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ORGANIZATION-BASED
SELF-ESTEEM: CONSTRUCT
DEFINITION,
OPERATIONALIZATION
AND
VALIDATION

by

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Abstract

The construct organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) and its operationalization are introduced. A nomological network is developed containing a set of hypotheses which guided efforts to validate the construct and its research scale. Homogeneity of scale items, stability of dimensions, reliability (test-retest and internal consistency), convergent, concurrent and predictive validity estimates were all inspected through the conduct of a combination field studies and a laboratory experiment. Results from a validation effort involving eight samples (N>2000) representing a diversity of organizations and occupations are presented. Results supported all hypotheses. Recommendations for future research are suggested.

Organization-Based Self-Esteem:

Construct Definition, Operationalization, and Validation

There is a strong tradition for the role of "belief systems" in the industrial/organizational psychology literature. The work of Korman (1966, 1970) on self-esteem, Blood (1969) on Protestant work ethic, Dubin (1956) on work as a central life interest, Rotter (1966) on internal-external locus of control, and Christie and Geis's (1970) Machiavellianism are only a few examples of belief system constructs in organizational paradigms.

In this paper the construct "organization-based self-esteem" (OBSE) and its operationalization are introduced. The results from eight studies examining the psychometric properties of the OBSE operationalization are presented, as well as an empirical validation evaluation of a nomological network incorporating OBSE.

OBSE is treated as one component of an individual's belief system about his/her competence. Global self-esteem has long been treated as an important part of overall belief systems (c.f., Korman, 1966; 1970). More recently, however, a number of organizational scholars studying self-esteem (e.g., Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Korman, 1976; Tharenou, 1979; Tharenou & Harker, 1982) have called for research on self-esteem which focuses on specific facets of esteem rather than upon the global construct. These scholars suggested that such an approach should provide better understanding of a number of aspects of organizational behavior. In fact, some recent research (c.f., Tharenou & Harker, 1984) has had initial success in explaining work environment phenomena (e.g., performance) by examining task-based self-esteem. It is in this framework that we began exploration of OBSE.

Conceptually, we define OBSE as the degree to which an organizational member believes him/herself to be an important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within the context of the work organization. Thus OBSE reflects self-perceived

value within an organizational setting. We agree with scholars such as Ellis and Taylor that facet self-esteem is more relevant to our understanding of organizational behavior than is global self-esteem. Tharenou (1979) argues, however, that examining excessively specific aspects of self-esteem (e.g., task-specific) is likely to cause conflicting empirical results. Thus, we introduce the construct OBSE as a way of achieving a middle ground.

An OBSE Nomological Network

While a complete nomological network for OBSE has not yet been developed, an initial network is presented here to guide efforts to validate the construct and its operationalization. Korman's (1976, 1971, 1970) self-consistency motivational theory provides much of the theoretical basis for our OBSE construct. He positions self-esteem as a construct central to the explanation of employee motivation, attitudes, and behavior, and defines self-esteem as "the extent to which one sees oneself as a competent, need satisfying individual" (Korman, 1976, p.51). Coopersmith provides a similar definition when he defines self-esteem as "the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to the self" (1967, p. 4-5).

Korman (1970) suggests that self-esteem operates at different levels and across different contexts. Level refers to the degree of specificity of a self-esteem target. Chronic (or global) self-esteem is a relatively persistent self-assessment, while context-based self-esteem involves perceived competence within a specific context (e.g., one's organizational role). Context-based self-esteem concepts allow for variation in self-perceived competence across situations. Thus it is reasonable to distinguish self-esteem related to one's overall organizational role from a more general or chronic self-esteem level, as well as from the highly specific task-based self-esteem (i.e., one's self-esteem as it relates to carrying out one task or one of many different organizational roles).

In fact, this distinction parallels that called for by Tharenou (1979). Task-based self-esteem is that portion of self-esteem that is based only on the individual's performance in a specific job. OBSE is that portion of self-esteem that is based upon task, role performance plus all other experiences within the person's organizational life. Global self-esteem is that self-esteem based upon organizational experiences plus all the other non-work and non-organizational life situations.

Within the context of its nomological network, we agree with Tharenou's suggestion that self-esteem be treated as both a dependent and independent variable. Thus we explore OBSE as a determinant of behaviors and attitudes and as a consequence of work environment experiences.

Global and organizational-based self-esteem are both a part of an individual's basic belief system. As a part of personality, these belief systems should be relatively stable in the absence of major environmental changes (Cohn, 1978). Our first hypothesis is based on this expectation.

Hypothesis #1: In the absence of major work environment changes, OBSE will be stable across time.

As noted above, Korman (1970) recognizes the existence of both global and context specific self-esteem. Global self-esteem is presented as the aggregate of the various specific components of self-esteem which accumulate across time. Many of these context-specific self-esteem components are also likely to be related to one another, through for example, a spillover effect. The influence process between global and context-based self-esteem is likely to be reciprocal. Our treatment of OBSE as one of the major components of global self-esteem leads to our second hypothesis.

Hypothesis #2: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and global self-esteem, and between OBSE and job/task-specific self-esteem.

Antecedents. Our nomological network specifies several expected antecedents of OBSE. Korman's (1971) review of environmental antecedents of self-esteem suggests that both the expectations of others and situational conditions play a shaping role. Korman (1970, 1976) notes that individuals can develop belief systems regarding their own competence from the attitudes of others (which he refers to as socially-induced self-esteem). If significant others think a person is competent and able, and their behaviors reflect this belief structure, enhanced self-esteem is likely to be a consequence. For this reason, self-perceived competence need not be completely consistent with true competence levels. Variation is introduced by the false and/or ambiguous signals sent by relevant others to a focal person, who in turn can misperceive whatever signal is being sent.

In addition to socially-induced self-esteem, environmental conditions also have been identified as major shaping factors. Korman's (1970) work suggests that in a mechanistically designed social system (i.e., a social system where there is an emphasis upon a concern for procedures, control, formality, and hierarchy) low levels of self-esteem can develop. In a mechanistic organization, there is a high level of system-imposed control achieved through a rigid hierarchy, centralization, standardization, and formalization. Korman predicts that under this kind of organizational condition, a belief system will eventually develop which is consonant with the apparent basic mistrust of people implicit in highly controlled systems. Korman reasons that the development of programmed activities and high rule specification implies a mistrust in the

abilities and willingness of people to complete their tasks on their own and without direction and control from others (Kipnis & Lane, 1962). In contrast, an organic social system (which is more personal, democratic, and less concerned with hierarchy, procedures, formality, and control) will lead to higher levels of self-esteem within the work context.

Korman (1970) argued that certain organization control systems (e.g., the bureaucratic structure) can imply a mistrust of people's ability to exercise self-direction and self-control. Pierce, Dunham and Cummings (1984), in their study of alternative sources of environmental structuring, noted that organizationally imposed control can stem from a number of different sources. Among some of the more dominant systems identified were social systems design (mechanistic vs. organic), job design (routine vs. complex), technology (system-vs. people-controlled), and leader initiating structure behaviors (high vs. low). An elaboration of Korman's argument would suggest that any form of system-imposed control (i.e., external control system) carries with it an implicit assumption of the incapability of an individual to exercise self-direction and self-control. One consequence of this type of control system is likely to be the suggestion to the employee that s/he is not competent within the organizational context. Continual exposure to these signals and the absence of organizational opportunities to demonstrate and experience competence leads to low levels of OBSE. By way of contrast, sources of environmental structure that permit the exercise of self-direction and self-control should be positively associated with the perception of one's organizational competence. Individuals in such a system have greater opportunity to exercise competence and experience success, which contributes to self-assessments of competence, than do individuals in system-controlled work environments.

In sum, managerial attitudes and behaviors directly expressed in the

manager-employee interaction, and/or indirectly expressed via the creation of systems within which the employee must function are likely to play a major role in the development of OBSE. Thus:

Hypothesis #3: There will be a positive relationship between the perception of managerial trust and OBSE.

Hypothesis #4: There will be a positive relationship between perceived job importance (significance) and OBSE.

Hypothesis #5: There will be a negative relationship between the degree of mechanistic social system design and OBSE.

Tharenou (1979) and Tharenou and Harker's (1982) review of the self-esteem literature suggests that job characteristics are among the most consistent correlates of an individual's assessment of his/her own work task competence. The most influential job characteristic for self-esteem is the amount of challenge and autonomy in the job (Tharenou, 1979). In other studies, job complexity has had a consistently positive and significant relationship with global self-esteem and work/task self-esteem (cf. Sekaran & Wagner, 1981; Dipboye, Zultowski, Dewhirst & Arvey, 1978; Tharenou & Harker, 1982). Opportunity to perform complex tasks that require moderate to high levels of ability should allow employees the opportunity to experience competence, and we thus expect perceived job complexity to affect perceptions of competence within an organization. Thus:

Hypothesis #6: There will be a positive relationship between perceived job complexity, and OBSE. In addition, there will be a positive relationship between autonomy and OBSE.²

If job conditions contribute to the employee's self-assessed level of competence, additional relationships can be extrapolated from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics model. Specifically, Hackman and Oldham theorize that job complexity contributes to two psychological states (i.e., experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and experienced meaningfulness of work) that an employee develops concerning his/her organizational role. Autonomy, one component of a complex job, is hypothesized to lead to experienced responsibility for work outcomes. Three components of complexity--variety, significance, and identity--are predicted to contribute to experienced meaningfulness of work. Therefore, one might reason that, when employees are given jobs which suggest that they are competent and capable of self-direction and self-control this will reinforce a similar belief system. Thus, as employees experience responsibility for organizational results, they will develop attitudes which are consonant with that experience resulting in high OBSE. One might further reason that, as the organizational role is experienced as meaningful, a cognitively consistent view of the self would emerge. Thus, employees would experience themselves as having personal competence and organizational worth. Applications of self-consistency and self-enhancing theory would suggest a positive association between both psychological state constructs and OBSE. Thus:

Hypothesis #7: There will be a positive relationship between experienced responsibility for work outcomes and OBSE.

Hypothesis #8: There will be a positive relationship between experienced meaningfulness of work and OBSE.

Other determinants of self-esteem include experienced stressors and resultant strain (French & Caplan, 1972). Perceptions of stressors and

experienced strain are consistently and negatively related to various measures of self-esteem, though self-esteem is likely to be both a determinant and consequence of stress (Tharenou, 1979). Consistent with prior research, we predict that experienced strain contributes to one's level of OBSE (as it would for global and task-specific self-esteem). To the extent that organizational experiences cause strain, which in turn affects the evaluation of one's competence within the organization, we expect that there will be negative correlations between measures of strain and OBSE. Thus:

Hypothesis #9: There will be a negative relationship between experienced strain and OBSE.

Personal successes and failures have long been associated with individual self-images. Individuals who attribute failure to personal factors (e.g., lack of personal ability or effort) will subsequently experience a diminution in their self-esteem. Thus, personal failure, within one's organizational role, if attributed to internal factors that are within the control of the individual will lower an employee's OBSE. Thus:

Hypothesis #10: There will be a negative relationship between personal attribution for organizational failure and OBSE.

Consequences. A series of empirical observations coupled with propositions from need theories (Maslow, 1943; Alderfer, 1972), self-enhancement theory (Dipboye, 1977), and cognitive consistency theory (Korman, 1970) provide the theoretical underpinnings for the next set of predictions. A number of variables are included in the nomological network for the purpose of looking at the attitudinal and behavioral effects of OBSE.

Cognitive consistency theory assumes that people are motivated to achieve outcomes that are consistent with their self-concept (Korman, 1971, p. 595). This model would suggest that employees with high OBSE (i.e., employees who perceive themselves as organizationally meaningful and competent) will attempt to engage in organizationally-valued behaviors. In similar fashion, need theory and self-enhancement theory would also lead to the prediction of employee motivation to engage in behaviors that demonstrate and enhance one's organizational worth. To the extent that these behaviors demonstrate personal competence and make an organizational contribution, intrinsic satisfaction will be derived, coupled with a reinforcement of one's self-esteem. Subsequent success due to these behaviors should reinforce high OBSE while failure would reinforce low OBSE.

Tharenou and Harker (1982) point out that a number of investigators have observed relationships between self-esteem and both satisfaction and performance. For example, Inkson (1978) observed that feelings derived from good performance produced higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction for high self-esteem than for low self-esteem employees. Hall (1971) noted that satisfaction occurs in conjunction with jobs that allow enhancement of self-esteem through engagement in organizationally meaningful behaviors (e.g., engage in acts of good organizational citizenship), and Tharenou and Harker (1982) found a significantly positive relationship between task competence and satisfaction. We hypothesize that OBSE would relate to the following behavior and attitudes:

Hypothesis #11: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and job performance.

Hypothesis #12: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and intrinsic work motivation.

Hypothesis #13: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and general job satisfaction.

Hypothesis #14: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and engagement in organizationally meaningful behaviors (e.g., engagement in acts of good citizenship).

Increased self-acceptance within the organizational context is likely to be associated with increased attachment to the organization (organizational commitment) and increased satisfaction with one's organizational association (organizational satisfaction). A high level of organizational self-esteem implies a correspondingly high level of experienced personal competence and organizational worth. This psychological state is need-satisfying and reinforcing for the individual, and thus positions the organization as a need-satisfying agent in the employee's life. As a consequence of the organization serving the employee as a need-satisfying source, the employee is likely to integrate the organization into his/her life and internalize the organization, its goals, and its value systems as part of his/her own. Thus:

Hypothesis #15: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis #16: There will be a positive relationship between OBSE and organizational satisfaction.

Figure 1 summarizes our proposed nomological network for the OBSE construct. Numbers by boxes in Figure 1 correspond to the hypothesis about these relationships. It should be noted that many of these relationships are likely to involve reciprocal effects (Tharenou, 1979).

Insert Figure 1 about here

This paper reports a series of eight studies. Together, these studies demonstrate the conceptual development of the OBSE construct, its operationalization, and its initial validation.

Method

Study Designs and Samples

The studies reported here utilized eight samples with a combined total of 2466 participants. The eight samples were used to test the 16 hypotheses, but each hypothesis was not tested in each sample. Scale dimensionality, the homogeneity of the scale items, the reproducibility of this homogeneity across samples, reliability estimates (i.e., test-retest and internal consistency), and convergent, concurrent and predictive validity estimates were examined.

Sample 1 consisted of 32 summer school teachers employed by a Midwest school system. Sample 2 contained 333 employees of a mining organization representing a variety of occupational and skill categories. Sample 3 consisted of a group of lower, middle, and upper level managers from a variety of manufacturing and service oriented organizations (e.g, utility, banking, mining, oil, education, health care) who participated in two laboratory-based organizational simulations. A total of 38 observations (for simulated Organization A, n=20; and for simulated Organization B, n=18) were obtained from the simulations. Sample 4 consisted of 1426 school administrators, teachers, and support personnel. Sample 5 was composed of 96 office personnel (entry level clerical through top management) from the insurance group of a state educational association. Sample 6 involved 475 employees (representing all levels and job functions) from an automobile service club in a Midwestern state. Sample 7

consisted of 45 MBA students (all full time employees from various types of jobs) at a Midwestern university. Finally, Sample 8 consists of 22 employees remaining after the announcement of a plant closing and the termination of employment for approximately 60 employees of a meat processing firm.

Procedures

Participants in seven of the eight samples (sample three being the exception) were administered paper and pencil questionnaires with questions directed toward their current full-time jobs. For sample 7 the same questionnaire was administered twice separated by five weeks. Participants from sample 3 were also administered a paper and pencil questionnaire. For this sample, however, questions were directed toward simulated jobs held by the participants during a three day management development laboratory program.

The organizational simulation utilized in sample 3 was designed to create two types of organizational structures: mechanistic and organic. These differences were produced through a combination of written instructions describing the structure and goals of the organization, and through the role playing of directors of the laboratory. All participants worked in both a mechanistic and organic organization during three days of organizational simulations (the order of exposure to mechanistic vs. organic structure was counterbalanced). A complete description of the simulation is contained in the paper by Knudsen, McTavish and Aamodt (Note 2). As a manipulation check, measures were obtained of perceived authoritarianism, formality, impersonality, democracy, concern for control, concern for procedures, and flexibility. The results indicated that the manipulation was perceived as intended ($F=40.03$, $p<.01$). There were no significant effects for the order in which the two structures were experienced.

Measures

Organizational-based self-esteem. The items in the OBSE esteem scale were derived from comments often heard by the researchers as they engaged in discussions with employees, managers, and organizational scientists. For example, Joel S. Birnbaum, in an interview with Business Week (March 10, 1986, p. 116), noted that he became frustrated at IBM by the difficulty of getting his ideas to market -- "I had the feeling I didn't make a difference." We have come to the conclusion that it is not uncommon for employees to develop a belief that "they do not count" - "that they do not make a difference" - "that they are not a valuable part of this place." It was out of this context that we started the development of the OBSE measure.

The OBSE scale consists of ten items. In samples one through three participants were asked to think about the messages they receive from the attitudes and behaviors of their managers and supervisors, and to indicate, on a 5 point scale, the extent to which they agree/disagree with each of the following statements: I COUNT around here; I am TAKEN SERIOUSLY; I am IMPORTANT; I am TRUSTED; there is FAITH IN ME; I can MAKE A DIFFERENCE; I am VALUABLE; I am HELPFUL; I am EFFICIENT; and I am COOPERATIVE. To increase adjusted item-total correlations the wording "around here" was added so that it was included with each item (e.g., I make a difference around here; I count around here; I am taken seriously around here). This revised scale was employed in samples four through eight. In sample 1, OBSE was also measured with a 19 item (e.g., cooperative-uncooperative, self assured-hesitant; helpful-frustrating; efficient-inefficient; supportive-hostile) semantic differential scale.

Other Measures. Management trust was measured using a single Likert item in samples one and four ("management has little regard for the well being of people

who work for this organization.") Organizational commitment was assessed in samples one, two, four, five, and six using the Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulain (1974) 15 item instrument. Organizational satisfaction was measured in samples one and five using the Index of Organizational Reactions (Smith, 1976) and in samples two and seven using a faces scale (Kunin, 1955; Dunham and Herman, 1975). General job satisfaction was measured: in sample one using the Hackman and Oldham (1975) measure; in sample four using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Davis, England, & Loftquist, 1967); and in samples five and six using a combination of seven of the eight facets assessed by the Index of Organizational Reactions (organizational satisfaction was excluded from the general satisfaction measure). In sample two, the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) was used to measure significance, internal work motivation, experienced responsibility, and experienced meaningfulness. Autonomy in sample two was measured by the Job Characteristics Inventory (Sims, Szilagy, & Keller, 1976). Organizational Citizenship was measured in sample four using the 16 item Smith, Organ and Near (1983) scale and in samples five and six with the Graham (Note 1) instrument. Global self-esteem was measured in sample seven with Rosenberg's 10 item questionnaire (1965). A six item modification of the Rosenberg scale was used in samples five and six as was Beehr's (1976) unmodified three item task self-esteem measure. The Rosenberg scale was modified by anchoring each item in the context of the respondent's job. Job complexity was measured in samples five and six by combining the five job characteristics dimensions from the Job Diagnostic Survey. In both samples five and six, intrinsic work motivation was assessed with the Lawler and Hall (1970) instrument. In sample five and six, experienced strain was measured with scales developed by Gardner and Warrick (1984). Job performance was measured in samples five and six by supervisory rating of

nonexempt employees. Data were obtained from archival personnel files. In sample six, ratings were in one of three classes: below standard, at standard, or above standard. In sample five, there were two measures of performance, reflecting major categories of employees in the research site: (1) non-exempt (who received an hourly wage), and (2) telemarketing (who received an hourly wage plus a commission for membership sales). The nonexempt performance measure used in analyses was the sum of ratings on eight dimensions: knowledge, quality, quantity, initiative, dependability, adaptability, cooperation, and attitude. The performance measure used for telemarketers was average dollar club membership sales per hour during the most recent performance review period. In sample 8, the "Personal-attribution" for organizational failure was measured by two items (i.e., I have not tried hard enough to make _____ a success; and as a group we, the Associates of _____, did not try hard enough to make a success).

Analyses

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Validity. Sample means and standard deviations were calculated for each variable. For multi-item scales, coefficient alpha was used to estimate reliability. For sample seven, a test-retest estimate of reliability for OBSE was also calculated. In addition, this test-retest correlation was calculated controlling for employee perceptions of the degree to which organizational change had occurred between the two data collections. For sample one, convergent validity evidence for the OBSE measure was obtained by correlating the scores for the Likert and semantic versions of the scale. Discriminant validity evidence was examined for that sample by comparing the convergent validity coefficients to correlations of OBSE with other study variables. Convergent and discriminant validity evidence were also tested in samples five and six by comparing the correlations of OBSE with

measures of job/task self-esteem and with the correlations of OBSE with other study variables.

Tests of Hypotheses. Most hypotheses were tested using simple correlational analyses of the proposed relationships. Hypothesis five, involving the impact of social system design on OBSE, was tested using a one way analysis of variance for differences in OBSE between mechanistic and organic settings.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, sample size, and number of scale items for each variable. Where appropriate, coefficient alphas are also shown. Coefficient alphas for all variables in the OBSE nomological network reach acceptable levels.

Insert Table 1 about here

Reliability Estimates

Internal consistency. The coefficient alpha values for the OBSE scale are presented in Table 1. Across all eight samples and nine measurements, each alpha value was equal to or greater than .86 ranging to a high of .96 in sample four. The average alpha value was .906

Stability coefficient. The test-retest reliability coefficient (Hypothesis #1) was .75 ($p \leq .01$). After controlling for perceived organizational change the test-retest correlation rose to .87 ($p \leq .01$).

Convergent Validity

The two OBSE measures used in study one correlated .69 (see Table 2). This association was stronger than correlations of OBSE with any of the other non-self-esteem variables examined across the eight samples. In samples five and six, it was expected that the OBSE measure would converge more with the Rosenberg and Beehr self-esteem measures than with other study variables. With one exception (OBSE--commitment in sample six) this was true. OBSE correlated .54 ($p \leq .01$) and .57 ($p \leq .01$) respectively with the Rosenberg and Beehr scales in both samples. In sample seven global self-esteem had a positive ($r = .48$, $p \leq .01$) relationship with OBSE (Hypothesis #2). Thus convergent and discriminant validity evidence for the OBSE scale appear adequate.

Insert Table 2 about here

Tests of Hypotheses

Predictive Validity Estimates. ANOVA was employed to examine the relationship between social system design and OBSE. It was predicted (Hypothesis #5) that employees experiencing a mechanistic/bureaucratic social system will experience a significantly lower level of OBSE than their counterparts in a more organic social system. Results from the ANOVA reveal a statistically significant ($F = 21.58$, $p \leq .01$) difference in OBSE across the two organizations. Confirming the prediction, those working under the mechanistic design reported lower levels of OBSE ($\bar{X} = 33.11$) than their counterparts working under more organic organizational conditions ($\bar{X} = 41.72$). Analyses indicated that there were no significant effects on the criterion attributable to the order of laboratory experiences.

Inspection of the product-moment correlations (see Table 2) was made to gain clearer insight into the relationship between social system structure and OBSE.

Six of the seven design variables (concern for procedures being the single exception) had significant correlations ($r = -.32, p \leq .05$ to $r = -.54, p \leq .01$) with the OBSE scale. The direction of these relationships suggests that employees exposed to high levels of impersonality, authority, formality, concern for control, inflexibility, and low levels of democracy tend to develop a psychological state where their OBSE is low. Individuals who experienced a social system with the opposite of these design features developed higher OBSE. Because of the strong intercorrelations among the social system structure variables a unit weight model depicting a mechanistic-organic social system design was constructed and correlated with the criterion. This relationship ($r = -.46, p \leq .01$) suggests that as the social system becomes increasingly mechanistic, OBSE decreases.

A significant correlation ($r = -.44, p \leq .05$) was observed between OBSE and employees attributing organizational failure to their own personal lack of effort (Hypothesis #10), measured shortly after the announcement of a plant closing. This negative relationship suggests that the more employees attribute the organizational failure to a personal failure to try harder to make the organization successful, the lower his/her OBSE.

Concurrent validity estimates. Job autonomy, job significance, job complexity, strain, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, experienced meaningfulness of work, and managerial trust (Hypotheses #3, 4, 6-9) were positioned in the nomological network as antecedents of organization-based self-esteem. Each of these variables had a significant ($p \leq .01$) cross-sectional correlation with the criterion. In fact, inspection of Table 2 reveals that some of these correlations are quite substantial in magnitude. The strength of these associations ranged between .30 ($p \leq .01$) for trust to .50 ($p \leq .01$) for experienced meaningfulness of work. These observations confirm the hypothesized

relationships. Employees who experience managerial trust, complex and meaningful jobs, and work-related responsibility, and have low levels of strain have high levels of OBSE.

Six variables (organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, general job satisfaction, organizational satisfaction, internal work motivation, and performance) were theoretically positioned in the nomological network as consequences of organization-based self-esteem (Hypotheses #11-16). With one exception, all tests of all hypotheses were confirmed (see Table 2) (in sample five one hypothesis was confirmed on only one of the two performance measures). The correlation coefficients ranged between .15 ($p \leq .05$) for job performance to .60 ($p \leq .01$) for organizational commitment. Thus, employees who experience a high level of OBSE tend to be better organizational citizens, more job satisfied, satisfied with their organizational identity, committed to their employing organization, have a high level of internal work motivation, and be among the high performers.

Discussion

The results of extensive research on OBSE across eight samples suggests the importance of the construct and the viability of our operationalization of the OBSE measure. The OBSE construct was shown to be empirically distinguishable from more general self-esteem constructs. The measure of OBSE reported here was shown to have consistently good internal consistency, stability over time, reasonable predictive and concurrent validity, and appropriate convergent and discriminant validity when placed within a nomological network. The evidence presented here supports our belief that OBSE exists as part of employees' belief systems. Both the proposed determinants and consequences of OBSE were appropriately related to OBSE in the various studies reported here. The nature

of these relationships did not appear to be affected substantially by the nature of the sample involved nor by the specific instruments used to measure the study variables.

Based on the results of these eight studies, it appears that the determinants of OBSE may include managerial trust, organizational structure, job complexity, experienced responsibility, experienced meaningfulness, and experienced strain. Factors influenced by OBSE may include not only global self-esteem but also job performance, intrinsic motivation, general satisfaction, organizational satisfaction, citizenship behavior, and organizational commitment.

It should be recognized that, although all hypotheses were confirmed, the design of most of our eight studies did not provide particularly strong tests of the cause--> effect nature of the proposed relationships. It is hoped that future research on OBSE will do so. It should also be noted that the nomological network shown in Figure 1 is probably far from complete. More research is also needed to pursue the processes involved as OBSE develops and the processes through which OBSE impacts upon other variables. To do so will involve the need for more longitudinal research (only two of the eight samples reported here were longitudinal in nature).

Footnotes

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²It is important to be concerned about job-individual fit and therefore to distinguish between "optimal" and "overly" complex jobs a la Schwab and Cummings (1976). We clearly recognize that "too much" complexity is likely to lead to failure, frustration, and lowered OBSE.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Estimates

Variables:	No. Items	n	Mean	Std Dev	Alpha
<u>Sample One:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem	10	32	2.96	.88	.93
Organization-based Self-Esteem (Two)	19	32	3.09	1.13	.95
Management Trust	1	32	2.77	.90	N.A.
General Job Satisfaction	3	32	3.46	.65	.79
Organizational Commitment	15	32	62.41	15.41	.85
Organizational Satisfaction	3	32	3.08	.77	.74
<u>Sample Two:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem	10	333	35.61	5.89	.90
Job-Autonomy	5	333	19.81	3.55	.68
Job-Significance	3	333	11.08	3.07	.79
Experienced Responsibility	4	333	14.44	2.46	.70
Experienced Meaningfulness	4	333	14.55	2.29	.69
Internal Work Motivation	8	333	30.11	4.07	.82
Organizational Commitment	15	333	46.96	8.48	.87
Organizational Satisfaction	1	326	4.42	1.59	N.A.
<u>Sample Three:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem	10	36	37.42	7.01	.93
Organic-Mechanistic	7	30	19.97	7.99	.94
Authoritarian	1	31	2.77	1.38	N.A.
Formality	1	32	2.94	1.50	N.A.
Impersonality	1	31	2.77	1.38	N.A.
Democratic	1	35	2.46	1.17	N.A.
Concern for Control	1	32	2.94	1.19	N.A.
Flexibility	1	37	2.70	1.29	N.A.
Concern for Procedure	1	34	2.85	1.31	N.A.

Table 1 (continued)

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Estimates

Variables	No. Items	n	Mean	Std Dev	Alpha
<u>Sample Four:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem	10	1403	5.18	2.00	.96
Management Trust	1	1409	2.67	1.17	N.A.
Organizational Citizenship	16	1306	3.06	.24	.71
General Job Satisfaction	20	1368	3.69	.31	.88
Organizational Commitment	9	1399	4.40	1.56	.89
<u>Sample Five:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem	10	475	3.86	.56	.86
Beehr's Task Self-Esteem	3	475	4.09	.61	.72
Rosenberg's Job Self-Esteem	6	475	4.12	.54	.66
Job Complexity	5	473	3.74	.55	.66
Intrinsic Work Motivation	2	488	4.30	.66	.70
Organizational Citizenship	7	468	5.55	.66	.66
General Job Satisfaction	7	466	3.47	.56	.83
Organizational Commitment	9	485	3.45	.71	.89
Organizational Satisfaction	2	488	3.72	.82	.84
Strain	20	469	2.02	.56	.90
Performance--telemarketers	1	116	6.14	5.53	N.A.
Performance--nonexempt	8	188	3.80	.47	.82

Table 1 (continued)

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Estimates

Variables	No. Items	n	Mean	Std Dev	Alpha
<u>Sample Six:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem	10	90	3.98	.54	.87
Beehr's Task Self-Esteem	6	95	4.23	.57	.73
Rosenberg's Job Self-Esteem	3	96	4.28	.52	.72
Job Complexity	5	93	3.95	.51	.66
Intrinsic Work Motivation	2	96	4.27	.61	.83
Organizational Citizenship	7	89	5.33	.80	.85
General Job Satisfaction	7	93	3.66	.60	.83
Organizational Commitment	9	96	3.63	.68	.89
Performance	1	55	1.49	.54	N.A.
Strain	20	96	4.11	1.16	.90
<u>Sample Seven:</u>					
Organization-based Self-Esteem (Time-One)	10	45	4.05	.56	.88
Organization-based Self-Esteem (Time-Two)	10	45	3.89	.66	.93
Chronic Self-Esteem	10	41	3.44	.37	.82
Organizational Satisfaction (Time-One)	1	45	5.14	1.41	N.A.
Organizational Satisfaction (Time-Two)	1	45	5.00	1.33	N.A.
<u>Sample Eight:</u>					
Organization-based Self Esteem	10	22	3.56	.88	.90
Personal-attribution for failure	2	18	2.58	1.90	.90

Correlations

Variables - Phase One	Organization-Based Self-Esteem
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<u>Sample One</u> (Summer School Teachers, n = 32)	
Management Trust	.48**
General Job Satisfaction	.31*
Organizational Commitment	.51**
Organizational Satisfaction	.53**
Organization-Based Self-Esteem (semantic differential scale)	.69**
<u>Sample Two</u> (mining organization, n = 333)	
Job-Autonomy	.42**
Job-Significance	.40**
Experienced Responsibility	.47**
Experienced Meaningfulness	.50**
Internal Work Motivation	.47**
Organizational Commitment	.59**
Organizational Satisfaction	.52**
<u>Sample Three</u> (managers, n = 38)	
Organic-Mechanistic	-.46**
Authoritarian	-.45**
Formality	-.46**
Impersonality	-.52**
Democratic	-.47**
Concern for Control	-.32*
Flexibility	-.54**
Concern for Procedure	-.19

Variables - Phase One

<u>Sample Four:</u> (School District, n = 1426)	
Management Trust	.30**
Organizational Citizenship	.21**
General Job Satisfaction	.58**
Organizational Commitment	.43**
<u>Sample Five:</u> (Clerical, Managers, n = 96)	
Rosenberg's Self-esteem	.54**
Beehr's Self-esteem	.57**
Job Complexity	.43*
Intrinsic Work Motivation	.21**
Organizational Citizenship	.34**
General Job Satisfaction	.40**
Organizational Commitment	.48**
Organizational Identification Satisfaction	.40**
Strain	-.27**
Performance--telemarketers	.11
Performance--nonexempt	.15*
<u>Sample Six:</u> (Automobile Service Club, n = 475)	
Rosenberg's Self-Esteem	.54**
Beehr's Self-Esteem	.57**
Job Complexity	.39**
Intrinsic Work Motivation	.30**
Organizational Citizenship	.26**
General Job Satisfaction	.44**
Organizational Commitment	.60**
Strain	-.25**
Performance	.26*

Variables - Phase One

Organization-Based
Self-Esteem

Sample Seven: (MBA's, n = 45)

Organization-based Self-Esteem (Time1-Time2 Correlation)	.75** (.87**) ¹
Chronic Self-Esteem	.48**
Organizational Satisfaction	.61** ² (.77**) ³

Sample Eight: (Meat Packers, n = 22)

Personal-attribution	-.44*
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*p ≤ .05

**p ≤ .01

¹Controlling for Organizational Change²Time-One auto correlation³Time-Two auto correlation

Figure 1

Summary of hypothesized relationships of organization-based self-esteem to other constructs

