POS and AOC is large (Cohen, 1988). The null hypothesis ($H_0$) is rejected, as POS has been found to have a significant, positive predictive relationship with AOC. A summary of results of the linear regression that informed the decision to reject the null hypothesis can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

Regression Coefficients of POS on AOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$B$ $\beta$ $SE$</td>
<td>$B$ $\beta$ $SE$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.606**</td>
<td>1.816**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.004 -.038 .006</td>
<td>.001 .012 .005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.005 .059 .005</td>
<td>.009* .106 .004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>.385**</td>
<td>.610 .029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (Continued)

Regression Coefficients of POS on AOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( B )</td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>( SE )</td>
<td>( B )</td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \Delta R^2 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.367**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( N = 295 \). I examined the impact of Southern region county 4-H agents’ POS on AOC. In Model 1, I entered the control variables of gender identity and tenure to predict AOC. In Model 2, I entered POS as a predictor.

Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .025. * \( p < .025 \), ** \( p < .001 \)

Research Question 3

Research question 3 examined if county 4-H agents’ job satisfaction can be predicted by POS, while controlling for gender identity and tenure.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for job satisfaction and POS are reported in Table 10. The scale values, mean, and standard deviation are reported for each variable.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics (\( N = 295 \))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction (Criterion Variable)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support (Predictor</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure (Control Variable)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>9.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The correlation coefficients in Table 11 show a strong, positive linear relationship between job satisfaction and POS, \( r = .600 \) (Cohen, 1988). Gender and tenure resulted in extremely small relationships all correlations being less than .10 (Cohen, 1988).

Table 11

*Correlation Matrix (N=295)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>POS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.600*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .025. * \( p < .001 \)

Assumptions Tests

The independence of observations is reasonable, and the residuals are uncorrelated with a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.963 (Warner, 2021). Linearity and homoscedasticity were not violated, as there were no signs of curves or funnels in the scatterplot (Figure 8) for this research question (Field, 2018).
The assumption of multicollinearity was not violated, as the tolerance values were greater than 0.1 (the lowest is .993) and the VIF values are less than 10 (the greatest is 1.013; Warner, 2021). Cook’s distance test resulted in values from .000 to .052, indicating no significant outliers existed (Cook & Weisberg, 1982; Warner, 2021). There was no concern for a violation of the normality assumption because of the large sample size (N=295; Field, 2018).

**Linear Regression Analysis**

After concluding all assumptions were met, a linear regression was conducted to analyze this study’s null hypothesis (H₀₃). Research question 3’s primary null hypothesis (H₀₃) states
there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between Southern region county 4-H agents’ POS and job satisfaction. A simple linear regression was used to determine if county 4-H agents’ POS can predict their job satisfaction. POS explained 36.3% of the variance in job satisfaction, $F(1,292) = 55.33, p = .000, R^2 = .363, R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .357$. The regression prediction equation used was $\hat{y}_i = b_0 + b_iX_i$. Participants’ predicted job satisfaction score is equal to $\hat{\text{jobsatisfaction}}_i = 2.442 + (.336\text{perceived organizational support}_i)$. For every one unit increase in POS, the predicted job satisfaction score increases by .336. The relationship between job satisfaction and POS is large, finding a $\beta_1$ value of .602 (Cohen, 1988). The null hypothesis ($H_03$) is rejected, as POS has been found to have a significant, predictive relationship with job satisfaction. A summary of the regression analysis used to inform the decision of rejecting the null hypothesis is in Table 12.

Table 12

Regression Coefficients of POS on Job Satisfaction

| Variable | Model 1 | | Model 2 | \\
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
<td>$B$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$4.007^*$</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2.442^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$336^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 295. I examined the impact of Southern region county 4-H agents’ POS on job satisfaction. In Model 1, I entered the control variables of gender identity and tenure to predict job satisfaction. In Model 2, I entered POS as a predictor.

Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .025. * $p < .001$
Research Question 4

Research question 4 explored if Southern region county 4-H agents’ perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, and job satisfaction can predict turnover intention, controlling for gender identity and tenure.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the criterion variable, turnover intention and predictor variables job satisfaction, affective organizational support, and perceived organizational support are reported in Table 13. The scale, mean, and standard deviation is reported for each variable.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics (N = 295)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intention (Criterion Variable)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Organizational Commitment (Predictor Variable)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction (Predictor Variable)</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support (Predictor Variable)</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson correlation values were examined for the research question. The coefficients yielded mostly moderate to strong linear relationships (Cohen, 1988). Like the previous research questions results, gender identity and turnover intention yielded very weak relationships (Cohen, 1988). AOC, job satisfaction, and POS have strong, negative relationships with turnover intention. The results of the correlation matrix can be found in Table 14.
Table 14

Correlation Matrix (N=295)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turnover Intention</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>AOC</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>POS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intention</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>-.628*</td>
<td>-.729*</td>
<td>-.653*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.724*</td>
<td>.600*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>.724*</td>
<td>.600*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.724*</td>
<td>.600*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .0125. * p < .001

Assumptions Tests

A Durbin-Watson value of 2.137 indicates the assumption of independence of observations is reasonable and the residuals are uncorrelated (Watson, 2021). Linearity and homoscedasticity were analyzed visually using a scatterplot in Figure 9 (Field, 2018). The scatterplot had no curving or funneling, which yielded no evidence of linearity or homoscedasticity violations.
Figure 9

*Research Question 4 Residual Scatterplot*

The tolerance values were greater than 0.1 (the lowest is .426) and the VIF values are less than 10 (the greatest is 2.347), resulting in confidence that the assumption of multicollinearity is not violated (Warner, 2021). The Cook’s distance values were less than 1, ranging from .000 to .311, which indicates no significant outliers exist (Cook & Weisberg, 1982, Watson, 2021). There was no concern for a violation of the normality assumption because of the large sample size (N=295) and therefore was not checked for this question (Field, 2018).
HMR Analysis

After confirming all assumptions were met, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to analyze null hypotheses 4.1-4.4 for this study. Research question 4’s primary null hypothesis (H01) states there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variables (county level 4-H agent’s affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceptions of organizational support) and county level 4-H agent’s turnover intention (criterion variable), while controlling for gender identity and tenure. The four subsequent hypotheses for research question 4 address the predictive association of each predictor variable with the criterion variable used in this analysis. The four models used in the hierarchical multiple regression analysis to accept or reject the primary null hypothesis (H04) can be found in Figure 10.
Model 1
Descriptive Covariants (Gender Identity & Tenure) = Turnover Intention

Model 2
Descriptive Covariants + Affective Organizational Commitment = Turnover Intention

Model 3
Descriptive Covariants + Affective Organizational Commitment + Job Satisfaction = Turnover Intention

Model 4
Descriptive Covariants + Affective Organizational Commitment + Job Satisfaction + Perceived Organizational Support (POS) = Turnover Intention

**Figure 10**

*Research Question 4 Regression Models Used in HRM Analysis*

Model 1 was used to analyze null hypothesis (H04.1) which stated there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variables gender identity and tenure and turnover intention. It did not statistically predict turnover intention, $R^2 = .001$ (adjusted $R^2 = -.006$), $F(2, 292) = .111, p = .895$. There is no evidence to reject null hypothesis 4.1. Gender identity nor
tenure of Southern Region 4-H agents did not significantly contribute to the explanation of the variance in their turnover intention.

Model 2 in the HMR model was used to analyze null hypothesis (H04.2) which stated there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variable affective organizational commitment and turnover intention. Model 2 was a statistically significant model of prediction of turnover intention when affective organizational commitment is added, $R^2 = .399$ (adjusted $R^2 = .393$), $F(1, 291) = 64.337, p = .000$. There is evidence to accept the null hypotheses. AOC of Southern Region 4-H agents significantly contributed to the explanation of the variance in their turnover intention.

The $R^2$ change from Model 1 to Model 2 was .398 [$F(1,291)=192.643, p=.000$], reflecting a significant increase in explained variation when AOC was added to the model. The variance explained in the dependent variable of turnover intention increased by 39.8%. This increase was found to be statistically significant and there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis 4.2.

Model 3 was used to analyze null hypothesis (H04.3) which stated there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variable job satisfaction and turnover intention. Model 3 is a statistically significant model to predict turnover intention, $R^2 = .556$ (adjusted $R^2 = .550$), $F(1, 290) = 90.759, p = .000$. There is evidence to accept the null hypothesis 4.2. Job satisfaction of Southern Region 4-H agents significantly contributed to the explanation of the variance in their turnover intention.
The $R^2$ change from Model 2 to Model 3 was .157 [$F(1,290)=102.622, p=.000$]. When job satisfaction is added to the model, 15.7% of the variance is explained in the dependent variable, turnover intention. There is strong evidence to reject null hypothesis 4.3.

Model 4 in the HMR model was used to analyze null hypothesis (H$_{04.4}$) which stated there is no statistically significant, predictive relationship between the predictor variable perceptions of organizational support and turnover intention. Model 4 is a statistically significant model that predictors turnover intention, $R^2 = .611$ (adjusted $R^2 = .605$), $F(1 289) = 90.975, p = .000$. There is evidence to accept the null hypotheses.

The $R^2$ change from Model 3 to Model 4 was .056, $[F(1,289)=41.338, p=.000]$ reflecting a significant increase in explained variation when POS was added to the model. The variance explained in the dependent variable, turnover intention, increased by 5.6 when adding POS. This increase was found to be statistically significant (p = .000), providing evidence to reject the null hypothesis 4.4. The evidence from the HMR analysis supports rejecting null hypothesis 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4, as model 4 statistically predicts Southern Region 4-H agents’ turnover intention. Table 15 shows the statistical values used to make the decision to reject secondary null hypothesis 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

POS of Southern Region 4-H agents significantly contributed to the explanation of the variance in their turnover intention. As a set, the predictor variables in Model 4 (AOC, job satisfaction, and POS) accounted for the following variation in turnover intention. AOC ($b = -.126, s.e. = .070, p = .072$), job satisfaction ($b = -.664, s.e. = .078, p = .000$), and POS ($b = -.245, s.e. = .038, p = .000$). Using the Bonferroni correction method, the value used to determine
significance was \( p = .0125 \) (.05/4). Job satisfaction and POS are considered statistically significant variables in Model 4. AOC did not offer an individual significant contribution to Model 4. The results suggest that the best model to predict turnover intention among Southern region, county 4-H agents include POS and job satisfaction variables.

**Table 15**

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results for POS (N=295)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>95% CI for ( B )</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.354*</td>
<td>2.170</td>
<td>2.539</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>.157*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.191*</td>
<td>4.764</td>
<td>5.618</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>-.787*</td>
<td>-.898</td>
<td>-.675</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>-.632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.157*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 (Continued)

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results for POS (N=295)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>95% CI for B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LL</td>
<td>UL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.564</td>
<td>6.110</td>
<td>7.018</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-.040</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>-.267*</td>
<td>-.406</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>-.214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.811*</td>
<td>-.968</td>
<td>-.653</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>-.577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>.056*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.608*</td>
<td>6.182</td>
<td>7.034</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>-.264</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.664*</td>
<td>-.818</td>
<td>-.509</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>-.472</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>-.245*</td>
<td>-.320</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-.312</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Note: CI = confidence interval; LL – lower limit; UL = upper limit

Bonferroni correction value that was used to determine significance were scores less than .0125.
Summary

In summary, 305 Southern region, county 4-H agents participated in this predictive correlational study that examined possible variables associated with POS, AOC, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Descriptive statistics and correlations were examined prior to conducting analysis. Assumptions for regression analysis were reviewed and no gross violations were found. With this population, the best model to predict POS includes the variables: perceptions of organizational politics behaviors, organizational politics policies, and job satisfaction. Perceived organizational politics raises and promotions did not significantly contribute to the variance. The linear regression analyses found that POS has a significant, predictive relationship with AOC and job satisfaction among Southern region county 4-H agents. To best predict turnover intention with this population, the best fit model includes POS and job satisfaction as predictive variables. Surprisingly, AOC does not appear to contribute significant variant in the model to predict turnover intention with this population. In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed in conjunction with existing literature, limitations will be presented, conclusions will be described, and recommendations for future research will be discussed.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Existing trends in retention rates of agents show a continued loss of employees (Benge & Harder, 2018; Mears, 2017; NAEPSDP Member Connect, 2021). As CES looks to the future, retaining county-level 4-H agents is essential for sustainability (Benge et al., 2015; Safrit & Owen, 2010). This study aimed to explore if any relationships exist between 4-H agents’ gender identity, tenure, POS, perceptions of organizational politics, direct supervisor support, organizational support for development, AOC, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The survey used in this study included 50 questions and was a combination of several validated instruments used in previous research (Appendix A). The non-random sample was drawn from county-based 4-H professionals working in the CES Southern region's 15 universities (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Hierarchical multiple regression and simple linear regression were used to analyze participants’ survey responses (N=305) to accept or reject the study’s null hypotheses. This chapter will interpret the findings within the context of previous research and discuss implications for practice among CES universities to improve retention rates of Southern region county 4-H agents.

Findings Discussion

The findings of this study produced mixed results. The variables were identified using organizational support theory and past research on POS antecedents and outcomes (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017). The study’s results confirmed some expectations of predictive relationships among variables, while some of the findings were contradictory to OST and POS research.
The sample of this study was mostly white, female county 4-H agents working in the Southern CES region. This sample is representative of the larger population in question. Gender identity and tenure were not significant variables within any of the analyses conducted for this study. This finding was expected, as gender identity was not related to POS in past research (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Tenure was sometimes found to have a relationship with POS, however, that association was rare (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Lei & Chen, 2020). Interestingly, the instrument used to measure perceived organizational politics (POP) produced three different factors than in previous research. The responses from Southern region 4-H agents factored into the following constructs: POP politics behaviors (Factor 1), POP policies (Factor 2), and POP raises and promotions (Factor 3).

As expected, research question 2's null hypothesis was rejected, as POS did prove to be statistically significant in predicting 4-H agent's AOC. Similarly, research question 3’s null hypothesis was also rejected, as POS was a statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction. Also, POS and job satisfaction were significant predictors of turnover intention, while AOC was a statistically insignificant predictor. A summary of key findings, discussions, and recommendations follows.

**Perceived Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) Instrument Factors**

Perceived organizational politics (POP) is a POS antecedent that organizations use to examine the employee-organization relationship quality (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). High levels of POP in employees are related to low levels of POS, which can predict their turnover intention (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The POPS instrument used in this
study was chosen for its wide use in measuring individuals' perceived organizational politics in previous research (Brubaker, 2012; Collins & Paul, 2020; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Since the creation of the POPS instrument, researchers have debated the factors that the instrument measures (Brubaker, 2012; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Nye & Witt, 1993). The original POPS scale (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991) contained 15-items that measured three factors: general political behavior, go along to get ahead, and pay and promotion, with an overall reliability score for the full scale of .87 (Brubaker, 2012). However, after establishing the original POPS scale, Kacmar and Ferris (1991) issued a call for further psychometric testing to confirm the validity and reliability of the scale.

Ferris and Kacmar (1992) responded to that call by producing a 22-item, three-factor scale that measured supervisor behavior (factor 1), coworker and clique behavior (factor 2), and organizational politics and practices (factor 3). The instrument factors identified differed from the three factors that Kacmar & Ferris (1991) established. Also, Ferris and Kacmar (1992) examined perceived organizational politics through various levels of the organization, including peers, supervisors, and organizations, which differed from the original Kacmar and Ferris (1991) organizational politics scale (Brubaker, 2012). Ferris and Kacmar (1992) also called for further analysis of the POPS scaleability to measure three distinct factors (Brubaker, 2012; Dipboye & Foster, 2002).

Next, Nye and Witt (1993) conducted a study using the 12-item scale created by Kacmar and Ferris (1991). The study included 1,297 government employees and was conducted to test the POPS dimensionality and construct validity (Brubaker, 2012; Nye & Witt, 1993). Using a principal component factor analysis, Nye & Witt (1993) forced a three-factor structure. After that
analysis, only one factor emerged (Nye & Witt, 1993), which accounted for 81% of the variance. As compared to the Kamar and Ferris (1991) subscales, this factor included "two items from the pay and promotion subscale and two items from the going along to get ahead" construct subscale (Nye & Witt, 1993, p. 826). Also, Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) latent factors were extremely highly correlated (Nye & Witt, 1993). The results of the Nye and Witt (1993) study suggest that the POPS instrument by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) measures one construct and warned against using a three-factor model (Brubaker, 2012).

Kacmar and Carlson (1997) evaluated POPS using an EFA to determine that the POPS instrument measures three distinct constructs. They found a 15-item scale that reliably measured ($\alpha = .87$) three factors: general political behavior (factor 1), go along to get ahead (factor 2), and pay and promotion (factor 3). Despite the debate over the dimensionality of the scale, over time, most perceived organizational politics studies have analyzed POPS as a single construct measure (Brubaker, 2012). Essentially, the three constructs have been ignored in past research; as Brubaker (2012) claimed, "there remains a paucity of research that has utilized Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) scale as a three-factor model" (p. 608).

Due to the disagreement regarding the POPS instrument factors, an EFA was conducted before data analysis to determine if the constructs factored similarly to the previous constructs for the study's sample. An EFA was chosen because there is minimal research using the POPS instrument with Southern region county-level 4-H agents (Bandalos, 2018). Interestingly, after conducting the EFA, three different factors emerged with high Cronbach alpha reliability values, as reported in Chapter 4. The new factors were named POP behaviors (Factor 1), POP policies (Factor 2), and POP raises and promotion (Factor 3). These findings are consistent with the early
development of the POPS instrument and the debate over the instrument being unidimensional or measuring three constructs (Brubaker, 2012; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1992). The EFA in this study produced three factors, similar to Kacmar & Carlson's (1997) three-factor POPS instrument. However, the items factored differently than Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) POPS instrument factors. With this study's population, Factor 1, POP behavior, included items from Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) factors 1 (general political behavior) and factor 2 (go along to get ahead). The items in Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) factors 1 and 2 are similar, including political behaviors. Factor 2, POP policies, included Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) factor 3 (pay and promotion) items. Factor 2 was named policies because each of the two items from Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) instrument included the word "policies," which could explain why these factored together with this population. Factor 3, raises and promotion, included Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) factor 3 (pay and promotion) items. The items included in Factor 3 are very similar to Kacmar and Carlson's factor 3 (pay and promotion), although the word "pay" was replaced with "raises" in this study because the phrase "raises" was used in the items from the instrument.

The factors are summarized in Table 16. The three factors were retained and entered separately into research question 1's hierarchal multiple regression model two. The HMR concluded that POP behaviors (Factor 1) and POP policies (Factor 2) provided significant variance in the model. In contrast, POP raises and promotion (Factor 3) was not an individual contributor to explaining significant variance in the final predictive model (p = .046).
Table 16

*New POPS Instrument Factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Factor Name</th>
<th>Items in New POPS Factors</th>
<th>Items from Original POPS Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POP behaviors (Factor 1)</td>
<td>POPS items 1-9</td>
<td>General Political Behaviors (Factor 1): Items 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Go Along to Get Ahead (Factor 2): Items 3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP Policies (Factor 2)</td>
<td>POPS items 10-11</td>
<td>Pay and Promotion (Factor 3): Items 10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POP Raises and Promotions (Factor 3)</td>
<td>POPS items 12-15</td>
<td>Pay and Promotion (Factor 3): Items 10-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*POP Behaviors*

The first POPS factor that emerged with this study's sample was POP behavior, which included the POPS original instrument items 1-9. POP behavior items examine perceptions about employees' actions and the observed actions of other coworkers (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). If organizations do not communicate clear and consistent expectations, some employees engage in power-seeking behaviors to get ahead (Collins & Paul, 2020; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kurtessis et al., 2017). High POP results when organizations appear to use the political behavior of employees, rather than job performance, as a standard to determine rewards and recognition (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Lee & Peccei, 2011; Vigoa & Cohen, 2002). Employees begin to feel
that POP is present in their workplace when they feel that their transactions are giving them a positive return on this investment in the organization (Lee & Peccei, 2011). Employees may begin to engage in political behaviors to get ahead because they see others are being rewarded while not meeting expectations (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993). Accountability has been an expressed concern of county-level 4-H agents (Castro, 2016). Some agents seem to get ahead by doing the bare minimum, while others struggle to meet all expectations and feel they are not rewarded or recognized (Castro, 2016). The final model included POP behavior to predict Southern region 4-H agents' POS. With the frustration among agents with accountability, this finding is significant. Further research should be done to establish what phenomena of political behaviors are most frequently observed in CES and how those behaviors are being rewarded or recognized.

**POP Policies**

The second POP factor found in this study was policies, which included the POPS original instrument items 10-11. Employees' political behaviors seem to intensify when the organization has no policies and procedures to communicate appropriate behaviors that the organization will reward (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). As 4-H agents struggle with organizational accountability, "it is very evident that 4-H agents feel that other coworkers may not be held to the same standards as others" (Castro, 2016, p. 85). Louisiana 4-H agents expressed that their organization lacks policies to implement consequences when agents are not being accountable (Castro, 2016). Extension agents who feel that the organization does not hold everyone to the same standard of accountability may be tempted to circumvent the chain of command to gain rewards and recognition, politically motivated behavior (Lee & Peccei,
In CES, rewards and recognition are tangibles beyond just pay increases and promotions. Committee assignments, awards, work location (at home or in the office), comp time, agent assignments, and general acceptance by supervisors and administrators are other rewards and recognition. Typically, there are no established policies to determine these rewards and recognition. Organizations that reward and recognize political behaviors rather than following procedures risk appearing to not value employees' contributions, which could negatively affect employee POS (Harris et al., 2007; Kurtessis et al., 2017, Lee & Peccei, 2011). Organizations can reduce POP among employees when policies are communicated and implemented consistently, even with informal rewards and recognitions that county-level 4-H agents have access to (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997).

**POP Pay and Promotion**

The third POP factor that appeared in this study was pay and promotion, which included the POPS original instrument items 12-15. Pay and promotion distribution can influence employee POP (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993). Pay and promotion distributed through fair procedures and not based on subjective likability decrease employee POP (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Organizations risk high employee POP when forgoing procedures to determine increases in pay and rewarding promotions (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Pay and promotion did not contribute to the final model to predict the Southern region, county 4-H agent's POS. One consideration for the insignificance of POP factor 3 in predicting POS may be attributed to the policies and procedures in place to determine the pay and promotion of 4-H agents. Pay and promotion decisions in CES are not discretionary (Eisenberger et al., 2020). CES organizations
are part of higher education, state government, and federal government systems known to have pay/promotion policies and procedures established. Typically, the CES in each state has written policies and procedures for pay and promotion that the land-grant university's governing body has voted on to ensure compliance among distribution of organizational resources. County-level 4-H agents rank promotions are typically determined by a committee of peers and supervisors. This process helps to limit the influence of employee political behaviors on organizational administrators, as they alone do not decide to reward a promotion. If policies and procedures are clear, and 4-H agents understand how to receive a pay increase or a promotion, this factor may not hold the predictive power of POS (Caner et al., 2009; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Lee & Peccei, 2011) especially since the pay raises and promotions are rewarded based on consistency and not particular amiability of an administrator. Pay and promotion among higher-ed faculty and staff should be explored further to see if this factor can predict POS among other groups or if this was just an incongruity found in Southern region 4-H agents.

This anomalous scale factoring, as well as the insignificant POP raises and promotion (Factor 3) results, should be further explored in future research and will add to the current debate about this instrument's dimensions, as there has long been a debate about what factors POPS measures since its inception in 1991 by Kacmar and Ferris (Brubaker, 2012). These new factors could be explained because of minor changes made to the scale items during the development of the survey for this population. Another explanation is that this instrument has not been widely used among the 4-H agent population participating in the study. Limited use of this instrument may prove that this population produced different factors than those established with other populations. It is recommended that further research be conducted to confirm if this was an
anomaly by administering the survey to a larger sample of 4-H agents. Also, more in-depth validation and reliability analyses should be conducted to inform decisions about the significance of this finding.

**Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC)**

AOC is an individual's emotional attachment to an organization that forms reciprocal relationship with the organization (Klein et al., 2012; Mercurio, 2015). AOC has been found to be strongly associated with turnover intention (Rhoades et al., 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997). In this study, AOC was found to be a significant predictor of Southern region county 4-H agents’ turnover intention in the first HMR model for research question 4. However, when job satisfaction and POS were added to the final predictive HMR model, AOC was not a significant predictor of Southern region county 4-H agents’ turnover intention and was excluded from the final model.

Possible explanations that may contribute to this finding include: other variables added to the HMR models, the commitment required to be an extension agent, and the 4-H career ladder. The job satisfaction and POS variables may have accounted for the same variance associated with those variables, making AOC redundant in the final model. Nevertheless, these AOC finding are interesting, as AOC has been found to have a strong, negative relationship with turnover intentions in past CES research samples (Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Mercurio, 2015; Mowday et al., 1978; Newman et al., 2011).

The level of commitment required to be a 4-H agent may also explain why AOC was an insignificant predictor variable in the final model. Rhoades et al. (2001) found that “basic work
experiences influence affective commitment and ultimately, employee withdrawal behavior” (p. 835). The work experiences of a 4-H agent are very complex (Mears, 2017). Extension agents are teachers, organizers of events/activities/contests, trainers, marketing specialists, grant writers, fundraisers, volunteer managers, curriculum writers, change agents that inspire social justice, evaluators, mentors to their 4-Her’s, support persons for their co-workers, and subject matter technicians (Benge et al., 2015; Benge et al., 2020; Bowen et al., 1994; Castro, 2016; Harder et al., 2014; Mears, 2017; Russell et al., 2019; Sanders et al., 1966). The complexity of the role requires commitment to stay with the organization. 4-H agents work long hours and weekends, which is inferred by youth, volunteers, and parents as a form of commitment to the program. As extension agents seek promotion, they are asked by the organization to complete a graduate degree, requiring a form of commitment. Through these various forms of commitment, an emotional attachment to the organization would be expected to transpire (Klein et al., 2012; Mercurio, 2015). “Affectively committed employees are seen as having a sense of belonging and identification that increase their involvement in the organization’s activities, their willingness to pursue the organization’s goals, and their desire to remain with the organization” (Rhoades et al., 2001, p. 825). 4-H agents may have built such a strong emotional attachment through their demonstrated commitment to the organization, this may have affected their AOC and turnover intention perspectives reported in this study.

In contrast, the lack of a 4-H career ladder may have impacted levels of commitment for some 4-H agents, as they have no commitment to the organization because they have nowhere to go. Traditionally, a 4-H agent position was an entry level CES position (L. Hebert, personal communication, April 25, 2022). Agents would come into their positions with a college degree,
typically in agriculture, family and consumer science, or education. After working several years with the 4-H program, agents would be promoted to an agriculture or family and consumer science agent working with adults (L. Hebert, personal communication, April 25, 2022). Over time, the career ladder has shifted, and current 4-H agents stay working with the 4-H program longer and do not move into adult work (L. Hebert, personal communication, April 25, 2022). However, when this shift happened, the career ladder for a 4-H agent was weakened. Now, if a 4-H agent seeks for a new role, such as a promotion to a different department, those opportunities are limited (L. Hebert, personal communication, April 25, 2022). These limitations may be perceived as negative and disappointing treatment form the organization, effecting AOC and turnover intention (Rhoades et al., 2001). The most common option is for those 4-H agents to choose to leave the organization for other opportunities, which sustains the retention problem of practice in CES.

**Implications for Practice**

POS was a statistically significant predictor of AOC, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, which was expected (CITE). This finding adds to the CES body of work on constructs and variables necessary for solving the retention crisis (Benge et al., 2015; Russell & Liggans, 2020; Vines et al., 2018). As the CES administration looks to retain the existing workforce in the Southern region, fostering POS among employees can help cultivate a positive orientation toward the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Those employees then exhibit positive behaviors toward the organization and its agents, benefiting not only CES, but their county’s 4-H members, parents, and volunteers (Benge et al., 2015; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Hussain & Asif, 2012; Kurtessis et
al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This positive orientation decreases an employee's departure behaviors and ensures the sustainability of county 4-H youth development programs (Benge et al., 2015; Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Russell & Liggins, 2020).

Southern region CES administration should institute best practices and strategies that increase county 4-H agents’ POS (Eisenberger et al., 2020, Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS significantly increases when employees believe that the organization is acting freely regarding the favorable treatment of employees (Eisenberger et al., 2016). One strategy to increase POS is for the organization to communicate to employees that favorable treatment is being given voluntarily and not being done to fulfill an organizational requirement (Eisenberger et al., 2016). To effectively increase POS within a Southern CES organization, the first strategy administration should adopt "supportive workforce services that are discretionary" (Eisenberger et al., 2016, p. 5).

Fairness is an essential antecedent of POS that can be used to strengthen employees’ perceptions. One strategy to increase fairness in the organization is to maintain transparency of decision-making processes to exhibit discretionary treatment of employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Employees can be involved in the decision-making process by being invited to put their input into the process (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Also, fairness can be exhibited by showing consistency within the decision-making process (Eisenberger et al., 2020). CES administration should look for organizational behaviors that exist, such as established cliques that yield power over decision-making within the organization and dismantling that power group to increase POP among employees (Less & Peccei, 2011; Kurtessis et al, 2017). Also, CES administration should
consider policies that outline consequences for county 4-H agents that are not meeting expectations (Castro, 2016; Lee & Peccei, 2011; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Lastly, CES administration should focus on strategies that promote fairness and transparency with new county 4-H agents, as their perceptions from early in their careers (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

Leader support strategies can also increase POS (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Recognizing a fundamental concept of POS, the personification of the organization, county-level CES supervisors would benefit from sharing credit for favorable treatment with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2020). One example is for CES administration to train county-level supervisors to give credit to the organization, and themselves, for the favorable treatment of employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020, p. 108). Also, supervisors can communicate to county 4-H agents how much they value their contributions to the local 4-H program to enhance POS (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Lastly, supervisors can foster their personal POS through their interactions with employees (Eisenberger et al., 2016; Eisenberger et al., 2020). County CES supervisors are encouraged to treat 4-H agents favorably to increase their personal POS, creating a reciprocal process to increase POS CES system-wide (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

Human resource practices are another antecedent that organizations have control over to increase employees’ POS (Eisenberger et al., 2020, Kurtessis et al., 2017). As CES administrators work with human resources to increase POS among county 4-H agents, they should encourage “individualized benefits” for agents to meet their learning needs (Eisenberger et al., 2016). These needs can be collected through needs assessment surveys, performance evaluation data, and interviews with agents (Eisenberger et al., 2016). Another strategy for human resources to adapt to increase POS among county 4-H agents is to help them build a
social network (Eisenberger et al., 2016). Eisenberger et al. (2016) suggest the following to build social networks within your organization: “mentoring, team projects, informal social gatherings, and social media” sites such as Slack or Teams so agents can share their program knowledge, experiences, and ideas with other agents in an informal setting (Eisenberger et al., 2016, p. 16). Lastly, CES organizations' human resources can intentionally build a supportive organization for new 4-H agents prior to their start date (Eisenberger et al., 2016). New hires' treatment before beginning employment with an organization establishes their perceptions of organizational treatment (Eisenberger et al., 2016). One place to establish organizational support with new hires is at the job interview (Eisenberger et al. 2016). Eisenberger et al. (2016) suggest that “interviewers can promote anticipated organizational support by setting applicants at ease by acting in a courteous, friendly and respectful manner” (p. 17).

The organizational effects of high employee POS are very beneficial. As CES administration continues to seek ways to increase county-level 4-H agent retention, increasing employee POS is a proven predictor of the positive outcomes of AOC and job satisfaction which all have relationships with lower turnover intention.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

CES has studied turnover for over 30 years as an answer to its retention problem (Benge et al., 2015; Martin & Kaufman, 2013; Russell & Liggans, 2020; Safrit & Owen, 2010; Vines et al., 2018). However, it continues to persist. When a situation within an organization seems unmanageable, and the employee is not supported, turnover is a coping strategy the employee uses to escape the dire situation (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). These recommendations are presented
to CES organizations to understand POS and turnover intention further. First, leveraging the power of 4-H agents’ current POS can help the organization predict AOC, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The Southern region CES administration is encouraged to administer POS instruments as a survey to 4-H agents to gauge current levels of POS within their systems. Also, longitudinal studies would expand the current literature about POS, with studies that focus on causal relationships among the antecedents and outcomes that the theory suggests (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Lastly, utilizing a qualitative research design may help determine some central phenomena of 4-H agent perceptions of organizational politics as an antecedent of POS (Benge et al., 2015). Qualitative research results will help the CES field identify the POS outcomes that best help to facilitate the most significant relationships with turnover intention. Once the most important outcomes are identified, best practices strategies could be leveraged to increase retention among 4-H agents.

**Limitations**

It is essential to consider the limitations of the study design, procedures, and the lack of data collection for numerous variables noted in the literature that have relationships with POS. A predictive, correlational study does not establish causation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Urdan, 2017). The results of this study provide evidence that relationships exist between variables. However, more research is needed to understand POS antecedents and outcomes of 4-H agents’ turnover intention. Another limitation of the study was the error in the Qualtrics survey that did not collect data for a question 1 predictor variable. In the future, this error can be corrected by ensuring that the Qualtrics survey is published after making edits. Also, the distribution procedures were disrupted when a state 4-H program leader asked not to be included
in the study because prior institutional permissions were not sought before survey distribution. Therefore, the initial sample size was reduced when these participants were not included. Also, the skewness of the demographic data, especially the region, gender, and ethnicity are limitations of this study. A bigger sample size that includes more CES regions could help to incorporate a variety of responses and represent the larger county-level 4-H agent population.

Covid-19 was a limitation of this study, as the survey was distributed during the pandemic. A recent study by Lai (2022) “revealed that pandemic related work pressure can be a source of job stress among employees, which could lead to voluntary turnover behavior. Stress found among employees during an emergency period, which has become a major concern for modern psychological scholars as it can deteriorate both employee mental health and job performance.”. Conducting the study during the pandemic does introduce some response bias because of the uncertainty the pandemic brought to work organizations (Lai, 2022). Lastly, there are numerous antecedents and outcomes of POS. It was impossible to collect data for all the variables associated with POS. Therefore, a complete understanding of the complexities of POS cannot be fully realized with this population in this study. However, future research can address the gaps in the data.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, POS predictors Southern region county 4-H agents' AOC, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Although retention among extension agents has been explored for over 30 years, this study adds to the literature to better understand the problem of practice that includes the perspectives of 4-H agents themselves. POS can help CES move towards building Southern
region organizations that voluntarily show appreciation for 4-H agents' contributions and that they care about their well-being.
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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Default Question Block

Section 1: Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Laura Robertson of the University of Memphis, Department of Instructional Design and Technology is conducting the study. She is being guided by Dr. Craig Shepherd.

You will be 1 of 450 subjects to participate in the research. The purpose of this research is to explore 4-H agents’ perceptions of organizational support. You are being invited to participate because you were identified as a county-level extension agent currently employed in one of the fifteen states in the cooperative extension service southern region who has a 4-H appointment.

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to complete one 50 question online survey. Your participation should take about 8 minutes to complete the survey. Participating in this study is completely voluntary and if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any point. You may choose not to answer any survey question and stop the survey at any time by exiting the browser window. Your survey responses will be anonymous.

As a participant in this research study, there may be a direct benefit for you if you are chosen as one of ten participants randomly chosen to receive a $25.00 Amazon gift card. If you choose to register for the gift card drawing, you will have an opportunity to opt in at the end of the survey. You will not be paid for taking part in this study. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

If you have questions about the research you may contact Laura Robertson at lbrbts1@memphis.edu or 225-921-3984 or faculty advisor, Dr. Craig Shepherd at
cshphrd2@memphis.edu or (901)-678-3820. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject please contact the University of Memphis Institutional Review Board at 601-678-2705

ELECTRONIC CONSENT

Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent document for your records. Clicking on the “Agree” button indicate that you

- Have read the above information
- Voluntarily agree to participate
- Are 18 years of age or older

Agree
Not Agree (Option to Opt out of Survey)

Section 2: Personal Characteristics
In this next section, you will be asked to answer some questions about yourself.

What is your age as of January 1, 2022?

Please indicate your gender identity (select all that apply).
Woman
Man
Transgender
Non-binary/Non-conforming
Prefer not to answer

Please indicate your race and ethnicity (select all that apply):
American Indian or Alaskan Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Hispanic or Latino
White
Mixed Race
Other
Prefer not to answer

Please select which state or U.S. territory that you work in.

Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Puerto Rico

How many years have you worked in your current county level 4-H position? Please provide the number of years you have worked, rounding up to the nearest whole number. (For example, 4 years and 6 months would be 5 years.)

Section 3: Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support
Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below about your state's Cooperative Extension Service organizational support.
The organization values my contribution to its well-being.

The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.

The organization would ignore any complaint from me.

The organization really cares about my well-being.

Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice.

The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.
The organization shows very little concern for me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4: Organizational Politics

Organizational Politics

Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below about your state's organizational politics.

People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There has always been an influential group in this organization that no one ever crosses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no place for &quot;yes&quot;-people around here: good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeing with individuals who are perceived as powerful in this organization is the best alternative.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is best not to rock the boat in this organization.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 4: Organizational Politics Continued

Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below about your state’s organizational politics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant. |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Strongly | Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly | Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly | Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

| Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political. |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Strongly | Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly | Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly | Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

**Section 5: Perceived Supervisor Support**

**Perceived Supervisor Support**

Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement about support you receive from your direct supervisor.

| My direct supervisor cares about my opinions. |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Strongly | Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |

| My direct supervisor really cares about my well-being. |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Strongly | Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Disagree nor Agree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree |
### Section 6: Organizational Support for Development

Organizational Support for Development

Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below about your state organization's support for development of your functional skills and expertise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My direct supervisor strongly considers my goals and values.

My direct supervisor shows very little concern for me.

My organization provides opportunities for employees to develop their specialized functional skills.

My organization has programs and policies that help employees to advance their functional specializations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organization has career development programs that help employees develop their specialized functional and skills and expertise.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizational Support for Development Continued

Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below about your state organization’s support for development of your managerial skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organization provides opportunities for employees to develop their managerial skills.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organization has programs and policies that help employees to reach higher managerial levels.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 7: Affective Organizational Commitment

Affective Organizational Commitment
Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below about your commitment to the state Cooperative Extension Service organization you are employed with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organization has career development programs that help employees develop their managerial skills.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like “part of the family” at my organization.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 8: Turnover Intention

**Turnover Intention**
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement about your turnover intention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I often think about leaving the organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to look for a new job within the next year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I could choose again, I would not work for this organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 9: Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements about job satisfaction in your current position as a county level 4-H professional.

All in all, I am satisfied with my job.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

In general, I don’t like my job.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

In general, I like working here.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Section 10: Conclusion
To express my gratitude for your time, you can register for a drawing for one of ten $25.00 Amazon gift cards. I anticipate that you have a 2% chance of winning a gift card in the random drawing.

Would you like to enter a raffle to win a $25.00 gift card?

If you would like to provide your contact information to be entered into the gift card raffle, when you select "yes" below, you will be taken to a second survey that is separate from your responses you provided in this survey.

Yes
No
## Appendix B

### Instrument Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Number</th>
<th>Instrument Section Name</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Survey Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction and Informed Consent</td>
<td>1 item</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personal Characteristics</td>
<td>6 items</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Created by Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support</td>
<td>8 items</td>
<td>1 (1.1-1.4), 2, 3, and 4</td>
<td>Eisenberger et al., 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale Factor 1- General Political Behavior</td>
<td>15 items</td>
<td>1 (1.2)</td>
<td>Kacmar &amp; Carlson (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2-Go Along and Get Ahead</td>
<td>Items 3-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3-Pay and Promotion</td>
<td>Items 10-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Perceptions of Direct Supervisor Support</td>
<td>4 items</td>
<td>1 (1.3)</td>
<td>Rhoades et al., 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Organizational Support for Development</td>
<td>6 items</td>
<td>1 (1.4)</td>
<td>Kraimer et al., 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Affective Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>6 items</td>
<td>2 and 4 (4.3)</td>
<td>Meyer et al., 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Turnover Intention</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>4 (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4)</td>
<td>Mobley et al., 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>3 and 4 (4.4)</td>
<td>Bowling &amp; Hammond, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Closing and Gift Card Drawing Information</td>
<td>Link to Gift Card Drawing Registration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

IRB Approval Letters

PRO-FY2022-231 - Initial: Approval - Exempt

donot-reply@cayuse.com

To: Craig Ershel Shepherd (cshphrd2); Laura Brumbaugh Robertson (lbrbrts1)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and trust the content is safe.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

December 14, 2021

PI Name: Laura Robertson
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Craig Shepherd
Submission Type: Initial
Title: COUNTY LEVEL 4-H AGENTS' PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT: A PREDICTIVE CORRELATIONAL STUDY
IRB ID: #PRO-FY2022-231
Exempt Approval: December 14, 2021

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statues and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
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Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

January 13, 2022

PI Name: Laura Robertson
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Craig Shepherd
Submission Type: Modification
Title: COUNTY LEVEL 4-H AGENTS’ PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT: A PREDICTIVE CORRELATIONAL STUDY
IRB ID: #PRO-PY2022-231
Level of Review: Exempt

Approval: January 13, 2022
Expiration: --

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00000815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

The modification is approved.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations: