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# **The influence of perceived organisational support and perceived supervisor support on retirement intentions**

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# Background

- Retirement is complex decision – institutional arrangements, personal, familial and professional factors
- Most retirement research from the occupation psychology and HR perspectives has focused on characteristics of the individual (e.g. role identity and work attachment theory), rather than on the nature of the work or social environment of the employee.
- Better understanding of the influence of the organisational environment on individual choices is needed, both in terms of theory development and from a practitioner perspective if they are to encourage extended working life.

## Aims of paper

1. Explore similarities and differences between retirement and turnover.
2. Develop theoretical propositions for investigating perceived organisational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS) and retirement intentions

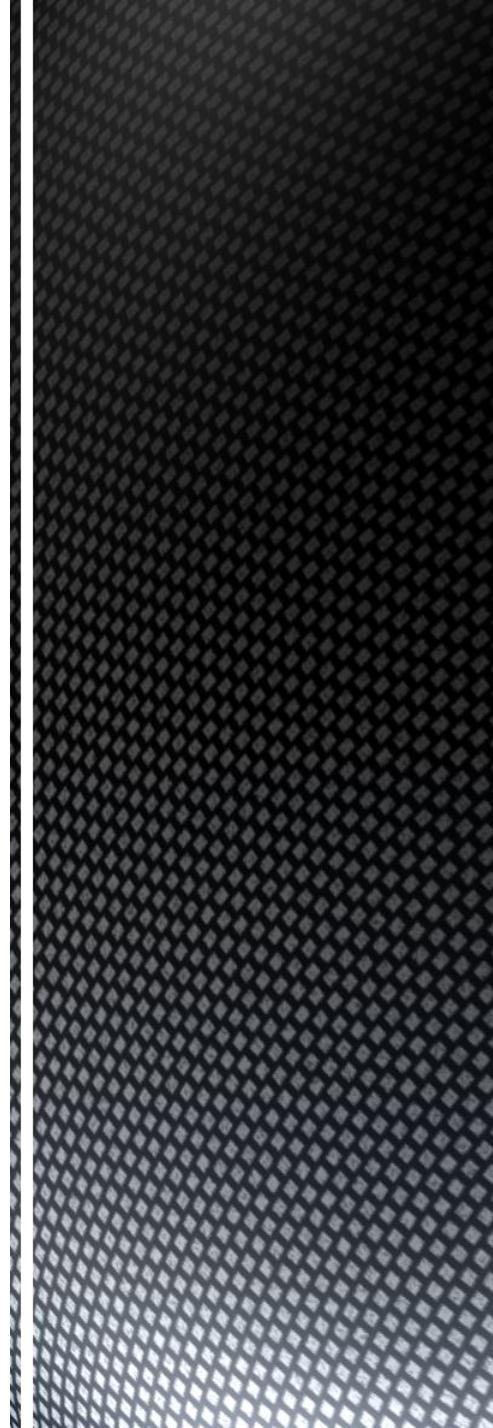
## Turnover and Retirement

	Turnover	Retirement
Withdrawal from job	Yes	Yes
Withdrawal from organisation	Yes	Yes
Withdrawal from profession	No	Yes (?)
Withdrawal from career	No	Yes
Withdrawal from (paid) work itself	No	Yes

# Empirical evidence

- A number of studies have investigated whether retirement and turnover are distinct constructs (Adams & Beehr, 1998; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990; Mündenlein et al., 2013; Schmidt & Lee, 2008)
- Broadly, personal characteristics (financial considerations, age and health) add more to the explanation of retirement intentions (Mündenlein et al., 2013).
- Work characteristics (e.g. job characteristics) better explain turnover intentions than retirement intentions.
- However, organisational motivators can increase older workers' labour market participation.

Organisational support  
and retirement  
intentions



# Perceived organisational support (POS) and turnover intention

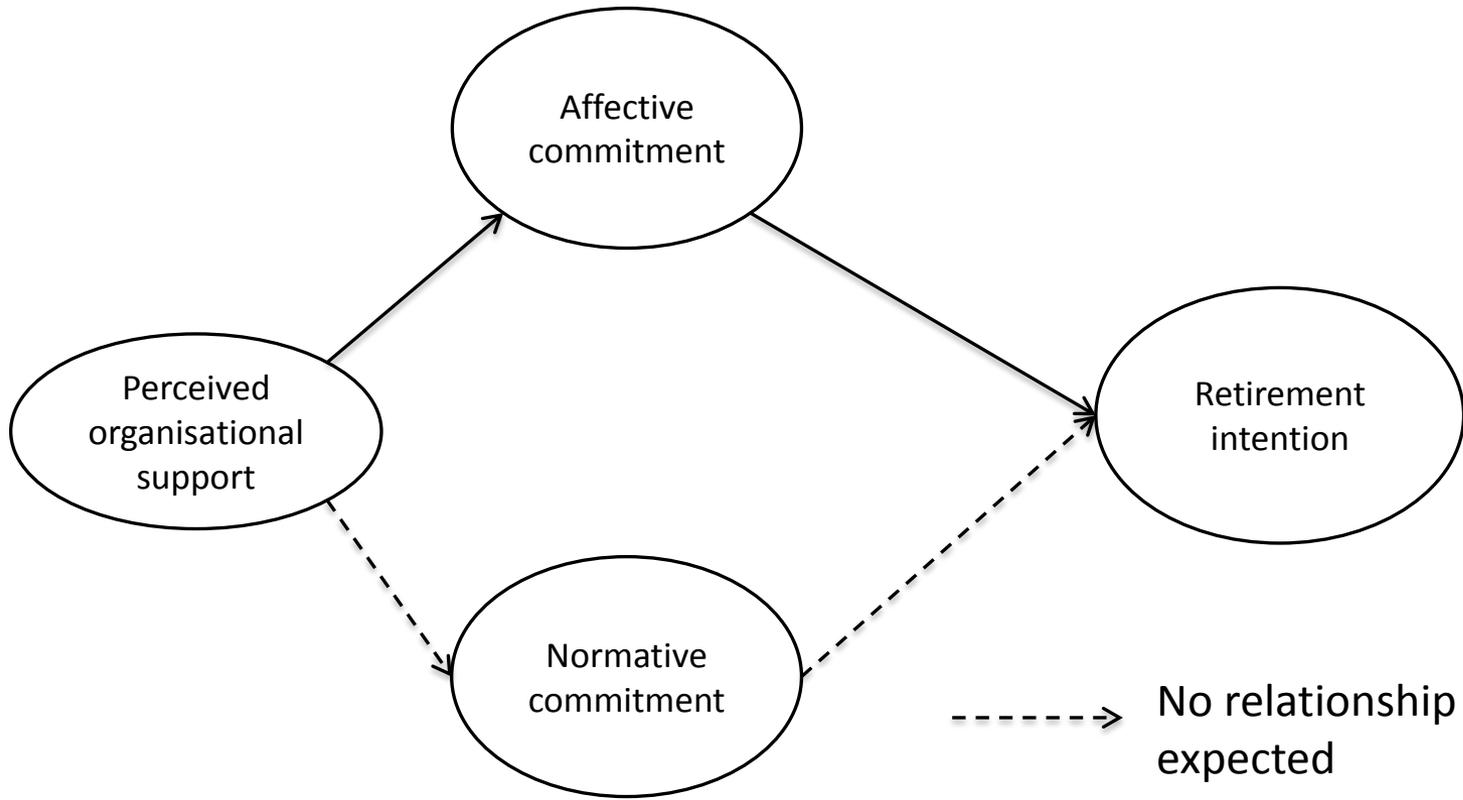
- POS is an employee's global belief concerning the extent to which an employee believes that the organisation values their well-being. Support can be through tangible benefits (e.g. wages) or intangible (care, respect, collegiality).
- Links between POS and turnover intention have been established.
- Causal explanations have been through
  - Affective commitment (Wayne et al 1997; Rhoades et al 2001; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002 and Maertze et al 2007) and Chinese settings (Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011).
  - Reciprocity / social exchange (normative commitment) (Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007)

# Extending perceived organisational support (POS) to retirement intention

- No studies have looked at whether POS is linked to retirement intentions.
- As choices available to older workers increase, it follows that the relationship with the employer will influence decision making.
- Older workers who feel supported by their organisation are more likely to derive positive feelings (affective commitment) and so be motivated to delay retirement (extend working life).
- The reciprocity principle might not apply in a similar manner to retirement intention as to turnover intention due to social expectations of retirement at around age 65.

## Propositions

- **There is a positive relationship between POS and retirement intention.**
- **POS effects on retirement intention will be mediated by affective commitment, but not by normative commitment.**



## Perceived supervisor support (PSS) and turnover intention

- PSS refers to the view that employees develop concerning the degree to which supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being (Kottke and Sharfinska, 1988).
- Two perspectives – support has been found for both in relation to turnover
  - Supervisors embody the organisation itself – employees interpret treatment by their managers as representing the employer more generally.
  - Supervisors engender their own attachments. Commitment, mentoring and coaching and LMX theories suggest that supervisor support. Developed relationships are characterised by support, trust, information sharing, liking, respect and reciprocal influence.

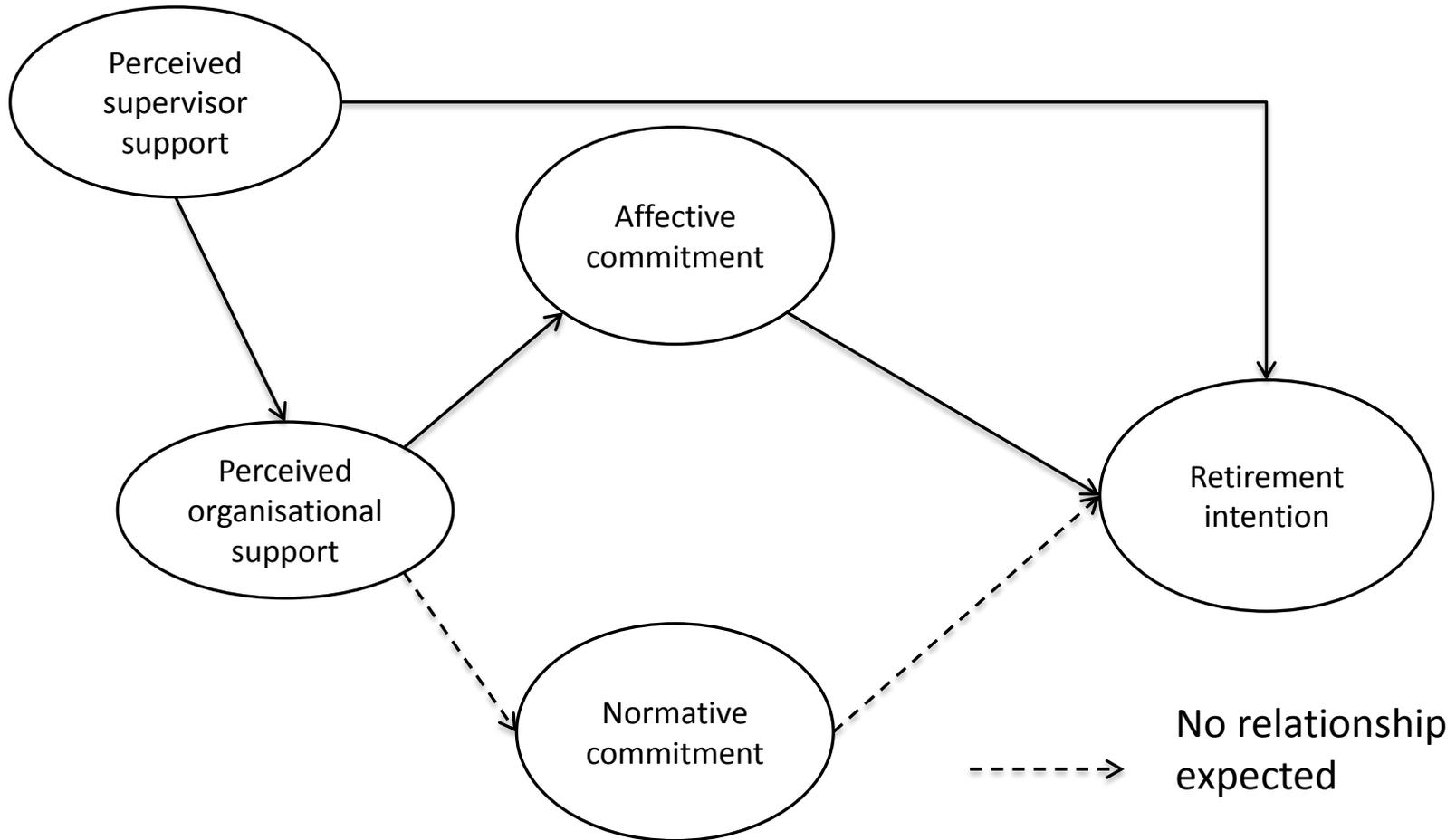
# Extending perceived supervisor support to retirement intentions

- Theoretically, line managers and supervisors have a significant role to play in retirement choices:
  - Availability of alternative working patterns
  - Advice, support, motivation and encouragement of staff (Henkens and van Dalen, 2011)
  - Timing of retirement.
  - Work climate

## **Propositions**

- PSS is positively associated with the retirement intention
- PSS effects on retirement intentions will be partially moderated by POS

# Proposed model



- The life course perspective draws heavily on the education – work - retirement model
- Whilst this still remains strong, the relatively clear markers between work and retirement, symbolised by mandatory retirement ages, have made the meaning more complex
- Employees have to decide *when* to retire and *how*
- *Who decides what 'retirement' is?*

What do we  
mean by  
retirement  
intention?

# Retirement is a fuzzy concept

## Withdrawal

- Move jobs / switch employer (resignation)
- Retire (retirement resignation)
  - Early (pre-65)
  - On time

## Remain 65+

- Extend working life
  - Full time / part time
  - Same or modified form
  - Wind down
- Intention to past state pension age
- Retire 'late' / defer retirement

# Proposition

**The decision to remain is conceptually distinct for older workers (65+) and have different antecedents than for younger workers.**

- Social norms have developed suggesting that the default decision is to retire
- Failure to retire on time can provoke discrimination, prejudice and backlash
- The decision to remain at work, past normal retirement age, can be seen as an 'active' decision, rather than a passive choice.
- As an active choice, the decision of an older worker to retire differs from that of a younger person who stays in the job.