Relationships at Work: Toward a Multidimensional Conceptualization of Dyadic Work Relationships

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Abstract

Work relationships have come to form the very foundation of organizations and the contemporary embodiment of how most work gets accomplished, and there has been increased scholarly interest in this area. Although research has investigated the nature of high-quality and low-quality work relationships, few attempts have taken that next important step in more precisely articulating the actual dimensions that underlie work relationships, how they relate to one another, and how, as contextual background, they frame and influence organizational phenomena. In an effort to help address this gap in our understanding of relationships at work, this study briefly reviews the relevant literature on work relationships, extracting what is currently known about the specific aspects or underlying dimensions of such relationships. Then, the authors introduce an integrative multidimensional conceptualization of dyadic work relationships, which specifies the critical foundational dimensions and processes, and discusses the implications for future theory and research.

Keywords

Work relationships generally refer to patterns of exchanges between two interacting members or partners, whether individuals, groups, or organizations, typically directed at the accomplishment of some common objectives or goals. Although work relationships share many qualities with nonwork relationships, the organizational context of such exchanges makes the study of

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work relationships unique. Work relationships play an integral role in many topics in the organizational sciences, facilitating adaptation (Huy, 2002), differential access to resources (Graen, 1976), citizenship performance (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002), and effective coordination (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006), among other outcomes. However, research relevant to the study of dyadic work relationships is limited in scope (Ragins & Dutton, 2007), and does not articulate the multiple, and integrative, underlying dimensions that frame behavior and outcomes in organizations (for exceptions, see Kahn's, 1998 work on relational systems and research on leader–member exchange or LMX).

The current fragmentation of inquiry threatens the advancement of knowledge and practice regarding work relationships (Kuhn, 1970), potentially resulting in redundant inquiry for some areas, insufficient inquiry for others, and the neglect of potentially important boundary conditions. Acknowledging this deficiency, Ragins and Dutton (2007) argued that the field needed to "build bridges across silos of scholarship" (p. 5), "put relationships to the foreground of organizational studies" (p. 5), and "extend our boundaries of knowledge about relationships in organizations" (p. 6).

Following the call by Ragins and Dutton (2007), we focused on integrating a diverse set of literature for which relationships play a key role. Our first goal in the present article is to provide a brief review of the key theoretical frameworks and content domains that have informed research on work relationships, focusing on *dyadic entities* (i.e., between two actors). Our second goal is to provide a framework for future research that identifies key underlying dimensions and processes of relationships, and provides implications for attitudinal and behavioral processes and outcomes in organizations. In particular, we propose that work relationship dimensions differentially influence the quality of relational interactions, and resultant outcomes.

Furthermore, the dimensions and processes underlying work relationships should function similarly across multiple levels. Specifically, although the majority of our reviewed research focuses on dyads involving two people, the central tenets of our conceptualization can be applied to the relationship dimensions and stages at various levels of dyadic work relationships, as long as the level is similar between entities (e.g., person to person, group to group, or organization to organization). Accordingly, we propose an integrative multidimensional conceptualization of dyadic work relationships designed to provide guidance for future research across multiple levels.

Dyadic Work Relationships

In this section, several topical literatures are examined with regard to the status of our knowledge regarding the dimensions of dyadic work relationships.

Leader–Member Exchange

The notion that leaders develop unique relationships with individual followers marked a significant departure from traditional leadership theories of the time, and offered a valuable framework for studying both leadership and organizational relationships. It is safe to conclude that LMX research has not been wanting for definitions, measures, or models regarding dimensionality. Dienesch and Liden (1986) highlighted the need for a more structured theoretical basis for LMX, and proposed a multidimensional framework for the construct. Their dimensions of mutual affect, contribution, and loyalty reflected a concept the authors labeled "mutuality," in an effort to underscore the reciprocal nature of the relationship.

Soon after, Graen and Scandura (1987) presented a thorough and systematic discussion of the LMX domain, offering a two-dimensional framework for the construct: quality (i.e., reflecting the attitudinal components of loyalty, trust, and support between dyadic members) and coupling, which, according to Schriesheim, Castro, and Cogliser (1999), addresses the behavioral elements of influence, delegation, latitude, and innovativeness. Schriesheim et al. (1999) identified six subdomains of the LMX construct that appeared to emerge consistently over that time: mutual support, trust, liking, latitude, attention, and loyalty. Although Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) reiterated their conclusion that a single dimension of LMX was still appropriate and empirically justified, they and others (Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992) offered the dimensions of respect, trust, and obligation as the most appropriate sub-factors, should a one-dimensional conceptualization not be pursued.

Liden and Maslyn (1998) demonstrated empirical support for a four-dimension model, which included Dienesch and Liden's (1986) affect, loyalty, and contribution facets, but added a dimension of professional respect to the construct domain (see also, Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). In sum, LMX research over the years has identified and discussed the following potential dimensions of work relationships: Affect, loyalty, contribution, professional respect, support, trust, attention, obligation, influence, delegation, latitude, and innovativeness. Interestingly, even though Liden and Maslyn (1998) operationalized affect/liking as a dimension of relationships, previous research positioned affect/liking as an antecedent to work relationship quality (Wayne & Ferris, 1990). These results may be consistent with one another, as affect/liking not only may be critical in formation of high LMX relationships but also may be salient for maintenance of the relationship.

Employee–Organization Relationships

Theory and research on employee–organization relationships (EOR) has grown considerably in recent years as evidenced by meta-analyses published on perceived organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and psychological contracts (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). However, "[a] general characteristic of the overall body of research . . . is that it has been by-and-large somewhat piecemeal." (Shore et al., 2004: 359). Despite the piecemeal nature of the research, and the complexity of the contextual environment, common themes emerge across the EOR literature with regard to work relationships, including use of the psychological contract metaphor, a focus on obligations and entitlements, concern for the nature of the exchange (i.e., both the process and the "currency" exchanged), and the role of reciprocity in the relationship. Additionally, the issue of mutuality (i.e., agreement between dyadic members about the nature of the relationship and its specific terms) also emerged as a fundamental element describing the relationship.

Psychological contract metaphor. Rousseau (1989: 123) defined the psychological contract as "an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party." The key elements, whether stated or implied, for such a contract include perceived promises and perceived mutuality. The psychological contract stands in contrast to other types of contracts (i.e., legal, social, normative, implied) in that it is based on an individual-level perception, focuses on mutual obligations, and offers an explicit description of the exchange relationship between the employee and the employer (Shore et al., 2004).

Obligations and entitlements. At its core, any contractual or reciprocal relationship is based on the perceived or actual obligations and entitlements that derive from an employment relationship. This represents how an employee and organizational agent define "the deal," and whether or

not either one feels that "the deal" has been honored or violated (McLean Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher, 1998).

The issue of obligations and entitlements in work relationships is grounded in March and Simon's (1958) inducements–contributions model, which states that the organization offers incentives or inducements in return for inputs or contributions on the part of the employee. Lack of perceived balance (i.e., exchange inequity) in this relationship can predict conflict (Pondy, 1967), lower organizational commitment (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998), and turnover as employees seek equity. Herriot, Manning, and Kidd (1997) shed light on dimensions of employee–organization relationships, finding that managers tend to focus more on intangible terms of the employment relationship (e.g., humanity and recognition), whereas the workers tended to focus on tangible elements, such as fair pay, safe conditions, and job security (i.e., analogous to instrumentality).

Nature of the exchange. In addition to the inducement–contribution model (March & Simon, 1958), the dyadic employment relationship concept exhibits ties to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). For example, Foa and Foa (1976) offered a list of six different exchange resources (i.e., love, status, information, money, goods, and services) described by their positioning across two dimensional axes: universalistic versus particularistic and concreteness versus symbolic. This conceptualization has gone largely unvalidated and has been replaced by some others models. For example, Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007) identified three fundamental aspects to social exchange: relationship, reciprocity, and the actual exchange.

One fundamental issue raised by Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007) is that the organizational agent in the dyadic exchange relationship often is not defined. Individuals do not, in reality, enter into an exchange agreement with the "organization," as the EOR model would suggest. Rather, the representative of the organization (i.e., typically the immediate supervisor) is the dyadic partner with whom the employee interacts. As such, managers play an important role in shaping the psychological contract on behalf of the organization (cf. Huy, 2002). Because of this, scholars have recommended moving from a psychological contract metaphor to a "relationship" metaphor, which highlights the importance of the dyadic exchange. Additionally, an interactive approach has been recommended, with increased emphasis on both the context of what is exchanged and the process of how the exchange takes place (Shore et al., 2004).

The role of reciprocity. Although some scholars (e.g., Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2004; Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007) have recently argued for a decreased emphasis on the norm of reciprocity in employment relationship research, it continues to be a consistent thread running through most relationship conceptualizations. For example, Sparrowe and Liden (1997) presented three underlying dimensions of reciprocal relationships to explain the influence of interest on reciprocity in a leadership context. Their dimensions included "immediacy of returns" (e.g., the timing between the initial good or service offered and the repayment), "equivalence of returns" (e.g., reflecting the similarity in value of the exchange), and "interest" (e.g., reflecting the nature of the member's involvement). The final dimension of interest was further delineated into self-interest, mutual interest, and interest in (concern for) the other. Shore et al. (2004), in their expansive review of the EOR literature, identified the two key dyadic dimensions of such relationships as mutuality and reciprocity.

Mentoring

Another area of scholarship that focuses on work relationships is mentoring. As Liang and Grossman (2007: 242) have corroborated, "little research has explicitly focused on the process

of mentoring." Overall, then, the mentoring process is a dyadic exchange/process relationship through which the mentor and the protégé exchange information, knowledge, support, and resources (Young & Perrewé, 2000a). Kram (1983) suggested that career development and psychological support were the two broad categories of mentoring functions. They posited that there are numerous roles that can be played by a mentor in the development of a protégé: coaching, sponsorship, protection, providing visibility and challenging assignments, role modeling, counseling and advice giving, friendship, social needs, parenting function, and providing acceptance and confirmation.

In their discussion of mentor and protégé relationships in the PhD student development process, Ferris, Perrewé, and Buckley (2009) outlined a number of important dyadic relationship dimensions that typify effective mentoring relationships: trust, commitment, loyalty, accountability, flexibility, and support. They further posited that mutual respect and positive regard are essential to successful mentoring relationships. In characterizing the tone and setting of such work relationships, Ferris et al. (2009) stated,

> We also balance out the delicate tensions or dilemmas in accountability of creativity vs. conformity. We want to create a structured and temporally-sensitive context that regulates activity on a consistent schedule of progression, yet is flexible and open enough to encourage creativity and innovation – sort of an environment of "structured flexibility." (p. 280)

Allen and Eby (2007) proposed an interesting argument in terms of the development of effective dyadic mentoring relationships. They argued that the key attribute of effective dyadic mentoring relationships is that they "fulfill the need to belong . . . a need fulfilled through affiliation and acceptance from others" (p. 399). Developing the need to belong appears to require that individuals experience frequent positive interaction and an affective relationship between the mentor and protégé (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and "that is what makes mentoring relationships a powerful agent for individual growth and well-being" (Allen & Eby, 2007: 399). This fits in well with the core finding that the presence of interpersonal comfort and trust tends to facilitate effective mentoring relationships (Young & Perrewé, 2000b).

Research to date in this area has provided a good characterization of the activities and behaviors that transpire in mentoring relationships. However, although many issues have been investigated in the nature of mentoring relationships, there has been no explicitly stated focus of interest in the underlying dimensions of such work relationships.

Social Networks

In a social network approach, behavior is enabled or constrained by patterns of interconnected relationships. The basic unit of analysis is a dyadic relationship between two actors, but, social networks can include a theoretically infinite number of relationships spanning multiple levels. A social network approach classifies individual actors as nodes, and relationships between actors are represented by ties. In perhaps the seminal conceptualization on ties, Granovetter (1973: 1360) proposed that tie strength is based on "the amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy (mutual confiding), and reciprocal services which characterize the tie." He suggested that ties provide information and influence resources by serving as a bridge between different social groups, a concept advanced by social capital theory (e.g., Coleman, 1988). Empirically, Bian (1997) found that weak ties provide better access to information, whereas strong ties

provide better access to influence, and he noted that trust and mutual obligation characterize strong ties between actors.

Some social network researchers have considered the overlap between psychological and sociological approaches to relationships (Krackhardt & Brass, 1994). For example, Sparrowe and Liden (1997) applied LMX theory to social networks, proposing that the social structure of networks readily describes the relational context between a leader and members. Consistent with their theory, Sparrowe and Liden (2005) found that subordinates, particularly those with a high-LMX relationship, gleaned influence when their immediate leaders sponsored them (i.e., shared network contact with them), especially when their leaders were themselves high in advice network centrality.

Recent social network research that has integrated a psychological perspective on relationships has focused on trust networks. Interestingly, this research has revealed that the trust a person has in a target individual is influenced by the extent to which a third party trusts the target individual. The importance of third parties on dyadic relationships, introduced by Georg Simmel (1908/1950), and also discussed by Heider (1958), has been extended by Krackhardt and Kilduff (2002). These researchers documented the importance of triads by showing that dyadic relationships are strengthened when both parties of the dyad share a contact with a third person. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that trust between coworkers is strengthened when both members of the dyad trust the same third coworker (Ferrin, Dirks, & Shah, 2006). Similarly, coworkers tend to trust peers who are trusted by their immediate leader (Lau & Liden, 2008).

Relationship Science

General and social psychology had a significant, and complementary, effect on dyadic relationship theory through the field of relationship science. Relationship science seeks to understand laws governing individuals' interactions with each other, or the influence each person's behavior exerts on his or her partner's behavior (Berscheid, 1999). Thus, the issue of a relationship, and the object of study, is the oscillating rhythm of influence observed in the interactions of two people. Researchers have highlighted the adaptive value of social relationships, and that the "need to belong" motivates individuals to form and maintain at least a minimum number of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000).

Research on emotion has demonstrated links between the emotion-eliciting power of situations and their relationship context. Indeed, there is little about a relationship that can be understood without understanding its affective tone, and the emotions and feelings, the partners experience in their association with each other (e.g., Bowlby, 1979; Clark & Watson, 1988). This connection can be explained by Berscheid and Ammazzalorso's (2001) emotion-in-relationships model, according to which expectancy violations are the cause of the emotion.

In association with work relationships, research on relationships has provided support for the dimension of trust, which has been a focus of longstanding research (e.g., Bowlby, 1982; Holmes, 1991). Holmes (1991) and colleagues have demonstrated that examining the individual's security and trust orientation within a specific relationship helps clarify the dynamics of interaction of that relationship. In particular, "attitudes of trust reflect people's abstract positive expectations that they can count on partners to care for them and be responsive to their needs, now and in the future" (Holmes, Remple, & Ashmore, 1989: 188). Their theory predicts that

highly trusting partners can assimilate negative information about their partner without impairing their trust (Murray & Holmes, 1993).

Positive Connections/Relationships at Work

The positive organizational behavior perspective (e.g., Luthans, 2002) also has contributed to the study of work relationships in the area of positive connections. A connection represents an encounter between dyadic parties that can be brief and short-term, or enduring. Whether brief or long-lasting, connections can be marked by vitality, mutuality, and positive (high quality) or negative (low quality) regard based on the degree of attention paid to respecting the dignity of the dyadic partner (Ragins & Dutton, 2007). Developing high-quality connections at work has significant implications for the achievement of both individual and organizational outcomes. Conversely, the incivility of low-quality connections can be damaging to individuals and ultimately to organizations (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

High-quality connections accompany positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. Roberts (2007) described mutuality as possessing four dimensions: mutual benefit, mutual influence, mutual expectation, and mutual understanding. These types of work relationships yield benefits for all involved, and for the organization in which these individuals are involved. The development, nurturance, commitment, and enabling of these positive, mutual work relationships are influenced by trust, which must be present for high-quality connections to occur. As noted by Pratt and Dirks (2007: 117): "Trust is central to all positive relationships."

In addition to the interpersonal variables that influence work relationships, there are a series of work-related dimensions that influence the development of meaningful connections at work. According to Kahn (2007), work dimensions that facilitate positive work relationships are: task accomplishment, career development, sense making, provision of meaning, and personal support. Blatt and Camden (2007) suggested that essential to the development of work relationships is the establishment of a sense of community at work, which is defined as a situation where people feel a sense of belonging at work, and they feel that they matter to each other and to the organization. Also, Settoon and Mossholder (2002) identified the three dimensions of coworker support, trust, and perspective taking (i.e., which appears to be synonymous with empathy), which they found predictive of interpersonal citizenship behavior.

Conclusions Regarding Dimensions of Work Relationships

Our review reveals that several underlying work relationship dimensions have been proposed in the literature. Liden et al. (1997) reported four dimensions that comprised the LMX relationship: Affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect. Other research also has supported the importance of support (e.g., Burleson, 1990; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kahn, 1998; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), trust (e.g., McAllister, 1995; Sheppard & Sherman, 1998), empathy (e.g., Davis, 1994; Davis & Kraus, 1991; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Granovetter, 1973; Kahn, 1998), accessibility, attention, and compassion (Kahn, 1998). Figure 1 highlights common work relationship dimensions and their sources in the reviewed literature.

This research provides a good start, but Ferris, Munyon, Basik, and Buckley (2008), in their review and critical analysis of the social, emotional, cognitive, political, and relationship context of performance evaluation, argued that future research and theory development needs to more precisely articulate a set of work relationship dimensions, and delineate their specific

Literature	Leader-Member Exchange	Mentoring	Positive Connections	Social Networks	Relationship Science	Employee-Organization Relationships
Trust	▦	▦	▦	▦	▦	▦
Support	▦	▦				▦
Affect	▦		▦		▦	
Loyalty	▦					
Accountability		▦				
Instrumentality	▦		▦	▦		▦
Respect	▦					
Flexibility		▦				

Dimension Present in the Reviewed Literature	▦

Figure 1. Work relationship dimensions in the reviewed literature

features and interconnections. As noted earlier, multiple theories inform the development and dimensions of work relationships. The purpose of the following section is to integrate theory and research on relationships and their dimensions, as they influence the evolution and development of work relationships.

Integrative Model of Work Relationships and Dimensions

Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) developed a model of relationship formation between business buyers and sellers based in social exchange and contract frameworks. Their model proposed that relationships develop, and ultimately end, in five phases: (a) awareness, (b) exploration, (c) expansion, (d) commitment, and (e) dissolution. This is similar to Kram's (1983) model of mentor–mentee relationship development, in which she emphasized the phases of (a) initiation, (b) cultivation, (c) separation, and (d) redefinition. Although the context of our discussion is broader than buyer–seller relations or mentoring, the Dwyer et al. (1987) and Kram (1983) models provide a useful organizing framework that is readily adaptable to our current discussion.

In particular, both models propose that the initial phase of relationship development is marked by a search for information between two individuals regarding the potential instrumentality of social exchanges. It is during this phase that expectations concerning the quality of the future relationship are formed. Such expectations, based largely on the dimensions of affect, perceived similarity, and respect, tend to be remarkably valid as they are consistently correlated

with perceptions of relationship quality in the weeks and months following the initial encounter (Liden, Erdogan, & Bauer, 2006; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). Second, both models propose a subsequent phase marked by the negotiation of dyadic roles and role identities (cf. Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). In this stage, individuals may seek out information on the behavioral consistency, continued instrumentality, and affect toward an individual that contributes to the formation of the trust and respect relationship dimensions.

Individuals also may begin to provide support and empathy that supplements relational instrumentality. Next, relationships are often marked by change. Flexibility then becomes important as prior social exchanges are modified by individuals in the dyad, or from external forces (e.g., career moves). The final stage of relationship development is marked by the presence of mutual accountability, where individuals help maintain each other's role identities, and encourage behavioral consistency (e.g., Frink et al., 2008; Frink & Klimoski, 1998). These stages and associated relationship dimensions are captured in Figure 2.

This model describes the relationship stages from an initial interaction to an established relationship. Although relationships may be of high quality based on expectations formed during the initial encounter, at each stage in the model, new dimensions enter the relationship as a function of prior experiences and met or unmet expectations, and dimensions change in importance. In the typical situation in which parties enter into relationships voluntarily, expectations of low-quality relationships at initial encounter stage should be rare, as most parties would simply end their pursuit of a continued relationship with the other party at this point (albeit, sometimes low-quality relationships persist because the structure and design of work preclude simply terminating a relationship because it is not high in quality). However, relationships that are expected to be of moderate to high quality will disintegrate into low-quality relationships with repeated instances of unmet expectations. Conversely, relationships expected to be of moderate quality may transcend to high quality when expectations are exceeded.

Certainly, relationships have the potential to terminate. However, because the presentation is concerned with how relationships differ in quality, the main focus is on the stages and dimensions of relationships rather than dissolution, thus discussing each stage in order of their appearance in a relationship. Although the stages are best defined in isolation, we also explore the salience of the way in which stages influence one another or interact. That being said, we do at least briefly address issues concerning relationship dissolution and/or redefinition in a later section.

Stage 1: Initial Interaction

Relationships may be based either on economic or social exchange (Blau, 1964). Economic exchanges are quid pro quo arrangements in which money or other tangible resources are exchanged between parties based on an explicit agreement. We contend that economic exchanges are most common at the initial interaction stage when the relationship is not voluntary for at least one party of the dyad (e.g., a new employee who had no other job offers and was essentially forced to accept a less than desirable job). Conversely, when both parties voluntarily enter a relationship, the initial encounters between parties are guided by the degree of mutual attraction (see Huston & Levinger, 1978 for a review). Affect may be especially important in initial interactions when newcomers have multiple job offers, and superiors have power in making selection decisions. However, when these conditions are not present, initial interaction is more likely based on institutional or managerial forces, and an economic exchange will guide the relationship.
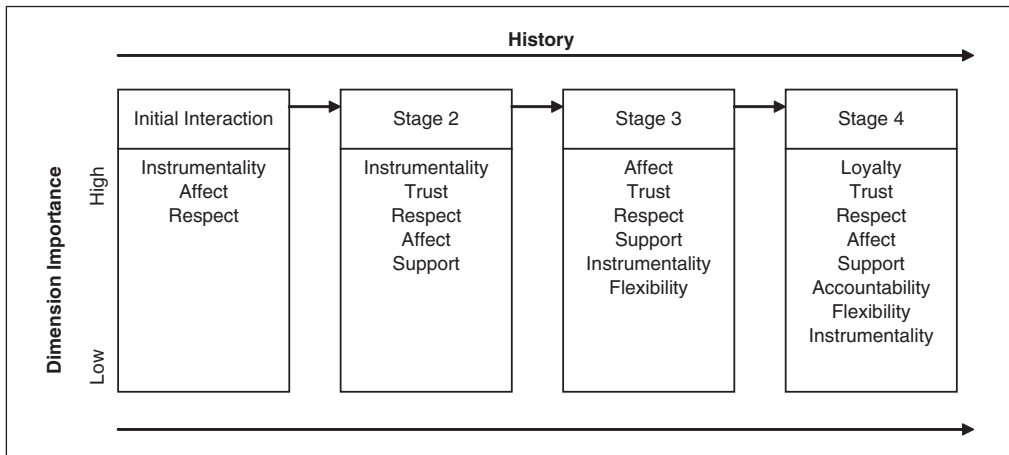
Figure 2. Work relationship stages and dimensions

New voluntary relationships are those most likely to be marked by the relational dispositions of participants. For example, attachment theory (e.g., Nelson & Quick, 1991) suggests that individuals exhibit one of three attachment styles that influence the quantity and quality of relationships in which they engage. Next, social/interpersonal influence theory suggests that individuals approach one another from differing positions of social status and power. The cooperation and competition thesis (Deutsch, 1949) suggests that individuals approach a relationship with an emphasis on goal attainment and congruence. What is common among these theories is an early relational emphasis on the perceived costs and benefits of social exchanges, thus, instrumentality is particularly important.

Instrumentality refers to the relative value an individual perceives from a dyadic relationship, whether it be an economic or a social exchange (cf. Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995). When parties of a dyad enter the relationship voluntarily, social exchanges are based on little information and no history. Consequently, the quality of relationships at this stage is based on expectations of the relationship in the future. In addition, participants in a social exchange may be seeking ways to establish or maintain important role identities within the workplace (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Thus, instrumentality also refers to the identity-bolstering characteristics and potential of a given relationship, both of which will differ based on the relational dispositions of individuals in a dyad.

Stage 2: Development and Expansion of Roles

Relationships based on social exchange, which are destined to strengthen the high quality of the relationship through met expectations, continue to develop through an expansion of roles, and the formation of a relational identity (cf. Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), which are consistent with Kram's (1983) and Dwyer et al.'s (1987) cultivation and exploration stages, respectively. In this stage of a relationship, the members of the dyad gather additional information concerning each other that cues the development of initial evaluative judgments concerning past and future behaviors. These probability statements are marked by the relationship dimensions of trust

(i.e., expectancies toward the future) and respect (i.e., positive judgments of past exchanges). This stage also expands the criteria with which individuals judge one another. Thus, we evaluate how well we like other individuals, and their potential for providing additional types of social exchanges, including support in its various forms.

Trust. Trust generally refers to a belief that one can place confidence and/or faith in the fairness, honesty, and integrity of another person. Therefore, trust essentially implies predictability of another's behavior, and the quiescence associated with such predictability. As such, trust arguably is the most critical feature of virtually any kind of dyadic relationship, including work relationships (e.g., Fisher & Brown, 1988), and thus, could represent a necessary but not sufficient condition for relationship effectiveness.

Although trust has been the focus of considerable research over the years, Simpson (2007) argued that, despite its obvious importance, little work has examined how and why trust develops, how it is maintained in relationships, and how it sometimes deteriorates. Sheppard and Sherman (1998) suggested that trust is critically important for establishing and maintaining an effective relationship, and Fisher and Brown (1988: 107) said trust might be "the single most important element of a good working relationship." McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998) argued that an individual's previous reputation affects trust development in new relationships, whereby trust formation is facilitated by favorable reputations, and impeded by unfavorable reputations. Additionally, trust has been found typically to also include empathy in relationships (e.g., Sheppard & Sherman, 1998).

Respect. In some ways, the dimensions of trust and respect appear to be similar, because both reflect holding another in high regard, and thus demonstrating esteem or positive feeling. However, respect also may involve demonstrating that esteem and high regard through deference and showing consideration. Therefore, like trust, respect generally is viewed as one of the most central dimensions of an effective relationship, and we typically see marriages fail when these two elements are lost, rendering it virtually impossible to rebuild. In the context of work relationships, respect likely is to be accentuated by, and influence feelings of, affect toward another, as well.

Affect. The relationship dimension of affect refers to a feeling or emotion conveying positive regard, and usually is used synonymously with the term *liking*. Affect has been consistently shown to drive attraction (Byrne, 1971), and appears to be so central to interpersonal relationships that it serves both as an antecedent (e.g., Wayne & Ferris, 1990) and enduring aspect (Liden et al., 1993) of relationship quality.

Support. In concept, support refers to the act of upholding, giving faith and confidence to, or otherwise corroborating another person (i.e., in a work relationship). In practice, support can take quite different forms, ranging from psychosocial and emotional types of support, to financial support, through provision of resources, and so forth (e.g., Nelson & Quick, 1991). As such, support shares similarities, and works collaboratively, with loyalty by essentially reflecting the behavioral action component of loyalty.

Support also includes the concept of empathy, or the emotional reaction of one person to comprehend the perspective of another person, in ways that allow for understanding of that other person's situation, constraints, challenges, and opportunities (Duan & Hill, 1996). Empathy can be an effective element in two-person interactions because both the choice of situationally appropriate behavior to demonstrate, as well as the interpretation of behaviors received from the other party, are substantially affected by one or both person's ability to empathize with the other. Also, empathy has been found to be positively associated with the qualities

of interpersonal communication (Davis & Kraus, 1991), trust (McAllister, 1995; Sheppard & Sherman, 1998) and feelings of concern toward others and helping behavior (Davis, 1994; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987).

Although our focus is on the development and maintenance of high-quality relationships, it is important to note that some relationships, especially those that are involuntary, are of lower quality, which are typically based on economic exchange. Although many low-quality relationships dissolve (Bauer, Erdogan, Liden, & Wayne, 2006), individuals may choose to maintain a low-quality relationship (Graen & Scandura, 1987), or be forced to cope with one when change is not possible. One significant contribution of the LMX literature is its proposal that relational quality is a function of scarce resources (e.g., Liden et al., 1997). Consequently, some individuals will be disposed to maintain informal, low-quality relationships that never grow beyond simple economic exchanges. Indeed, the level of effort put into relationships by dyadic partners varies widely (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

Stage 3: Expansion and Commitment

In what Dwyer et al. (1987) labeled the expansion and commitment stage, relational participants begin to see one another not simply as a means to an end, but rather, as the end in itself (cf. Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, the instrumentality of a given relationship dramatically falls away in the face of affect, which begins to dominate the relationship. The dimensions of trust, respect, and support continue in importance as critical conditions of relational quality. However, over time, relationships are marked by changing conditions, a point noted by Kram (1983). These transitions require flexibility by one or both participants to adapt to external pressures.

The capacity (and willingness) to be tractable, adjustable, and modifiable (i.e., the opposite of rigidity and incapability of change) reflect what is meant by the relationship dimension of flexibility. Flexibility has several subdimensions of the entire construct domain, but for our interest as a salient dimension of dyadic work relationships, we focus on cognitive and social flexibility, which refer to ways that individuals process information, and deal with issues of incompatibility and disagreement. Flexibility in relationships refers to compromise and negotiation that is associated with individuals' tendencies to demonstrate cognitive and social innovativeness. Because of its importance in resolving disputes, flexibility is a critical quality of healthy relationships.

Stage 4: Increased Interpersonal Commitment

This stage in relationships, characterized by met expectations, is marked by an increasing commitment to one another as each relationship participant relies on the other for continued social exchanges, support, and their shared relational identity (cf. Dwyer et al., 1987). In this stage, continued transitions and changes may be buffered by the increasing importance of loyalty to one another. We propose that this relational loyalty dimension may even supersede affect in importance as the characteristics of the relationship become more important than participants' liking or disliking of each other. In this regard, the relational identity of the system can supersede the individual desirability of one or both partners (cf. Sluss & Ashforth, 2007).

Loyalty and commitment. In interpersonal relationships at work, loyalty and commitment reflect public backing of one another, which is critical to healthy relationships because it reflects allegiance or faithfulness to each other. As demonstrated empirically by Liden and Maslyn (1998), loyalty overlaps considerably with trust.

Accountability. Although typically defined as being held answerable for one's actions in legal or contractual terms, accountability is a salient dimension of interpersonal relationships (Frink & Klimoski, 1998), as it reflects meeting the expectations tied to maintaining high-quality relationships. The objective with respect to accountability in work relationships is to establish the proper degree. If accountability is designed to channel and shape behavior in desired and organizationally prescribed directions, then it needs to be calibrated optimally to do so, thus implying nonlinearity in this process. If not enough accountability is imposed in the relationship, then there are no parameters to contain and guide behavior in order to maintain goal direction. On the other hand, if too much accountability is imposed, individuals may demonstrate reactance against the increased behavioral or outcome control (e.g., Frink et al., 2008). Thus, too much and too little accountability can produce dysfunctional consequences.

Although our model presented in Figure 2 presents relationship dimensions at each stage in rank order indicating degree of importance, this ranking should be interpreted as reflecting the most common order. There certainly will be variability in the relative importance of the dimensions across dyads. Using the example from the LMX literature, some leader-follower relationships may be dominated by affect across the life of the relationship, whereas others remain focused on the work itself (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). However, like accountability, there is an optimal degree of affect for healthy work relationships, whereby too much or too little can prove problematic. We discuss this issue in greater detail below.

Other Relationship Features

Time. Appeals for research on the nature and conceptualization of time in organizational research have suggested that such efforts will yield greater understanding of behavior in organizations (e.g., Ancona, Okhuysen, & Perlow, 2001; George & Jones, 2000). Time is the system we use for measuring duration or continuance, and it is of importance to our discussion because work relationships do not remain static and unchangeable. Although some grow more than others, all relationships are destined to change as they evolve over time (Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008). Thus, it is critical for researchers to ask, "Once trust is established in a relationship, what are the determinants of the trust being maintained over time versus being lost?" Also, if trust is lost, can time repair the damage, and rejuvenate trust (Dirks, Lewicki, & Zaheer, 2009)?

We need to identify the processes by which trust is built in new relationships, how long it takes, and what behaviors by the dyadic members are perceived and interpreted in ways that build trust. Stage models of trust have focused on how trust evolves throughout the life of work relationships between parties, and with added strength over time, trust tends to become more robust to trust violations (e.g., Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). However, and interestingly, these authors reported that whereas manager communication style and relationship quality have been strong predictors of trust, length of relationship alone has not.

We also need to better understand the types of information, expectations for behavior, and so forth that are transmitted to newcomers in organizations, which can affect the early development and emergence of work relationships (e.g., Liden et al., 1993; Morrison, 2002). Relationship development can be facilitated (or inhibited) by the accurate transmission of information and expectations for appropriate behaviors in the relationship, including the degree of ethical behavior and trustworthiness to exhibit.

Distance. The relationship dimension of distance refers to the quality of closeness or separation in space and time, and it can be reflected in the two concepts of physical distance and

psychological distance. In work relationships, physical distance might be reflected in how closely two people work in terms of physical location, which has been termed "spatial distance" (i.e., Ferris, Judge, Rowland, & Fitzgibbons, 1994) and "supervisor's opportunity to observe subordinate's performance" (i.e., Judge & Ferris, 1993) in work relationship research.

Psychological distance refers to the closeness or separation of the perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of two people, usually measured through the use of a Euclidean distance measure, or a profile similarity or matching process. Although both these aspects of distance are important components, Napier and Ferris (1993) argued that "functional distance" is the concept that is most important for relationships to be productive. They construed functional distance as the optimal degree of psychological distance that allows the supervisor to maintain objectivity, and be more dispassionate in providing guidance, and even discipline, when it is considered necessary for the effectiveness of the relationship.

Finally, Antonakis and Atwater (2002) discussed distance in a leadership context. Originally postulated by Katz and Kahn (1978), leader distance refers to physical distance, perceived social distance, and perceived interaction frequency of leaders with members (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). The distinction of leader distance is important because it reflects the vantage with which leaders process information and evaluate member outcomes. Although initial research has shown LMX–outcome relationships to be unaffected by distance (Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999), research is needed to evaluate the generalizability of this effect.

Dissolution and/or redefinition. Like any type of relationship, work relationships are not without their ups, downs, and changes. Throughout the development of a work relationship, issues and circumstances (e.g., instrumentality decreases substantially; loss of trust) arise that could impact the nature of the established relationship, which could result in dissolution. In this case, relationship dissolution would be more voluntary in nature. Involuntary relationship dissolution also could occur through the termination, promotion, or transfer of an employee.

On the other hand, relationship redefinition has been discussed in the mentoring literature (Ferris et al., 2009; Kram, 1983). One form of redefinition can be characterized by an increased development of mutual respect and affect dimensions that replaces the prior work relationship with friendship (Ferris et al., 2009). However, another form of relationship redefinition takes place in the presence of significant hostility and resentment (Kram, 1983), which can result in a lower-quality work relationship based primarily on instrumentality, which is very transactional in nature.

History, Prior Information, and Reputation

Although it is conceivable that individuals enter a work relationship with no prior information about each other, in most cases, information is transmitted formally or informally to each member regarding the norms, expectations, styles, and so forth regarding the new work relationship (e.g., Morrison, 2002). Some of that information may take the form of a prior history of interactions between the two members, and other information may involve reputations of one or both members of the dyad. Reputation has been defined as a

> [P]erceptual identity formed from the collective perceptions of others, which is reflective of the complex combination of personal characteristics and accomplishments, demonstrated behavior, and intended images presented over some period of time as observed directly or reported from secondary sources, which reduces ambiguity and unexpected future behavior. (Ferris, Blass, Douglas, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2003: 215).

It has been demonstrated that new relationships may be evaluated based on comparisons with previous relationships (Ritter & Lord, 2007). When a new work relationship materializes, information concerning the reputation of one's dyadic partner, as well as comparisons with previous partners, can create behavioral expectations and affect initial trust calculations, which influence the development and maintenance of the relationship. Favorable personal reputations typically are viewed as more legitimate, competent, and trustworthy, and individuals possessing such reputations often enjoy the benefits of possessing higher status (e.g., Bromley, 1993). Additionally, such favorable personal reputations are more likely to receive benefits associated with favorable social exchange relationships than those with less favorable reputations (Emler, 1990). In turn, such positive relationship interactions allow for the accumulation of decision latitude, autonomy (Ferris et al., 2003), influence, power (Pfeffer, 1992), and increased performance (Hochwarter, Ferris, Zinko, Arnell, & James, 2007).

Relationship Interaction Style

The composite of personal characteristics, backgrounds, experience, and so forth that each individual brings to the work relationship reflects the general style of interaction they employ, which can influence the nature and quality of the interactions, as well as the development of certain relationship dimensions. For example, interaction style could demonstrate a reciprocal association with relationship dimensions, such that, for example, pleasant interaction style could reduce psychological distance, but closer psychological distance (i.e., less distance) also can make for pleasant interaction style. The style of interaction is different than one's relational disposition in at least two ways. First, dispositional characteristics provide tendencies toward behavior, but situational conditions can exhibit dramatic influences on the salience of these tendencies. Second, individuals learn and continue to develop, meaning there is a role for interaction styles that can be adapted over time.

The styles employed by individuals can communicate (i.e., both verbally and nonverbally) many and varied messages to one another, including power and influence (e.g., Drake & Moberg, 1986; Goffman, 1959), and style can affect the way interacting partners perceive, interpret, and make attributions about particular messages. Social influence theory and research historically has focused on the content of influence attempts (e.g., the specific tactics of influence that are used). However, the style of execution demonstrates a major impact in how influence efforts are perceived. Jones (1990) argued that after studying interpersonal influence for decades, we know quite a lot about types or mechanisms of influence, but not much about the style of presentation that makes it effective. Since that time, scholars have demonstrated increased interest in such style effects, and have investigated the roles of social effectiveness competencies, such as political skill.

Political skill reflects interpersonal competencies that allow for the accurate assessment of workplace social dynamics, and effective engagement in image-enhancing behaviors, which are appropriate for the context (Ferris et al., 2005). Politically skilled individuals have both a private self and a public self that they show others in interpersonal engagements (Leary, 2001). Ferris et al. (2007) characterized political skill as "a comprehensive pattern of social competencies, with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations, which have both direct effects on outcomes, as well as moderating effects on predictor–outcome relationships" (p. 291).

Furthermore, politically skilled individuals exhibit cross-situational behavioral adjustment and adaptability, and, in combination with social astuteness, reflect a style that is sincere,

inspires support and trust, and effectively influences and controls the responses of others. Smith, Plowman, and Quinn (2008) reported qualitative results that provided support for political skill process dynamics articulated by Ferris et al. (2007). They found that managers conveyed political skill through affability and a sense of humility, and through creating accountability and the development of trust.

Recent research has demonstrated that the personality of both leader and member can affect the ratings made about work relationship quality. In a longitudinal study of LMX, Nahrgang, Morgeson, and Ilies (2009) reported that the extraversion of followers and agreeableness of leaders influenced assessments of work relationship quality. However, less clear is what behaviors demonstrated by certain personality types affect relationship quality. Perhaps related to this study is the research that has indicated that the demonstration of favorable emotions at work translates into greater allocation of rewards by others, as well as higher achievement, possibly operating through relationship quality.

Although the forgoing evidence demonstrated positive linear effects of emotions at work, recent evidence has suggested that more is not always better, suggesting potential nonlinear effects. Specifically, Oishi, Diener, and Lucas (2007) found that it is moderate to above average levels of happiness that are associated with the greatest education, income, and career success outcomes. The very high levels of happiness were found to be associated with lower levels of these outcomes than the moderate to above average levels of happiness.

Continuing this line of research, Diener and his colleagues make reference to other examples of where happiness (or optimism or positivity) has its limits in the workplace and in everyday life (e.g., Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008). Perhaps moderate levels of discontent are healthy because they motivate individuals to be proactive in attempting to change things for the better. This gives people a sense of purpose and feelings of accomplishment when succeeding in making positive contributions that benefit themselves and others.

Tensions, Compatibilities, and Controversies Among Relationship Dimensions

The aforementioned stages have represented the development and dimensions of work relationships. However, there are potential tensions among the dimensions that should be addressed, particularly as we seek to calibrate and foster high-quality relationships. Although beyond the scope of the current article, below we provide several examples of factors that add complexity to our model. These are factors that may be modeled as moderators in future theory development and empirical testing.

Trust–accountability–distance tension. If we could trust that individuals always would do what we wanted them to do, then we would be able to predict their behavior with 100% accuracy, and would not need to monitor them, or impose other mechanisms of accountability. In such hypothetical cases, we could construe trust as a psychosocial control mechanism, whereby it could be substituted for other mechanisms of coordination and control in organizations. In this respect, Ammeter, Douglas, Ferris, and Goka (2004) suggested that trust and accountability might be considered as substitutes for one another. However, this is a hypothetical case because we can never be completely certain that individuals always will do what is desired or expected, and even if that was the case, it might still indicate a need for some level of formal accountability. This may be reminiscent of former President Reagan's statement (i.e., about the former quite powerful Soviet Union): "Trust, but verify."

Sometimes we have prior reputation information about an individual coming into a new work relationship, which might affect the degree of trust we place in that individual initially, and the favorableness of that information can influence how trustworthy we regard this new individual (McKnight et al., 1998; Weber, Malhotra, & Murnighan, 2005). On this basis, we might erroneously grant too much initial trust, or not enough, depending on the accuracy of prior reputational information. In an examination of principal-agent relationships, Wernerfelt (1988) reported that principals were less likely to monitor the efforts of agents who had better reputations. This finding suggests that the relationships between dyadic members may be quite different across dyads, with those possessing greater reputations being treated more favorably that those with lesser reputations.

From a theoretical perspective (Greenberg, 1990; Hollander, 1958), the "idiosyncrasy credit" view may help explain this phenomenon. For example, it has been suggested that those with greater reputations often are granted more autonomy and "margin for error" than those with lesser reputations (Greenberg, 1990). Therefore, if individuals act on the belief that greater reputations tend to be associated with higher trust, they may well monitor less and hold less accountable people with higher reputations, than they do those with lesser reputations.

The controversial role of affect. Positive affect in a work relationship implies closeness, with greater closeness presumably associated with more positive affect. In our discussion of the distance dimension, we suggested that there is an optimal degree of distance in effective work relationships, with either too much closeness or distance causing problems. Theoretically, we could argue that, beyond a minimal level, affect actually is not necessary for effective work relationships, but we would be referring only to the performance or effectiveness outcomes.

We suggest that affect is important to a moderate degree, in order to influence health and well being, and to make more pleasant the nature of the working relationship in getting the day-to-day work accomplished. Such moderate levels of affect allow the relationship to preserve the degree of functional distance that is critical to effectively operating dyads. Too little affect, perhaps associated with actual dislike, potentially can interfere with both performance and well being of both dyadic members of the relationship, and create greater psychological distance (Napier & Ferris, 1993). Some affect eases interactions, and generally creates a more pleasant climate for the work relationship.

Also, excessively high levels of affect can prevent superiors from retaining their objectivity when they have to evaluate the performance of subordinates, provide constructively critical feedback or discipline, and so forth. Furthermore, it can lead subordinates in the relationship to blur the boundaries of work and friendship, which can influence the way they perceive and interpret feedback, instruction, and so forth. Indeed, research on trust has demonstrated that although typically reflective of a rational, incremental process, the allocation of trust sometimes can occur less rationally, and more immediately, and one of the ways this happens is when affect or liking is involved, thus placing the trust grantor in a risky position (Weber et al., 2005).

Discussion

Although research interest in work relationships has increased in recent years, few efforts have been made to articulate the critical dimensions underlying such relationships. Therefore, in an attempt to address this knowledge gap regarding relationships at work, we proposed an integrative multidimensional conceptualization of dyadic work relationships, which specified the critical

foundational dimensions and processes, their relationships and integrative dynamics, and the stages at which these dimensions take on greater or lesser importance. Our proposed conceptualization of relationships at work offers a number of implications and suggestions for research.

Multilevel Implications

The focus of this article was to propose an integrative multidimensional conceptualization of work relationships, which was geared at the dyadic level of analysis. However, we suggest that the proposed conceptualization can be expanded to multiple levels of analysis, including groups/teams, departments/subunits, and organizations. The notion of work relationships generally refers to connections or associations between two interacting members or partners, whether they are individuals, groups, or organizations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ingram & Zou, 2008). Although differences exist across types of dyads, such as a power differential in leader-follower dyads that is not as evident in coworker dyads, we contend that there is considerable overlap in the factors that influence all dyadic relationships.

Implications for Future Research

A number of important issues and directions for future research emerge from the present conceptualization of work relationships in and of organizations.

Measurement issues. The very nature of work relationships implies that they do not emerge and develop immediately, but rather take time, and evolve through different phases or stages over time. Given the dynamism inherent in all relationships, stages in the evolution of dyadic work relationships should be examined carefully, perhaps using LMX research as a starting point. However, this suggests that longitudinal research is needed to fully capture the process dynamics of such work relationships, including their antecedents and consequences. Full investigation of the many dimensions of work relationships suggests the need for the development of a multidimensional measure, which assesses the key dimensions. At the same time, increased efforts need to be made to derive a richer understanding of work relationships through the use of qualitative investigation (e.g., Liden et al., 1997 made a similar appeal for new research on LMX).

We highlighted a fairly broad but representative set of work relationship dimensions in the foregoing sections of this article, and provided some discussion of how such dimensions might combine to create effective work relationships. Therefore, the focus was on the core dimensions, which in virtually all cases are most likely correlated. Future research should investigate the extent to which these primary dimensions can be identified cleanly through first-order factor analysis, and perhaps the extent to which a second-order factor analysis might yield a smaller set of higher-order dimensions that largely capture the primary dimension variance.

It is quite possible that the nature of the jobs in question, industry type, and factors like this might serve as boundary conditions for the nature and operation of the proposed conceptualization. Of particular importance, the span of control of the supervisors might be a significant boundary condition that affects the very nature of the dyadic relationships that overloaded supervisors are capable of developing with subordinates (Schriesheim, Castro, & Yammarino, 2000).

Relational research in organizations. Although the acknowledgement that work relationships are important for understanding behavior in organizations is not new, research has not always progressed in ways that fully captured the relational linkage between individuals. Therefore, we encourage researchers to devote more attention to the dynamics of the dyadic relationships that underlie a multitude of workplace attitudes (Hoption, Christie, & Barling, 2008).

As Hoption et al. (2008) have noted, workplace phenomena, such as leadership, power, and victimization, frequently have failed to capture the perspectives of both parties involved (e.g., leader and follower), and also the nature of the relationship between the two. Also, it would be interesting to more thoroughly investigate the nature of fit in dyadic work relationships. Specifically, although research on supplementary fit, which is based on the similarity or congruence of attributes between two entities, has contributed to our understanding of dyadic relationships, complementary fit has received relatively little attention. This neglect needs to be rectified because complementary fit (i.e., which occurs when an individual's attributes fill a missing but needed piece valued by another individual or the organization) acknowledges that not just similarity, but dissimilarity, also can be a source of effective fit. Future research should investigate whether supplementary or complementary fit contribute to the most effective development of work relationships. Or, consider what might be the boundary conditions that emphasize the effectiveness of one type of fit over another.

Physiological implications of work relationships. Biological and physiological reactions to work, typically confined to research on job and work stress, offer great potential for enlightening the investigations of many topics in organizational behavior, including dyadic relationships (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). There is growing interest regarding how biological processes activate social interaction, which is the focus of a new field called "social neuroscience" (Hoption et al., 2008). Recent research in social neuroscience has investigated the neural correlates of interpersonal sensitivity (Decety & Batson, 2007), cognitive empathy (Preston et al., 2007), and social exclusion and self-control (Campbell et al., 2006). Future social neuroscience research that investigates the physiological manifestations of dyadic work relationships, reflecting such dimensions as trust, respect, and integrity, for example, could add greatly to a more informed understanding of reactions to work relationships.

Workforce generational issues. Generational factors represent an important moderating effect that needs to be considered when conducting research on dyadic relationships. Because there is increasing evidence that we are witnessing considerable changes in the new generation of employees, inclusion of work values and norms may be especially critical in future research on relationships. For example, "new millenials," or what Twenge (2006) has dubbed "generation me," tend to be characterized as self-centered and narcissistic, reflecting a basic inability or unwillingness to take criticism, and insist on only positive feedback. Dyadic relationships characterized by such self-centered expectations of relationships, suggest relatively less weight placed on trust, respect, and empathy. This lack of relevance placed on trust and respect reflects the little value attached to long-term stable work relationships, and the preference for short-term interactions, which are highly instrumental in nature.

Conclusion

Work relationships are fundamental to behavior in organizations, where employees must interact formally or informally in the process of getting work accomplished, and scholarly interest has increased considerably in recent years (e.g., Ragins & Dutton, 2007; Sias, 2009). Unfortunately, although there has been some limited research on work relationships in the organizational sciences, there had not been a comprehensive effort to identify the key underlying dimensions of effective work relationships, to explore their integrative dynamics in forming a contextual backdrop that frames behavior, and to identify their implications for understanding other organizational phenomena. We have attempted to raise these issues to the surface in the hope of encouraging scholars to conduct research investigating the multidimensional nature of

work relationships as context in developing a more informed understanding of behavioral processes and dynamics in organizations.

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