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Employee Benefit Availability, Use, and Subjective Evaluation: A Meta-Analysis of Relationships With Perceived Organizational Support, Affective Organizational Commitment, Withdrawal, Job Satisfaction, and Well-Being

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Employee benefits constitute 38.1% of compensation costs, representing a sizeable investment in the workforce. Unlike other forms of support that depend on the actions of individuals throughout the organization, benefits can be changed through decisions at the highest level and influence employees throughout the company. Yet, the literature on benefits has been largely disjointed, resulting in theoretical ambiguity and practical questions about the role of employee benefit experiences in individual employee outcomes. To inform theory and practice, we organized the benefits literature using social exchange theory as a framework and conducted a meta-analysis on the relationships of employee benefit availability, use, and subjective evaluation with perceived organizational support, employee attitudes, and well-being. Our review ($k = 134$, $N = 260{,}604$) found unique relationships between the availability and subjective evaluation of employee benefits and affective organizational commitment, withdrawal intentions, job satisfaction, and well-being, with these relationships partially mediated by perceived organizational support. Benefit use contributed little to these outcomes beyond benefit availability and subjective evaluation. Benefit subjective evaluation was also more strongly related to most outcomes than were benefits availability and use. These relationships varied across types of benefits, with training benefits more strongly related to job satisfaction and health care and retirement benefits more strongly related to turnover intentions. Altogether, this meta-analysis integrates the empirical literature on employee benefits and highlights the implications of benefit experiences and types for the employee–organization relationship and employee well-being.

Keywords: employee benefits, meta-analysis, review, job satisfaction, social exchange theory

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Employee benefits are compensations that organizations provide to employees in addition to standard salary or wages (Dulebohn et al., 2009). The cost of employee benefits to organizations is significant, constituting 38.1% of total compensation costs in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). While expensive, discretionary benefits are some of the more distinguishable and valuable features of many jobs. Benefits can influence employee attitudes and well-being by showing employees that the organization cares about them and fulfilling employees' material and socio-emotional needs. Furthermore, unlike other forms of favorable treatment that depend on the actions of individual employees, such as supportive treatment from supervisors, employee benefits can be directly changed by decisions at the top of the organization and affect everyone in it (Dulebohn et al., 2009). This makes benefits a key, changeable aspect of the employee experience through which employers can improve employee relations and well-being. Given their cost, changeability, and influence, employee benefits are a central component of an organization's human resource (HR) strategy and are of great concern to organizational leaders aiming to improve employee relations, support their employees, meet their social responsibility to workers, and manage personnel costs (Society for Human Resource Management, 2022).

Despite the importance of employee benefits and the number of studies on the topic, the contribution of different types of benefit experiences to employee outcomes and the employee–organization relationship is still not well understood. There are several types of benefits in which employers can invest, and these vary in their

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expense, uniqueness, and function. Furthermore, there are different types of benefit experiences, including the employees using the benefit, merely having the benefit available to them, and their subjective evaluation of the benefit. Differences across these benefits and experiences are critical for theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical standpoint, specific benefits and benefit experiences can influence social exchange outcomes for distinct reasons, and differential effects across these benefit types and experiences can offer new insight into employee social exchange processes. From a practical perspective, organizations must allocate their investments among different types of benefits, especially when their resources are limited, and empirical findings on relationships between benefit experiences and key outcomes can offer evidence to better support strategic benefit decisions. Employers may also consider whether to improve existing benefits or offer new ones, a decision that can be informed by knowledge about the relative importance of benefit availability and subjective evaluations of benefit quality. Furthermore, some employers may make benefits available without assessing their effectiveness, or they may track benefit use while not measuring employee evaluations of their benefits. Knowledge about the independent contributions of benefit availability, use, and subjective evaluation will offer insight into the importance of each of these factors and the theoretical and practical value in measuring each.

Given these important questions about benefits experiences and employee outcomes, we conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between employee benefit experiences and affective commitment, withdrawal, satisfaction, and well-being, doing so across different types of benefits (e.g., quality of life, health care, retirement) and benefit experiences (i.e., availability, use, and subjective evaluation). We also examine the relationship between benefit experiences and the employee's belief about the organization's concern for their well-being, or perceived organizational support (POS; Eisenberger et al., 1986), and the extent to which POS explains benefit-outcome relationships, with implications for theory on benefits and social exchange. Although employers invest considerable resources in benefits (Dulebohn et al., 2009), there is currently no meta-analysis on their contribution to these key employee outcomes, differences across types of benefits and benefit experiences, and the role of POS.

We ground our investigation in social exchange theory, which we argue offers the most comprehensive framework for why and how benefit offerings contribute to employee behaviors and attitudes. Social exchange theory suggests that when the organization provides resources to employees, this initiates a social exchange process in which employees respond with behaviors and attitudes that benefit the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; U. G. Foa & Foa, 1980, 2012). Benefits are a concrete, tangible resource that can influence employee commitment and retention through the norm of reciprocity and through strengthening mutual interdependence in the employee–organization relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In addition to their effects on social exchange processes, benefits can also fulfill material and socioemotional needs, thereby contributing to POS and employee well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Our meta-analysis applies and builds on social exchange theory to examine different types of benefits and benefit experiences and their relationship with employee outcomes.

Our meta-analysis of research on employee benefits contributes to the literature in three ways. First, we draw from the employee policy experience framework (T. D. Allen et al., 2013; Butts et al., 2013; Dreher et al., 1988; Dulebohn et al., 2009) to categorize employee benefit experiences into benefit (a) availability, (b) use, and (c) subjective evaluation. We compare the importance of each in affective commitment, withdrawal, job satisfaction, and well-being. We draw from social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) to theorize about the relationship between benefit experiences and outcomes and how these relationships may differ across types of benefit experiences. In our discussion, we compare benefits with other HR initiatives (e.g., pay, job design) in their relations with the same outcomes.

Second, this article delves into benefit-outcome relationships for specific types of benefits and contexts. Benefits can focus on various domains such as health care, retirement, training, and quality of life. Across these domains, benefits vary in their function and uniqueness, with implications for how organizations might prioritize benefit offerings. We discuss and analyze outcome relationships with different benefit types and their practical and theoretical implications. Workforces also vary in their needs based on their age, and national health care and social welfare programs can change the role of benefits in the employee–organization relationship. We investigate age and national context as potential moderators, with insights for the generalizability of employee benefit research.

Third, using social exchange theory as a framework, we examine the extent to which the employee's belief about the organization's supportiveness, or POS, mediates benefit-outcome relationships. In doing so, we theorize about and examine benefit-outcome relationships that are through POS and independent of POS. Social exchange theory posits POS as a key indicator of social exchange quality that helps explain the effects of favorable treatment in social exchange relationships (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Gavino et al., 2012). Social exchange theory also suggests that benefits can influence employee outcomes independent of POS by fulfilling employees' material needs and increasing the mutual interdependence between the employee and the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). We integrate our results with prior meta-analyses to assess the extent to which POS mediates benefit-outcome relationships, with implications for theory on social exchange and employee benefits.

Employee Benefits, Social Exchange, and Employee Outcomes

Social exchange theory, the theoretical grounding for our meta-analysis, posits that relationships between employees and their employers vary in the extent to which they are characterized by social exchange (Shore et al., 2006; Tsui et al., 1995, 1997). In a weak social exchange relationship, the employee feels no obligation or desire to commit to the employer beyond task completion, and the employer is not concerned with the employee's well-being beyond the payments they owe the employee (Tsui et al., 1995, 1997). By contrast, in a strong social exchange relationship, the employee and the organization each show concern for the other's well-being, and positive treatment from the organization can lead to more enduring employee attitudes and nonnegotiated actions that benefit the organization.

Employee benefits are a starting mechanism for employee–organization social exchange relationships. The employer provides benefits that employees interpret as signals of supportiveness, in turn increasing their commitment and satisfaction. Benefits also fulfill material and psychological needs and, in doing so, increase the mutual interdependence between the employee and the employer

(Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Meeker, 1971). For example, health care benefits signal to employees that the organization cares about their health while also helping to prevent and treat health problems. According to the theory, employees with good health care benefits in turn should be more likely to reciprocate with greater commitment and more positive attitudes because they care about and depend on the organization.

We focus on three types of employee benefit experiences that may influence the employee–organization social exchange relationship and relate to employee outcomes. The first type of benefit experience, benefit availability, is whether the organization offers the benefit and the employee is aware of it, regardless of whether the employee uses it. The second, benefit use, is whether the employee takes advantage of the benefit. The third, benefit subjective evaluation, is the employee's judgment of the benefit's value and their satisfaction with it.

Our meta-analysis focuses on affective organizational commitment and withdrawal as potential outcomes of benefit experiences via the social exchange process. Affective organizational commitment is the employee's emotional attachment to and identification with the organization (N. J. Allen & Meyer, 1990; Solinger et al., 2008). Affective commitment involves the employee holding the organization in high regard and caring about its success (Solinger et al., 2008). The employee's care and concern for the organization is a defining feature of a strong social exchange relationship (Clark & Mills, 1979; Colquitt et al., 2014; Tsui et al., 1997). Withdrawal behavior and intentions encompass the employee's intent to leave the organization, absenteeism, and turnover (Hom et al., 2017). Withdrawal is a potential negative outcome of poor benefit experiences and a negative social exchange relationship. Employees who have a strong positive social exchange relationship with the organization initiated by positive benefit experiences are less likely to withdraw their effort or leave because they care about the organization, want it to succeed, and depend more on it. Thus, social exchange theory would suggest that employee benefits increase affective commitment and reduce employee withdrawal.

Hypothesis 1: Employee benefit experiences are positively related to affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Employee benefit experiences are negatively related to employee withdrawal intentions and behaviors.

In addition, we specify job satisfaction as an outcome of employee benefits through the social exchange process they initiate. Job satisfaction is an overall evaluation of one's job that is reflected in the employee's feelings, beliefs, and behavior (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Schleicher et al., 2011). Theorists suggest that job satisfaction is influenced by the extent to which the job fulfills the employee's needs, values, and desires (Judge & Klinger, 2008; Locke, 1976). Employee benefits fulfill employees' material needs by providing money and services to help with life and career issues. Benefits also fulfill socioemotional needs and facilitate a positive social exchange relationship by communicating care and concern for employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020). This should result in employees reciprocating with more positive attitudes toward their work.

Hypothesis 3: Employee benefit experiences are positively related to job satisfaction.

In addition to influencing employee attitudes toward their work and organization, benefit experiences should influence employee well-being. We use the label employee well-being to encompass psychological well-being (e.g., stress, depression), overall health, and the work–nonwork interface. For the work–nonwork interface, we focus on work–family conflict, which is the extent to which work and family roles are incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), and family and life satisfaction. Employee benefits should influence well-being because they help fulfill employees' physical, material, and socioemotional needs. For example, health insurance helps employees obtain better health care, retirement benefits give employees long-term security, and wellness benefits give employees resources to reduce stress. These benefits also show the organization's concern for employees, which should fulfill socioemotional needs for support and further enhance employee well-being.

Hypothesis 4: Employee benefit experiences are positively related to well-being.

Differences Across Benefit Use, Availability, and Subjective Evaluation

Benefit use, availability, and subjective evaluation may influence employee outcomes in different ways and for different reasons, and their effects may differ in magnitude as a result. First, when employees use benefits, there is an exchange of goods or services that should facilitate a positive exchange relationship. The organization's provision of material resources to employees is an important type of resource exchange (U. G. Foa & Foa, 1980) that demonstrates the organization's care and concern, in turn increasing the employee's concern for the organization (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Used benefits also help meet employees' material and physical needs, increasing the interdependence between the employee and the organization and, in turn, improving employee commitment and retention (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Meeker, 1971). Benefit use may also increase employee well-being if the benefits fulfill the employee's needs effectively.

On the other hand, benefit availability signals the organization's concern for the employee, regardless of whether the benefit is used (Butts et al., 2013; Kurtessis et al., 2017). According to the resource theory of social exchange, this display of concern is an important symbolic resource (U. G. Foa & Foa, 1980) that contributes to a more positive social and communal exchange relationship in which the employee shows greater concern for the organization in return (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), even if no goods or services are exchanged. Thus, benefit availability may contribute to employee outcomes beyond the effects of benefit use.

Although benefit use and availability have received greater attention in prior reviews (e.g., Butts et al., 2013; Kurtessis et al., 2017), benefit subjective evaluation may be an even more important factor in employee outcomes because the value of the resources provided by one exchange partner to the other is critical to social exchange relationships (Liden et al., 1997; Shore et al., 2009). If a benefit is available and the employee uses it, that does not mean the employee evaluates it positively or considers it valuable. For example, if an organization provides a childcare center to employees, but the cost of the center to the employee is similar to or greater than other childcare centers or the hours are restrictive and inconvenient, the employee may evaluate the benefit as having

little value to them and may even have a negative view of it. Similarly, an employee who uses their employer's health insurance benefit may have to pay a large premium, copay, or deductible. The health insurance may also not cover all of the employee's preferred health care providers. This could result in a negative evaluation of the benefit, even if it is extensively used.

The effect of the employee's subjective evaluation of benefits on outcomes should be stronger than that of perceived availability or use because of the importance of the amount and quality of the resources provided to social exchange relationships (De la Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019; Lambert, 2000; Rodrigues et al., 2020). Having and using low-value benefits may even trigger negative reactions among employees and the belief that the organization does not care about them (i.e., negative reciprocity; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Additionally, benefit subjective evaluation should influence employee well-being by fulfilling socioemotional and material needs. Valuable and satisfactory benefits communicate the organization's concern for employees, offer socioemotional resources (Eisenberger et al., 2020), and should be more directly helpful to the employee than low-value benefits. Thus, we expect that benefit subjective evaluation has the strongest relationship with the outcomes of this meta-analysis.

Hypothesis 5: Benefit subjective evaluation is more strongly related to affective commitment, withdrawal intentions and behaviors, job satisfaction, and well-being than is benefit availability or use.

The Mediating Role of POS

In addition to examining differences across benefit experiences, our meta-analysis also studies POS as a factor that partially explains the relationship between benefit experiences and employee outcomes. Social exchange theory suggests that positive social exchange relationships are characterized by each party's concern for the other's well-being, and thus POS is a key indicator of employee–organization social exchange quality (Colquitt et al., 2014; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employee benefits, like other favorable inducements, can contribute to POS by showing that the organization is concerned about the employee's well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This is especially the case for benefits because employees perceive benefits to be a job condition over which organizations have great control (Eisenberger et al., 1997). It is these discretionary job conditions that have the greatest influence on POS (Eisenberger et al., 1997).

Hypothesis 6: Employee benefit experiences are positively related to POS.

Because POS reflects the employees' belief that the organization is concerned about them, POS should trigger the employees' social approval and positive affection for the organization. POS is a symbolic, particularistic resource that is characteristic of a strong positive social or communal exchange in which the organization is concerned with the employee's well-being in ways that go beyond the required negotiated conditions of the relationship (Clark & Mills, 1979; U. G. Foa & Foa, 1980; Tsui et al., 1997). This positive social exchange relationship should result in the employee's positive affection for the organization, higher job satisfaction, and lower levels of withdrawal (Rhoades et al., 2001). This makes POS a potential mediator in the relationship between employee benefits and these outcomes.

At the same time, benefits may influence affective commitment, withdrawal, and job satisfaction independently of POS because benefits directly fulfill employees' needs and increase the employees' dependence on the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Meeker, 1971). As long as the relationship is not perceived as coercive (Blau, 1964), this should inspire greater commitment and less withdrawal out of the employees' self-interest. Furthermore, this should increase job satisfaction by fulfilling employees' needs for goods and services. This would make POS a partial mediator in the relationship between benefit experiences and affective commitment, withdrawal, and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7: POS partially mediates the relationship between employee benefit experiences and (a) affective organizational commitment, (b) withdrawal intentions and behavior, and (c) job satisfaction.

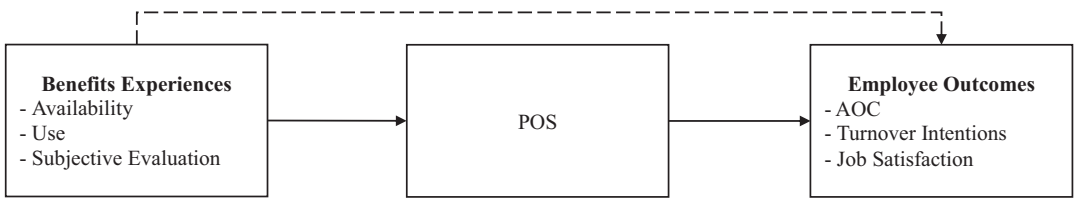
Hypothesized Path Model

Figure 1 integrates the hypotheses into a model in which benefit availability, use, and subjective evaluation simultaneously relate to affective commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction, partially through POS. We combined estimates from our meta-analysis with estimates from previous meta-analyses to test the model, including the mediation pathways. This allowed us to assess the extent to which POS explains benefit-outcome relationships and the extent to which benefit availability, use, and subjective evaluation differ in their relative importance in influencing POS and employee outcomes.

Differences Across Benefit Types

Employers can offer several different types of benefits, such as paid leave, insurance, and childcare support (see Table 1 for

Figure 1
Hypothesized Meta-Analytic Path Model



Note. POS = perceived organizational support; AOC = affective organizational commitment.

Table 1

Employee Benefits Category Scheme and Accessibility Based on the U.S. National Compensation Survey (NCS) for Benefits

Large category (NCS)	Subcategory benefit type (NCS)	Access[a] (sub)	General function	Sample item		
				Availability	Use	Subjective evaluation
General benefit[b]	General benefit[b]	N/A	Employee overall benefits packages	• "These two pages list benefits that some companies offer to their employees. … As far as I know, I am personally eligible to apply for this benefit." The list includes paid parental leave, on-site child care center, financial planning workshops, and tuition assistance (Zagorski, 2004, p. 179).	• "Participants used a 5-point scale … to indicate how often they used the same 12 benefits referred to in the benefit importance questions" (Sinclair et al., 2005, p. 13).	• Fringe benefits are good (2010 General Social Survey; T. W. Smith et al., 2019).
Financial benefits	Dependent care flexible spending account	43	Provide indirect financial assistance through tax savings, financial management, and loan assistance	• "How many of your entry-level workers are offered the following financial/health benefits? … tuition reimbursement" (Deckop et al., 2006, p. 558; for student loan repayment).	• "Employed students were asked (yes or no) whether they currently received tuition reimbursement" (Pattie et al., 2006, p. 430).	Not available.
	Financial planning	22				
	Flexible benefits	16				
	Student loan repayment	4				
Health care benefits	Dental care	44	Assist in paying for preventative medical care and treatment of injury or illness	• Do you receive health insurance from employer? (2008 General Social Survey; T. W. Smith et al., 2019).	• "In the last 12 months, how many times did you or your dependents go to a doctor's office or clinic (not counting the emergency) room to get care?" (Gillispie et al., 2013).	• "I have a good health-care plan at work" (Vignoli et al., 2020, p. 4).
	Vision care	28				
	Outpatient prescription drug coverage	71				
	Medical care benefits	72				
Health-related benefits	Retiree health care benefits—age 65 and over	19	Assist in paying for health care costs after retirement	• "whether their employer's health plan covers retirees" (Bamberger & Bacharach, 2014, p. 10).	Not available.	Not available.
	Retiree health care benefits—under age 65	21				
Insurance benefits	Life insurance	60	Provide financial protection for employees or their families in cases of death or disabilities	• "Please tell me whether you are eligible to receive each fringe benefit … life insurance" (1991 General Social Survey; T. W. Smith et al., 2019).	Not available.	Not available.
	Long-term disability insurance	35				
	Short-term disability insurance	40				
Leave benefits	Paid family leave	21	Give employees time to recover from work and attend to nonwork demands	• "asked the respondents whether or not these leave options are available to them through their employment" (Jang et al., 2016, p. 104).	• "We collected employees' responses on three items … to assess how often they used paid leave for (a) child rearing, (b) nursing sick family dependents, and c) dealing with family emergencies" (Choi et al., 2018, p. 5).	• "How satisfied are you with your organization's family leave policies?" (Ross, 2017, p. 32).
	Paid funeral leave	58				
	Paid holiday	78				
	Paid jury duty leave	59				
	Paid military leave	33				
	Paid sick leave	78				
	Paid vacations	76				
	Personal leave	47				
	Unpaid family leave	89				

(*table continues*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Large category (NCS)	Subcategory benefit type (NCS)	Access[a] (sub)	General function	Sample item		
				Availability	Use	Subjective evaluation
Nonproduction bonuses	Cash profit-sharing bonus Employee recognition bonus Other bonus	6 3 10	Increase compensation at irregular times and show appreciation for employees' collective efforts	• Company granted respondents stock options in 2005 (2006 General Social Survey; T. W. Smith et al., 2019).	• Respondents are the members of ESOP (employee stock ownership plan; 2014 General Social Survey; T. W. Smith et al., 2019).	• "One item measures how satisfied the employees are with the profit-sharing system" (Sweins & Kalmi, 2008, p. 372).
Quality of life benefits	Childcare Employee assistance programs Wellness programs	11 54 44	Provide resources to help employees manage nonwork responsibilities and improve their health	• "Does your organization have a program or service that helps employees find child care if they need it?" (Dolcos, 2007, p. 80).	• "Use of a child care center at the work site was a dichotomous variable" (Goff et al., 1990, p. 800).	• "How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency. … Child Care Programs?" (Caillier, 2013, p. 350).
Retirement benefits	Retirement benefits—defined benefit Retirement benefits—defined contribution	25 60	Help employees with long-term financial security	• Employer contribution to pension/retirement plan (yes/no; 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce; Families and Work Institute, 2008).	Not available.	Not available.
Training program[b]	Training program[b]	N/A	Promote employee career and personal advancement	• Respondents have training opportunities (2002 General Social Survey; T. W. Smith et al., 2019).	• "We asked whether employees participated in a training course in 2007 with respect to 13 general skills … communication skills, dealing with responsibilities …" (Koster et al., 2011, p. 2410).	• "Type of benefit satisfaction was measured by asking respondents to 'indicate their satisfaction with each of the following 24 benefits'". Career enrichment benefits include educational assistance/tuition reimbursement and rewards for advanced degrees (Blau et al., 2001, p. 675).

Note. Only the types of benefits that are included in the current meta-analysis are shown in the table. The full list of types of benefits is available in the *National Compensation Survey (NCS): Employee Benefits in the United States* by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020); GSS = General Social Survey; NSCW = National Study of the Changing Workforce.
[a] The accessibility for each type of benefits is for all civilian workers and is reported in the NCS employee benefits report. [b] General benefits and training programs are not included in the NCS employee benefits report.

a complete list). It is important to explore benefit-outcome relationships across different types of benefits for practical and theoretical reasons. Organizations must decide how to invest in their workforce with a limited pool of resources, meaning they need to make strategic choices about what types of benefits to invest in to supplement base and incentive pay as part of their total reward strategy (Kwon & Hein, 2013). This raises questions about which types of benefits are most highly valued, most effective for enhancing employee relations, and most likely to improve employee well-being. Here, we consider some consequential ways in which different types of benefits vary.

First, some benefits are more unique than others and may be more likely to differentiate an employer from other employers. For example, nonproduction bonuses, financial planning, and several quality of life benefits are much less common than health care and retirement benefits (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). An organization can enhance their brand as an employer by differentiating their benefits from competing employers (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016), and employees may be more attracted and committed to an organization that offers benefits they cannot get elsewhere. On the other hand, a failure to offer high-quality common, or "basic" (Blau et al., 2001) benefits, such as paid sick leave or retirement, may draw more negative comparisons with competing employers, inspiring employees to look elsewhere. Currently, it is unclear whether employee experiences with unique benefits or more common benefits are more strongly related to employee outcomes.

Additionally, some benefits are more expensive than others and provide more monetary value to employees. For example, health insurance and retirement benefits are expensive for the organization, costing several hundred dollars per month or more per employee. Other benefits, such as a gym membership, are comparatively cheaper. Employers can choose whether to invest more heavily in expensive benefits or to offer new benefits that are less expensive. It is unclear whether benefits that vary in their expense are differentially related to employee outcomes. Finally, different types of benefits also help fulfill different employee needs. For example, retirement benefits help employees maintain long-term financial security after their retirement, whereas training benefits help them develop and advance in their career. Health care benefits provide resources for employees to access preventive care, diagnoses, and treatments for illnesses. The needs that these types of benefits fulfill may vary in their value to employees, and this may influence how strongly related they are to employee attitudes and well-being.

We do not have hypotheses about which types of benefits are more influential, but given these distinctions and their importance to HR strategy, we examine differences across benefit types in an exploratory fashion. We also examine the effects of general benefits packages, which refer to the entire set of benefits that the organization offers.

> *Research Question 1:* Are there differences across types of benefits in their relationships with affective organizational commitment, withdrawal intentions and behaviors, job satisfaction, or well-being?

Age and National Context

Benefit experiences may have different relationships with employee outcomes across age and national contexts. We do not state formal hypotheses for such differences, but we consider these as potential moderating factors. Older workers may be more concerned about their health care, given the greater prevalence of health problems and more extensive use of health care services as employees get older. This may increase the perceived value of health care benefits and the extent to which employees interpret health benefits as a show of care and concern for them. Older workers are also closer to retirement and thus may put greater value on their retirement benefits, given that people generally value money more when it is nearer temporally and discount more delayed rewards (Frederick et al., 2002; Steel & König, 2006). On the other hand, younger employees may place greater value on their direct compensation and less on these types of benefits because direct compensation is more immediate and valuable to them.

Regarding national context, the United States is unique relative to other developed countries in the benefits that the government provides or requires, changing the role of employee benefits relative to other countries. Many non-U.S. countries provide universal health care coverage and mandate paid maternity leave, whereas this is not the case in the United States. As such, some benefits, such as health insurance and paid family leave, may be of greater value in the United States than in other countries because they fulfill a need that is not fulfilled elsewhere and they can distinguish an employer.

Given these potential differences across age and national contexts, we examine differences in effect sizes across studies that vary in the age and nationality of the sample.

> *Research Question 2:* Are there differences in benefit experience-outcome relationships across (a) the mean age of the sample and (b) the national context?

Method

Transparency and Openness

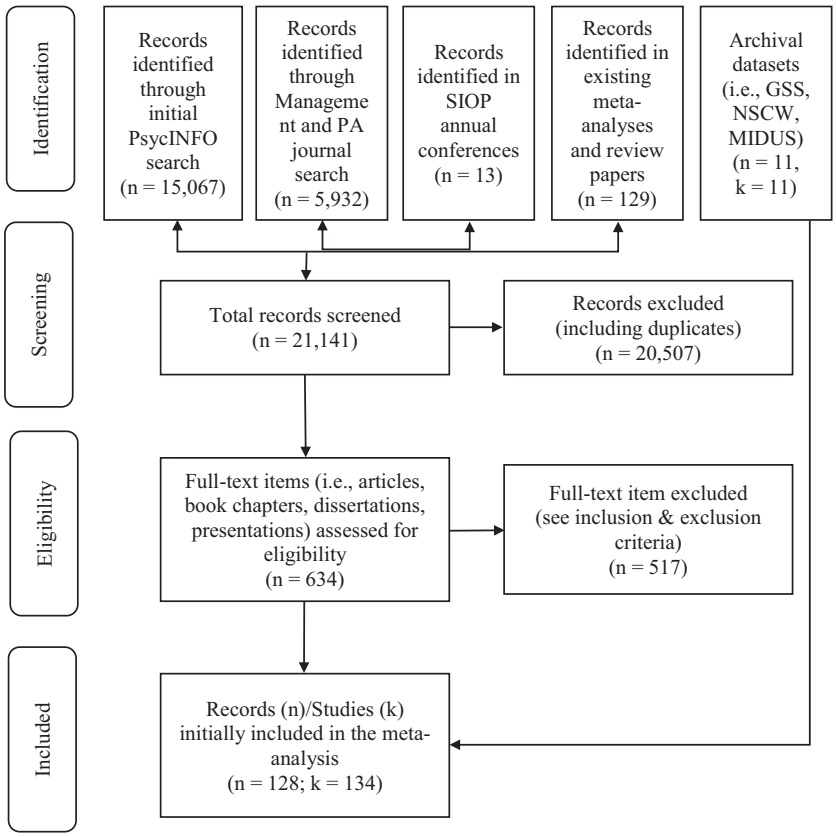
We describe our literature search process, coding procedure, information on intercoder agreement, and meta-analytic procedure, and we adhered to the *Journal of Applied Psychology* methodological checklist. The coded information from the articles and archival data sets is available in Supplemental Materials 10 and 11. The R syntax codes for each analysis are available in Supplemental Material 3. Data were analyzed using *Mplus 8.1* (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015) and *R 4.1.2* (R Core Team, 2022) with the *R* packages *Psychmeta 2.6.3* (Dahlke & Wiernik, 2019) and *Metafor 3.4-0*[1] (Viechtbauer, 2010). This study's design and its analysis were not preregistered.

Literature Search and Archival Data Sets

To perform the meta-analysis, we integrated relevant effect sizes from (a) literature searches and (b) archival data sets. In our searches, we considered employee benefits as employer-sponsored benefits encompassing "all other inducements and services provided by an employer to employee" in addition to the direct compensations (Dulebohn et al., 2009, p. 87). Figure 2 shows a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses diagram of our literature search. We took four approaches to our search: (a) a search

[1] The *Metafor 3.4-0* R package (Viechtbauer, 2010) was used for publication bias analyses, and the results are available in Supplemental Material 6 and Supplemental Figures 1–3.

Figure 2
PRISMA Diagram



Note. GSS = General Social Survey; NSCW = National Study of the Changing Workforce; MIDUS = Midlife in the United States; PRISMA = Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses; PA = public administration; SIOP = Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

for relevant articles and dissertations on the APA PsycInfo database, (b) a manual search of scholarly management and public administration journals, (c) a review of conference presentations at the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology conference from 2010 through 2023, and (d) a review of references from two previous meta-analyses on family-friendly policies (T. D. Allen et al., 2013; Butts et al., 2013) and a narrative review on employee benefits (Dulebohn et al., 2009). The literature search covered articles published up to August 2023.

For the APA PsycInfo and manual journal searches, we performed two separate searches in total with two paired search terms (see Supplemental Material 1) that included keywords for employee benefits (e.g., employee benefit, health insurance, paid leave) and outcomes of interest (e.g., POS, job satisfaction). For the manual search, we performed literature searches via the search portals of the websites of 14 management journals and five public administration journals. Our literature search returned 21,141 items. The full list of management and public administration journals is available in Supplemental Material 2.

Second, we accessed archival data sets to identify additional relevant effect sizes. We identified three archival data sets that include employee benefit variables and relevant outcome variables: (a) the National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW; Families & Work Institute, 2008), (b) the General Social Survey (GSS; Smith et al., 2019), and (c) Midlife in the United States (MIDUS; Ryff et al., 2007). We included the NSCW from 1997, 2002, and 2008, the GSS from 1991, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2018, and the MIDUS 2 (2004–2006)[2] data set. This resulted in 11 total archival data sets. We included data sets from different years of the NSCW and GSS data sets because they collected responses from different people in separate years. We included only one data set from the MIDUS, which surveyed the same people multiple times.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

We used several inclusion criteria to identify primary studies for our meta-analysis. First, we only included primary studies in which the samples consisted of current employees. Second, we only included studies that measured (a) availability, (b) use, and/or (c) subjective evaluation of benefits. Third, we only included studies that provided bivariate effect sizes for the relationship between

[2] The interviews for collecting the MIDUS (2004–2006) data set started from January 2004 and were completed in September 2006 (Ryff et al., 2007).

benefit availability, use, and/or subjective evaluation and POS, affective commitment, withdrawal intentions or behaviors, job satisfaction, and well-being, or the relationship between benefit experiences.[3] Fourth, we excluded studies that measured only time- and place-based flexibility practices (e.g., telecommuting, compressed workweek). We focused our meta-analysis on benefits that required organizational expenditure and not on practices or policies that involved redesigning the job. Fifth, we excluded studies that investigated relationships only at the group or organizational levels because our theory and hypotheses concentrate on individual-level phenomena. Our procedures resulted in 783 effect sizes from 134 studies, with a total *N* of 260,604 in our meta-analyses. Specifically, 577 effect sizes were included from 123 samples (87 articles, 20 dissertations, two book chapters, seven presentations, one article in preparation), with a total *N* of 242,257, and 206 effect sizes were included from 11 archival data sets, with a total *N* of 18,347.

Primary Coding Procedure

All effect sizes from the literature search were coded twice: once by the first author and once by the second or third author. The first author double-checked the cross-coded information on sample sizes, effect sizes (e.g., Pearson *r*, Cohen's *d*, odd ratios), and reliability estimates for the independent and dependent variables. The percentage of agreement between two coders out of all information coded was 83%. All discrepancies in coding were resolved through discussion among the coders. During our review for each effect size, we transformed Cohen's *d* values and odds ratios into Pearson correlations following the procedures specified by Bonett (2007) and Ruscio (2008).

We adopted an artifact distribution approach to our meta-analysis based on the reliability distribution constructed from locally reported internal consistency estimates (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). Two artifact distributions of two constructs for a bivariate relationship were constructed independently based on available reliability values of each construct in the bivariate relationship and were then combined. To correct for unreliability, we used the mean of a construct's reliability estimates for each construct from the individual studies within a relationship. For example, hypothetically, if there were three studies of the benefit use-job satisfaction correlation and the reliability estimates for job satisfaction were .80, .85, and .90, we would have taken the average of these (.85) and used that estimate to correct the observed weighted mean effect size for unreliability. The variance in the reliability estimates was also used to estimate the proportion of variance in the effect sizes due to artifacts. When reliability estimates differ across studies, this can cause observed effect sizes to vary for artifactual reasons. This is the approach used in meta-analyses that use Hunter and Schmidt's (2004) artifact distribution approach and is the approach that *Psychmeta 2.6.3* uses (Dahlke & Wiernik, 2019).

When reliability information was missing in all studies for a construct in a bivariate relationship, we imputed the average reliability values for that construct across other studies in the meta-analysis. We identified nine cases (e.g., nonproduction bonuses use—affective organizational commitment; training program use—stress; training program use—turnover intentions; all combined benefits availability—turnover) when reliability information of four constructs was missing. Accordingly, we imputed the average reliability values for affective commitment (.85), stress (.86), turnover intentions (.82), and turnover (.93). One exception to this is that we imputed .51 as the reliability estimate for absenteeism, as was done in a previously published meta-analysis (Berry et al., 2012), drawing from Hackett and Guion's (1985) estimate. When the reliability estimate was not reported for a two-item measure, we computed its reliability following the procedure described by Cortina (1993).

Meta-Analytic Procedure

The *Psychmeta R* package (Dahlke & Wiernik, 2019) was used to perform our psychometric meta-analysis, which computed corrected mean correlations ($\bar{\rho}$) with 95% confidence intervals and 80% credibility intervals around $\bar{\rho}$. We used Schmidt and Hunter's (2015) psychometric meta-analysis method and employed a random-effects model (Borenstein et al., 2010) with an artifact distribution approach. Corrections for attenuation were performed with Taylor series approximation (Raju & Burke, 1983). We used sample-size weighting.

To preserve independence among effect sizes, we computed composites when a primary study reported multiple effect sizes that were categorized into one relationship by applying the procedure described by Hunter and Schmidt (2004). If the sample sizes varied across effect sizes when constructing composites, we used the minimum sample size. When the primary study did not provide the information that is required to compute composites, we computed the average correlation,[4] following a recently used procedure (Badura et al., 2020).

When primary studies on the same relationship used the same data set, we retained the one that reported a larger sample size (Badura et al., 2020). To examine whether two meta-analytic estimates (i.e., $\bar{\rho}$) were significantly different, we used the *t* test procedure described by Neter et al. (1988).

Model Testing

We performed a meta-analytic path analysis by (a) constructing a meta-analytic correlation matrix among constructs and (b) estimating our hypothesized path model (Figure 1) with maximum likelihood estimation through *Mplus 8.1* (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015).

We constructed the correlation matrix by pooling (a) corrected correlations in the current meta-analysis and (b) those from previous meta-analyses (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Meyer et al., 2002; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Corrected correlations between the availability, use, and subjective evaluation of benefits and POS and outcome variables were drawn from the current meta-analysis. Other corrected correlations were drawn from previous meta-analyses. The meta-analytic correlation table is shown in Table 2. Following previous research (Butts et al., 2013; Carr et al., 2003), we used the smallest of the correlation sample sizes ($N = 1{,}109$). To test the statistical significance of the indirect effects, we computed the Delta method standard errors of

[3] For the studies that were included in Butts et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis, we drew from the coding information shown in the appendix when the original source did not provide the information on bivariate effect sizes or when original source was not accessible.

[4] For the relationship between benefits availability and benefits use, we only included the effect sizes for the relationship between availability and use of the same type of benefits. This is because availability of one type of benefit (e.g., nonproduction bonuses) is not expected to relate to use of another type of benefit (e.g., training program). In these cases, we computed the average of the benefit use-availability correlations as the estimate for those studies.

Table 2
Meta-Analytic Correlation Table

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Benefits availability	—						
2. Benefits use	.54	—					
k studies	20						
N total observations	13,240						
3. Benefits evaluation	.32	.24	—				
k studies	7	11					
N total observations	6,279	8,424					
4. POS	.23	.08	.40	—			
k studies	5	9	10				
N total observations	**1,109**	8,385	4,073				
5. AOC	.21	.08	.33	.69[a]	—		
k studies	24	21	16	237			
N total observations	10,159	8,993	11,988	79,335			
6. Turnover intentions	−.22	−.07	−.32	−.50[a]	−.51[b]	—	
k studies	27	22	14	132	24		
N total observations	19,700	24,470	8,021	47,968	8,724		
7. Job satisfaction	.13	.05	.36	.65[a]	.65[b]	−.58[c]	—
k studies	32	24	26	154	69	88	
N total observations	29,599	24,135	87,152	64,303	23,656	35,494	

Note. POS = perceived organizational support; AOC = affective organizational commitment. The smallest sample size for the path models is bold-faced.
[a] Kurtessis et al. (2017). [b] Meyer et al. (2002). [c] Tett and Meyer (1993).

the indirect effects (Sobel, 1982), using the default setting of *Mplus* 8.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015).

Sensitivity Analyses

We performed one-sample-removed (Banks et al., 2016; Kepes et al., 2013) and trim-and-fill (Duval & Tweedie, 2000) analyses to test for outliers and publication bias. These analyses did not alter our conclusions and are described in Supplemental Material 6 and Supplemental Figures 1–3.

Moderator Analyses

To examine the moderating effects of sample nationality, we divided effect sizes in each relationship into two subgroups (U.S. group vs. non-U.S. group) and performed subgroup analyses. We only performed subgroup analyses when each subgroup had a *k* of at least 3. To examine the moderating effect of the average age of the sample, we performed metaregression analyses by regressing each bivariate effect on the average age of the samples. To maintain sufficient degrees of freedom in the metaregression analyses, we only examined bivariate relationships of all combined benefits with outcomes with a *k* of at least 10.

Type 1 Error Corrections

We conducted 15 *t* tests comparing benefit availability, use, and subjective evaluation across different outcomes, eight *t* tests in the subgroup analyses comparing U.S. samples and non-U.S. samples, and 10 meta-regression analyses for the moderating effect of sample age. Because this resulted in 33 statistical tests, we performed an alpha-correction procedure to control Type 1 error. Specifically, we performed the Benjamini and Hochberg (BH) procedure (1995) to control the false discovery rate, which refers to "the expected proportion of the number of erroneous rejects to the total number of rejections" (Keselman et al., 2002, p. 28). The BH procedure orders *p* values of all tests ($i = 1, 2, \ldots, 33$) from the largest ($i = 33$) to the smallest ($i = 1$). Then, the corrected α for each test is computed by multiplying the α, which is .05 in the present study by (i/33; see Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995, and Keselman et al., 2002, for more information). For an easier interpretation of test results, we slightly revised this procedure by leaving the α as .05 across 33 tests and instead multiplying *p* values by (33/i) (i.e., corrected *p* value). We reported only the corrected *p* values in the article. The uncorrected *p* values and the BH procedure are available in Supplemental Material 7.

Results

Bivariate Relationships

Tables 3–5 show the meta-analytic results for the bivariate relationships of availability, use, and subjective evaluation of employee benefits with POS, affective organizational commitment, withdrawal intentions and behaviors, job satisfaction, and employee well-being.

To test Hypotheses 1–6, we evaluated the corrected correlations for the relationship between the availability (Table 3), use (Table 4), and subjective evaluation (Table 5) of all combined employee benefits and outcomes. Benefit availability, $\bar{\rho} = .21$, use, $\bar{\rho} = .08$, and subjective evaluation, $\bar{\rho} = .33$, were significantly and positively related to affective organizational commitment, supporting Hypothesis 1. Availability, $\bar{\rho} = -.22$, and subjective evaluation, $\bar{\rho} = -.32$, were negatively related to turnover intentions, while use, $\bar{\rho} = -.07$, was not related to turnover intentions. Availability, $\bar{\rho} = -.07$, and use, $\bar{\rho} = -.05$, were not related to turnover. Also, availability was not related to absenteeism, $\bar{\rho} = -.02$. Altogether, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Availability, $\bar{\rho} = .13$, use, $\bar{\rho} = .05$, and subjective evaluation, $\bar{\rho} = .36$, were significantly and positively related to job satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis 3.

Table 3

Meta-Analytic Results for Availability of Benefits, POS, Affective Commitment, Withdrawal, Job Satisfaction, and Well-Being

Construct X	Construct Y	k	N	$\bar{r}$	SD_r	SD_{res}	$\bar{\rho}$	SD_{r_c}	SD_ρ	95% CI	80% CR	One-sample removed ($\bar{\rho}$)	Pub bias? (no. study)	New $\bar{r}$[b]
							Perceived organizational support							
All benefits[a]	POS	5	1,109	.21	0.06	0.00	.23	0.06	0.00	[.15, .31]	[.23, .23]	.20 to .27		
Multiple categories	POS	4	692	.21	0.03	0.00	.22	0.03	0.00	[.17, .27]	[.22, .22]	.20 to .23		
							Affective organizational commitment							
All benefits[a]	AOC	24	10,159	.18	0.13	0.12	.21	0.15	0.14	[.14, .28]	[.02, .40]	.18 to .23	No (0)	
Training program	AOC	3	2,320	.23	0.22	0.22	.28	0.27	0.26	[−.38, .93]	[−.22, .77]	.10 to .38		
Leave benefits	AOC	7	3,157	.15	0.05	0.01	.18	0.06	0.01	[.13, .24]	[.17, .20]	.16 to .20		
Quality of life benefits	AOC	5	2,256	.06	0.10	0.09	.07	0.11	0.10	[−.07, .21]	[−.09, .22]	.05 to .12		
Multiple categories	AOC	11	3,743	.19	0.11	0.10	.23	0.13	0.11	[.14, .31]	[.07, .38]	.19 to .25		
							Withdrawal intentions and behaviors							
All benefits[a]	TurnovIntent	27	19,700	−.18	0.09	0.09	−.22	0.12	0.11	[−.27, −.18]	[−.36, −.08]	−.23 to −.21	Yes (3)	−.20
General benefit	TurnovIntent	4	2,830	−.24	0.10	0.09	−.26	0.11	0.10	[−.43, −.09]	[−.43, −.10]	−.30 to −.21		
Training program	TurnovIntent	4	6,357	−.14	0.08	0.07	−.17	0.09	0.09	[−.32, −.03]	[−.32, −.03]	−.19 to −.13		
Health care benefits	TurnovIntent	5	9,518	−.16	0.02	0.01	−.20	0.03	0.01	[−.24, −.17]	[−.21, −.19]	−.21 to −.20		
Leave benefits	TurnovIntent	10	11,033	−.17	0.03	0.00	−.25	0.04	0.00	[−.28, −.21]	[−.25, −.25]	−.33 to −.22		
Quality of life benefits	TurnovIntent	12	11,295	−.08	0.06	0.05	−.11	0.08	0.07	[−.16, −.06]	[−.20, −.02]	−.13 to −.09		
Retirement benefits	TurnovIntent	4	8,993	−.19	0.02	0.00	−.23	0.02	0.00	[−.27, −.19]	[−.23, −.23]	−.24 to −.22		
Multiple categories	TurnovIntent	7	1,675	−.16	0.14	0.12	−.18	0.16	0.14	[−.33, −.04]	[−.39, .02]	−.26 to −.15		
All benefits[a]	Turnover	4	6,957	−.06	0.09	0.09	−.07	0.10	0.10	[−.23, .09]	[−.23, .09]	−.21 to −.05		
Leave benefits	Turnover	3	6,396	−.06	0.08	0.08	−.06	0.09	0.08	[−.28, .15]	[−.22, .10]	−.19 to −.04		
All benefits[a]	Absenteeism	4	8,111	−.02	0.09	0.08	−.02	0.12	0.12	[−.21, .17]	[−.21, .17]	−.05 to −.00		
Quality of life benefits	Absenteeism	3	7,801	−.02	0.04	0.03	−.03	0.06	0.05	[−.17, .11]	[−.12, .06]	−.06 to .02		
							Job satisfaction							
All benefits[a]	JobSat	32	29,599	.10	0.07	0.06	.13	0.09	0.08	[.10, .16]	[.03, .24]	.12 to .14	No (0)	
General benefit	JobSat	4	2,105	.14	0.11	0.11	.15	0.12	0.11	[−.04, .35]	[−.03, .34]	.12 to .24		
Training program	JobSat	4	7,623	.19	0.08	0.08	.23	0.10	0.10	[.07, .39]	[.08, .39]	.21 to .26		
Health care benefits	JobSat	8	14,863	.04	0.05	0.04	.05	0.06	0.05	[.00, .10]	[−.02, .13]	.02 to .06		
Leave benefits	JobSat	14	16,490	.08	0.08	0.07	.12	0.10	0.09	[.06, .18]	[−.01, .24]	.09 to .14		
Quality of life benefits	JobSat	12	11,263	.08	0.05	0.04	.11	0.07	0.05	[.07, .16]	[.04, .19]	.09 to .12		
Retirement benefits	JobSat	5	10,953	.07	0.02	0.01	.09	0.03	0.02	[.05, .12]	[.06, .11]	.07 to .09		
Multiple categories	JobSat	5	4,928	.05	0.06	0.06	.05	0.07	0.06	[−.03, .14]	[−.04, .15]	.04 to .08		
							Well-being							
All benefits[a]	Stress	9	7,510	−.10	0.06	0.05	−.10	0.06	0.05	[−.15, −.06]	[−.17, −.03]	−.13 to −.08		
Multiple categories	Stress	3	3,339	−.13	0.03	0.00	−.15	0.03	0.00	[−.23, −.07]	[−.15, −.15]	−.15 to −.12		
All benefits[a]	WFC	26	14,241	−.05	0.07	0.06	−.06	0.09	0.07	[−.09, −.02]	[−.15, .03]	−.06 to −.05	Yes (7)	−.03
Leave benefits	WFC	5	2,959	−.06	0.06	0.04	−.07	0.07	0.05	[−.15, .02]	[−.15, .01]	−.09 to −.05		
Quality of life benefits	WFC	11	8,817	−.02	0.05	0.03	−.02	0.06	0.04	[−.07, .02]	[−.08, .03]	−.03 to −.02		
Multiple categories	WFC	10	2,842	−.10	0.09	0.07	−.11	0.11	0.08	[−.19, −.04]	[−.23, .00]	−.14 to −.10		
All benefits[a]	Depression	5	19,394	−.04	0.03	0.02	−.04	0.03	0.02	[−.08, −.01]	[−.08, −.01]	−.05 to −.01		
Quality of life benefits	Depression	3	832	−.04	0.11	0.09	−.05	0.11	0.10	[−.33, .24]	[−.23, .14]	−.08 to .01		
All benefits[a]	Overall Health	4	4,277	.03	0.02	0.00	.03	0.02	0.00	[−.01, .07]	[.03, .03]	.03 to .06		
Training program	Overall Health	3	3,860	.02	0.00	0.00	.03	0.01	0.00	[.01, .04]	[.03, .03]	.03 to .04		
All benefits[a]	SatLifeFamily	5	3,420	.09	0.05	0.03	.10	0.05	0.03	[.04, .17]	[.06, .15]	.07 to .11		

Note. POS = perceived organizational support; AOC = affective organizational commitment; TurnovIntent = turnover intentions; JobSat = job satisfaction; WFC = work–family conflict; SatLifeFamily = satisfaction with life and family; k = number of studies contributing to meta-analysis; N = total sample size; $\bar{r}$ = mean observed correlation; SD_r = observed standard deviation of r; SD_{res} = residual standard deviation of r; $\bar{\rho}$ = mean corrected correlation; SD_{r_c} = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations (r_c); SD_ρ = residual standard deviation of ρ; CI = confidence interval around $\bar{\rho}$; CR = credibility interval around $\bar{\rho}$. Correlations corrected using artifact distributions.
[a] All types of benefits were included at once in the meta-analysis for a specific bivariate relationship. [b] Recomputed summary estimates ($\bar{r}$) after performing trim-and-fill analysis.

Table 4

Meta-Analytic Results for Use of Benefits, POS, Affective Commitment, Withdrawal, Job Satisfaction, and Well-Being

Construct X	Construct Y	k	N	$\bar{r}$	SD_r	SD_{res}	$\bar{\rho}$	SD_{r_c}	SD_ρ	95% CI	80% CR	One-sample removed ($\bar{\rho}$)	Pub bias? (no. study)	New $\bar{r}$[b]
							Perceived organizational support							
All benefits[a]	POS	9	8,385	.08	0.03	0.00	.08	0.03	0.00	[.06, .11]	[.08, .08]	.08 to .09		
Multiple categories	POS	7	1,932	.06	0.07	0.04	.06	0.08	0.04	[−.01, .13]	[.00, .12]	.04 to .08		
							Affective organizational commitment							
All benefits[a]	AOC	21	8,993	.06	0.07	0.05	.08	0.08	0.06	[.04, .12]	[.00, .16]	.07 to .10	Yes (4)	.05
General benefit	AOC	3	1,787	.11	0.05	0.03	.15	0.07	0.04	[−.02, .32]	[.07, .23]	.13 to .21		
Training program	AOC	3	2,312	.13	0.03	0.00	.13	0.03	0.00	[.05, .21]	[.13, .13]	.12 to .15		
Nonproduction bonuses	AOC	4	1,413	.04	0.03	0.00	.04	0.03	0.00	[−.01, .09]	[.04, .04]	.04 to .06		
Quality of life benefits	AOC	3	980	.03	0.08	0.05	.03	0.09	0.06	[−.19, .24]	[−.09, .14]	.01 to .06		
Multiple categories	AOC	10	2,879	.08	0.08	0.05	.12	0.11	0.08	[.04, .20]	[.02, .23]	.09 to .14		
							Withdrawal intentions and behaviors							
All benefits[a]	TurnovIntent	22	24,470	−.05	0.15	0.15	−.07	0.22	0.22	[−.16, .03]	[−.35, .22]	−.14 to −.04	Yes (2)	−.04
Training program	TurnovIntent	4	7,126	.01	0.06	0.05	.01	0.06	0.06	[−.08, .11]	[−.08, .11]	−.01 to .03		
Financial benefits	TurnovIntent	3	4,802	−.06	0.11	0.11	−.06	0.12	0.12	[−.36, .24]	[−.29, .16]	−.10 to .01		
Health care benefits	TurnovIntent	4	8,388	−.18	0.02	0.00	−.22	0.02	0.00	[−.26, −.19]	[−.22, −.22]	−.23 to −.21		
Leave benefits	TurnovIntent	6	10,932	−.01	0.26	0.26	−.01	0.29	0.29	[−.32, .29]	[−.44, .41]	−.21 to .05		
Quality of life benefits	TurnovIntent	8	13,904	−.03	0.07	0.07	−.04	0.08	0.08	[−.11, .03]	[−.15, .07]	−.08 to −.00		
Multiple categories	TurnovIntent	7	1,911	−.05	0.08	0.05	−.07	0.12	0.08	[−.18, .04]	[−.19, .04]	−.10 to −.04		
All benefits[a]	Turnover	5	70,932	−.05	0.04	0.04	−.05	0.04	0.04	[−.10, .00]	[−.11, .02]	−.06 to −.02		
							Job satisfaction							
All benefits[a]	JobSat	24	24,135	.05	0.06	0.05	.05	0.07	0.06	[.03, .08]	[−.02, .13]	.04 to .06	Yes (7)	.04
General benefit	JobSat	3	926	.15	0.02	0.00	.16	0.02	0.00	[.12, .21]	[.16, .16]	.15 to .18		
Training program	JobSat	7	12,834	.03	0.06	0.05	.04	0.07	0.06	[−.03, .10]	[−.06, .13]	.02 to .05		
Health care benefits	JobSat	3	8,352	.04	0.02	0.01	.05	0.03	0.02	[−.03, .12]	[.01, .08]	.03 to .06		
Leave benefits	JobSat	7	8,227	.09	0.09	0.09	.10	0.11	0.10	[.00, .20]	[−.04, .25]	.07 to .16		
Nonproduction bonuses	JobSat	5	1,317	.04	0.04	0.00	.05	0.05	0.00	[−.00, .11]	[.05, .05]	.03 to .07		
Quality of life benefits	JobSat	6	9,975	.06	0.04	0.03	.07	0.04	0.03	[.03, .11]	[.02, .11]	.06 to .10		
Multiple categories	JobSat	5	1,405	.04	0.06	0.02	.04	0.07	0.02	[−.04, .13]	[.02, .07]	.02 to .06		
							Well-being							
All benefits[a]	Stress	12	4,144	.02	0.07	0.05	.02	0.09	0.06	[−.03, .08]	[−.06, .11]	.01 to .04		
Training program	Stress	3	2,515	.08	0.01	0.00	.09	0.01	0.00	[.07, .11]	[.09, .09]	.09 to .09		
Nonproduction bonuses	Stress	5	1,232	.09	0.04	0.00	.10	0.05	0.00	[.04, .16]	[.10, .10]	.09 to .11		
Quality of life benefits	Stress	4	2,335	.03	0.09	0.08	.03	0.11	0.09	[−.13, .20]	[−.12, .19]	−.02 to .07		
All benefits[a]	WFC	21	6,479	−.03	0.09	0.06	−.04	0.11	0.08	[−.09, .01]	[−.14, .07]	−.05 to −.03	Yes (5)	−.01
Leave benefits	WFC	5	1,561	−.02	0.06	0.02	−.02	0.06	0.02	[−.10, .06]	[−.06, .01]	−.08 to −.02		
Quality of life benefits	WFC	7	3,538	.01	0.04	0.00	.01	0.05	0.00	[−.03, .06]	[.01, .01]	−.00 to .03		
Multiple categories	WFC	10	2,538	−.06	0.11	0.10	−.07	0.14	0.12	[−.18, .03]	[−.24, .09]	−.10 to −.05		
All benefits[a]	WFE	3	1,459	−.01	0.11	0.10	−.02	0.11	0.10	[−.29, .26]	[−.21, .18]	−.04 to .17		

Note. POS = perceived organizational support; AOC = affective organizational commitment; TurnovIntent = turnover intentions; JobSat = job satisfaction; WFC = work–family conflict; WFE = work–family enrichment; k = number of studies contributing to meta-analysis; N = total sample size; $\bar{r}$ = mean observed correlation; SD_r = observed standard deviation of r; SD_{res} = residual standard deviation of r; $\bar{\rho}$ = mean corrected correlation; SD_{r_c} = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations (r_c); SD_ρ = residual standard deviation of ρ; CI = confidence interval around $\bar{\rho}$; CR = credibility interval around $\bar{\rho}$. Correlations corrected using artifact distributions.

[a] All types of benefits were included at once in the meta-analysis for a specific bivariate relationship. [b] Recomputed summary estimates ($\bar{r}$) after performing trim-and-fill analysis.

Table 5

Meta-Analytic Results for Evaluation of Benefits, POS, Affective Commitment, Withdrawal, Job Satisfaction, and Well-Being

Construct X	Construct Y	k	N	$\bar{r}$	SD_r	SD_{res}	$\bar{\rho}$	SD_{r_c}	SD_ρ	95% CI	80% CR	One-sample removed ($\bar{\rho}$)	Pub bias? (no. study)	New $\bar{r}$[b]
							Perceived organizational support							
All benefits[a]	POS	10	4,073	.37	0.18	0.18	.40	0.19	0.19	[.26, .54]	[.14, .66]	.35 to .42		
General benefit	POS	4	2,234	.46	0.10	0.09	.49	0.11	0.10	[.32, .66]	[.33, .65]	.44 to .53		
Multiple categories	POS	3	1,177	.23	0.05	0.02	.25	0.05	0.02	[.12, .38]	[.22, .28]	.23 to .27		
							Affective organizational commitment							
All benefits[a]	AOC	16	11,988	.30	0.10	0.09	.33	0.11	0.10	[.27, .39]	[.20, .46]	.32 to .34	Yes (2)	.31
General benefit	AOC	10	8,057	.31	0.08	0.07	.33	0.09	0.08	[.27, .39]	[.22, .44]	.31 to .34		
Multiple categories	AOC	4	2,932	.24	0.10	0.09	.27	0.11	0.10	[.10, .45]	[.11, .44]	.19 to .30		
							Withdrawal intentions and behaviors							
All benefits[a]	TurnovIntent	14	8,021	−.29	0.07	0.06	−.32	0.08	0.07	[−.37, −.27]	[−.41, −.23]	−.33 to −.31		
General benefit	TurnovIntent	9	6,275	−.30	0.07	0.06	−.33	0.07	0.06	[−.39, −.27]	[−.42, −.24]	−.34 to −.31		
							Job satisfaction							
All benefits[a]	JobSat	26	87,152	.30	0.06	0.05	.36	0.07	0.06	[.33, .38]	[.28, .44]	.35 to .36	Yes (1)	.31
General benefit	JobSat	18	14,747	.30	0.11	0.10	.35	0.13	0.12	[.29, .42]	[.19, .51]	.34 to .37	No (0)	
Leave benefits	JobSat	3	899	.30	0.27	0.26	.30	0.28	0.27	[−.39, .99]	[−.21, .82]	.05 to .41		
Quality of life benefits	JobSat	4	70,752	.31	0.03	0.03	.39	0.04	0.04	[.33, .45]	[.33, .45]	.38 to .39		
							Well-being							
All benefits[a]	Stress	6	5,555	−.05	0.06	0.05	−.05	0.06	0.05	[−.12, .01]	[−.13, .03]	−.07 to −.04		
General benefit	Stress	5	5,389	−.05	0.06	0.05	−.05	0.06	0.05	[−.13, .03]	[−.13, .03]	−.07 to −.03		

Note. POS = perceived organizational support; AOC = affective organizational commitment; TurnovIntent = turnover intentions; JobSat = job satisfaction; k = number of studies contributing to meta-analysis; N = total sample size; $\bar{r}$ = mean observed correlation; SD_r = observed standard deviation of r; SD_{res} = residual standard deviation of r; $\bar{\rho}$ = mean corrected correlation; SD_{r_c} = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations (r_c); SD_ρ = residual standard deviation of ρ; CI = confidence interval around $\bar{\rho}$; CR = credibility interval around $\bar{\rho}$. Correlations corrected using artifact distributions.

[a] All types of benefits were included at once in the meta-analysis for a specific bivariate relationship. [b] Recomputed summary estimates ($\bar{r}$) after performing trim-and-fill analysis.

Table 6
Standardized Path Coefficients for Path Models

Model	Variable	POS	AOC	TI	JS
Partial mediation model	Benefits availability	.16**	.05	−.11**	−.05
	Benefits use	−.10**	−.01	.05	−.00
	Benefits evaluation	.37**	.05*	−.13**	.13**
	POS		.66**	−.43**	.61**
	Indirect: Availability → POS → AOC		.11**		
	Indirect: Use → POS → AOC		−.06**		
	Indirect: Evaluation → POS → AOC		.24**		
	Indirect: Availability → POS → TI			−.07**	
	Indirect: Use → POS → TI			.04**	
	Indirect: Evaluation → POS → TI			−.16**	
	Indirect: Availability → POS → JS				.10**
	Indirect: Use → POS → JS				−.06**
	Indirect: Evaluation → POS → JS				.23**
Full mediation model	Benefits availability	.16**			
	Benefits use	−.10**			
	Benefits evaluation	.37**			
	POS		.69**	−.50**	.65**
	Indirect: Availability → POS → AOC		.11**		
	Indirect: Use → POS → AOC		−.07**		
	Indirect: Evaluation → POS → AOC		.26**		
	Indirect: Availability → POS → TI			−.08**	
	Indirect: Use → POS → TI			.05**	
	Indirect: Evaluation → POS → TI			−.19**	
	Indirect: Availability → POS → JS				.11**
	Indirect: Use → POS → JS				−.06**
	Indirect: Evaluation → POS → JS				.24**

Note. $N = 1{,}109$; POS = perceived organizational support; AOC = affective organizational commitment; TI = turnover intentions; JS = job satisfaction.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

With regards to employee well-being, benefit availability was significantly and negatively related to stress, $\bar{\rho} = -.10$, while use, $\bar{\rho} = .02$, and subjective evaluation, $\bar{\rho} = -.05$, were not related to stress. Benefit availability was negatively related to work–family conflict, $\bar{\rho} = -.06$, whereas use was not related to work–family conflict, $\bar{\rho} = -.04$, or work–family enrichment, $\bar{\rho} = -.02$. Benefit availability was positively related to satisfaction with family and life, $\bar{\rho} = .10$, and negatively related to depression, $\bar{\rho} = -.04$, but was unrelated to overall health, $\bar{\rho} = .03$. Altogether, Hypothesis 4 was only partially supported. Finally, benefit availability, $\bar{\rho} = .23$, use, $\bar{\rho} = .08$, and subjective evaluation, $\bar{\rho} = .40$, were significantly and positively related to POS, supporting Hypothesis 6.

To test Hypothesis 5, we compared the correlations of availability, use, and subjective evaluation of all employee benefits combined with five outcomes: (1) POS, (2) affective organizational commitment, (3) turnover intentions, (4) job satisfaction, and (5) stress.[5,6] The positive relationship of benefit subjective evaluation with POS, $\bar{\rho} = .40$, was not significantly different from that of availability, $\bar{\rho} = .23$, $t = -2.43$, corrected $p = .07$, but was significantly stronger than that of use, $\bar{\rho} = .08$, $t = -4.98$, corrected $p < .01$. The positive relationship of availability with POS, $\bar{\rho} = .23$, was stronger than that of use, $\bar{\rho} = .08$, $t = 4.86$, corrected $p < .01$. The positive relationship of subjective evaluation with affective commitment, $\bar{\rho} = .33$, was significantly stronger than that of availability, $\bar{\rho} = .21$, $t = -2.87$, corrected $p = .02$, and use, $\bar{\rho} = .08$, $t = -7.61$, corrected $p < .01$. The positive relationship of availability with affective commitment, $\bar{\rho} = .21$, was significantly stronger than that of use, $\bar{\rho} = .08$, $t = 3.55$, corrected $p < .01$. Results also indicated that the negative relationship of subjective evaluation with turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.32$, was significantly stronger than that of availability, $\bar{\rho} = -.22$, $t = 3.13$, corrected $p = .011$, and use, $\bar{\rho} = -.07$, $t = 4.89$, corrected $p < .01$. Also, the negative relationship of availability with turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.22$, was stronger than that of use, $\bar{\rho} = -.07$, $t = -3$, corrected $p = .013$.

The positive relationship of benefit subjective evaluation with job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .36$, was significantly stronger than that of availability, $\bar{\rho} = .13$, $t = -10.58$, corrected $p < .01$, and use, $\bar{\rho} = .05$, $t = -15.64$, corrected $p < .01$. Also, the positive relationship of availability with job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .13$, was stronger than that of use, $\bar{\rho} = .05$, $t = 3.80$, corrected $p < .01$. Finally, the relationship of subjective evaluation with employee stress, $\bar{\rho} = -.05$, was not significantly different from that of availability, $\bar{\rho} = -.10$, $t = -1.53$, corrected $p = .28$, and use, $\bar{\rho} = .02$, $t = 2.15$, corrected $p = .10$. However, the negative relationship of benefits availability with stress, $\bar{\rho} = -.10$, was significantly different from that of benefit use, $\bar{\rho} = .02$, $t = -3.95$, corrected $p < .01$.

Taken together, the results showed that, generally, benefit subjective evaluation was more strongly related to affective

[5] A table that summarizes results of the effect size comparisons across the relationships of availability, use, and subjective evaluation of all benefits combined with POS, affective commitment, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and stress is available in Supplemental Material 4.

[6] We additionally performed supplemental effect size comparisons with a subset of studies that measured all of benefits availability, use, and subjective evaluation. The results are available in Supplemental Material 9-1.

commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction than were benefit availability and use. Benefit subjective evaluation was not more strongly related to POS when compared with availability, although we note that this difference was significant before applying our Type 1 error correction. Also, benefit subjective evaluation was not more strongly related than availability and use to employee stress. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported. While not hypothesized, benefit availability was more strongly related than use to POS, affective commitment, turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and stress.

Effect Sizes for Types of Benefits

To answer *Research Question 1*, we focused on benefits availability and use in our description of the effects sizes for specific types of benefits because there were not enough studies (i.e., *k* of 3 or greater) on the subjective evaluation of specific employee benefits to allow for meaningful analyses.

Regarding availability, training program availability was negatively related to turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.17$, and positively related to job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .23$. The relationship between training program availability and affective commitment, $\bar{\rho} = .28$, was highly variable and thus nonsignificant. Health care benefit availability was also negatively related to turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.20$, and was positively related to job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .05$. Quality of life benefit availability was unrelated to affective commitment, $\bar{\rho} = .07$, absenteeism, $\bar{\rho} = -.03$, work–family conflict, $\bar{\rho} = -.02$, and depression, $\bar{\rho} = -.05$, but was positively related to job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .11$. Retirement and leave benefit availability showed negative relationships with turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.23$ and $-.25$, respectively, but had weaker positive relationships with job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .09$ and .12, respectively.

Training benefit use showed a positive relationship with affective commitment, $\bar{\rho} = .13$, but was unrelated to turnover intentions and job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .01$ and .04, respectively. By contrast, health care benefit use was negatively related to turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.22$. Leave benefit use was not significantly related to turnover intentions and work–family conflict, $\bar{\rho} = -.01$ and $-.02$, while it was positively related to job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .10$. Quality of life benefit use was also unrelated to turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.04$, but was positively related to job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .07$. Interestingly, nonproduction bonuses showed no significant relationships with affective commitment and job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .04$ and .05, respectively, and were positively related to stress, $\bar{\rho} = .10$. The implications of these specific benefit effects will be discussed more in the discussion section.

Model Testing

To test hypotheses with POS as a mediator, we estimated path coefficients of the path model specifying POS as a mediator (see Figure 1).[7,8] First, we compared the fit of the full POS mediation model with that of the partial mediation model, which allowed for direct effect paths.

The full mediation model showed an appropriate fit, $\chi^2(9) = 66.17$, $p < .01$, comparative fit index = .98, Tucker–Lewis index = .95, root-mean-square error of approximation = .08. The partial mediation model showed significantly better fit, $\Delta\chi^2(9) = 66.17$, $p < .01$. The standardized coefficients from the partial mediation model (see Table 6) showed that the availability, $\beta = .16$, $p < .01$, and subjective evaluation, $\beta = .37$, $p < .01$, of employee benefits were positively associated with POS, while the use of benefits was negatively related to POS, $\beta = -.10$, $p < .01$. POS was positively related to affective commitment, $\beta = .66$, $p < .01$, and job satisfaction, $\beta = .61$, $p < .01$, and negatively related to turnover intentions, $\beta = -.43$, $p < .01$. Moreover, the positive indirect relationships of benefits availability, .11, $p < .01$, and evaluation, .24, $p < .01$, with affective commitment via POS were statistically significant, as were the negative indirect relationships with turnover intentions, $-.07$ and $-.16$, $p < .01$, and the positive indirect relationships with job satisfaction, .10 and .23, $p < .01$. Indirect relationships of benefits use with outcomes via POS were significant but in the opposite of the hypothesized direction ($-.06$ for affective commitment and job satisfaction, .04 for turnover intentions, $p < .01$ for all).

Benefit availability, $\beta = .05$, $p = .08$, and use, $\beta = -.01$, $p = .66$, were not directly related to affective commitment independent of POS, while benefits subjective evaluation, $\beta = .05$, $p = .03$, was directly and positively related to affective commitment. Availability, $\beta = -.11$, $p < .01$, and evaluation, $\beta = -.13$, $p < .01$, were directly and negatively related to turnover intentions, while benefits use, $\beta = .05$, $p = .08$, was not. Finally, benefits subjective evaluation, $\beta = .13$, $p < .01$, was directly positively related to job satisfaction; on the other hand, availability, $\beta = -.05$, $p = .07$, and use, $\beta = -.003$, $p = .90$, were not directly related to job satisfaction.

Altogether, results partially supported Hypotheses 7a, 7b, and 7c. The indirect relationships between availability and subjective evaluation and outcomes through POS were significant in the expected direction, whereas this was not the case for benefit use. Independent of POS, subjective evaluation was also positively related to affective commitment and job satisfaction and negatively related to turnover intentions. Finally, benefit availability was negatively related to turnover intentions independent of POS, but it was not directly related to affective commitment and job satisfaction.

Moderator Analyses

Subgroup Analysis for the Nationality Moderator

Table 7 shows effect sizes for U.S. samples and non-U.S. samples for relationships for which there were at least three studies in each group.[9] There were some observable differences between U.S. studies and non-U.S. studies. Benefit availability was positively related to affective commitment in U.S. samples ($\bar{\rho} = .21$) but not in non-U.S. samples ($\bar{\rho} = .22$) due to variability of effect sizes across non-U.S. studies. Also, benefit subjective evaluation was positively related to job satisfaction ($\bar{\rho} = .36$) in U.S. samples but not in

[7] We additionally performed a supplemental meta-analytic path analysis with a subset of studies that measured all of benefits availability, use, and subjective evaluation. The meta-analytic correlations table and the results of path analysis are available in Supplemental Materials 9-2 and 9-3.

[8] In order to examine whether the results remain consistent when including only one type of benefits experience (i.e., availability, use, or subjective evaluation) is included in the research model, we performed supplemental path analyses with three separate path models, one for each benefits experience. The supplemental path analyses results are available in Supplemental Materials 8-1, 8-2, and 8-3.

[9] We additionally performed supplemental meta-regression analyses to examine the moderating effects of (a) benefits accessibility based on the National Compensation Survey subbenefits categories and (b) the percent of maximum possible scores (Cohen et al., 1999) of benefits subjective evaluation. The results of supplemental meta-regression analyses are available in Supplemental Material 5.

Table 7
Subgroup Moderator Analyses by Country of Data Collection (U.S. Samples vs. Non-U.S. Samples)

Relationship	k	N	$\bar{r}$	SD_r	SD_{res}	$\bar{\rho}$	SD_{r_c}	SD_ρ	95% CI	$t(df)$ U.S. sample vs. non-U.S. sample
Availability—AOC										
United States	15	6,775	.18	0.12	0.11	.21	0.14	0.13	[.14, .29]	
Non-U.S.	6	2,591	.19	0.18	0.18	.22	0.21	0.21	[−.01, .44]	−.02(19)
Availability—TI										
United States	16	15,217	−.20	0.09	0.08	−.24	0.11	0.10	[−.30, −.18]	
Non-U.S.	7	3,101	−.13	0.12	0.11	−.17	0.15	0.14	[−.31, −.03]	−1.19(21)
Availability—JS										
United States	22	21,301	.09	0.07	0.07	.11	0.09	0.08	[.07, .16]	
Non-U.S.	6	6,916	.15	0.05	0.04	.19	0.06	0.05	[.13, .26]	−2.40(26)
Availability—WFC										
United States	12	6,352	−.03	0.09	0.08	−.04	0.10	0.09	[−.11, .02]	
Non-U.S.	8	4,142	−.07	0.06	0.03	−.08	0.06	0.04	[−.13, −.02]	.97(18)
Use—AOC										
United States	14	6,555	.06	0.06	0.04	.08	0.08	0.06	[.03, .12]	
Non-U.S.	4	1,178	.05	0.11	0.09	.06	0.13	0.11	[−.14, .27]	.18(16)
Use—WFC										
United States	14	3,216	−.02	0.07	0.02	−.03	0.09	0.02	[−.08, .02]	
Non-U.S.	4	2,325	−.04	0.09	0.08	−.05	0.10	0.09	[−.21, .11]	.31(16)
Evaluation—AOC										
United States	13	10,162	.29	0.07	0.06	.32	0.08	0.07	[.27, .36]	
Non-U.S.	3	1,826	.32	0.23	0.22	.37	0.26	0.25	[−.28, 1.02]	−.33(14)
Evaluation—JS										
United States	19	84,558	.31	0.05	0.04	.36	0.06	0.04	[.33, .39]	
Non-U.S.	5	1,961	.19	0.24	0.24	.21	0.27	0.27	[−.13, .55]	1.21(22)

Note. AOC = affective organizational commitment; TI = turnover intentions; JS = job satisfaction; WFC = work–family conflict; k = number of studies contributing to meta-analysis; N = total sample size; $\bar{r}$ = mean observed correlation; SD_r = observed standard deviation of r; SD_{res} = residual standard deviation of r; $\bar{\rho}$ = mean corrected correlation; SD_{r_c} = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations (r_c); SD_ρ = residual standard deviation of ρ; CI = confidence interval around $\bar{\rho}$. Correlations corrected using artifact distributions. Statistical significance of test results is based on p values after Type 1 error corrections.

non-U.S. samples ($\bar{\rho}$ = .21). However, none of the differences between these effect sizes were statistically significant, indicating that we cannot draw strong conclusions about differences between U.S. samples and non-U.S. samples.

Meta-Regression for the Age as a Moderator

None of the 10 relationships with a k of at least 10 showed significant moderating effects of sample age (see Table 8). This suggests that the relationships of benefits availability, use, and subjective evaluation with outcomes remained similar across differently aged samples.

Table 8
Meta-Regression Results for Moderators of Average Age of Sample

	Moderator: Average age of sample					
	IV: Availability		IV: Use		IV: Subjective evaluation	
DV	k	b	k	b	k	b
AOC	13	.013	11	−.005		
Turnover intentions	17	−.004	12	−.001	10	.001
Job satisfaction	22	.001	15	−.004	19	.011
Work–family conflict	19	.005	11	−.006		

Note. DV = dependent variable; IV = independent variable; AOC = affective organizational commitment; k = number of studies contributing to meta-regression; b = unstandardized regression coefficient. Statistical significance of test results is based on p values after Type 1 error corrections.

Discussion

The purpose of this meta-analysis was to examine the contribution of different types of benefits and benefit experiences to employee relations and well-being. While our findings showed that better benefit experiences were generally related to positive employee outcomes, the results indicate that the employee's general subjective evaluation of their benefits is more important than benefit availability in predicting those outcomes, and both subjective evaluation and availability are generally more important than benefit use. Furthermore, the availability of more common benefits such as health care, retirement, and leave was more strongly related to withdrawal than was the availability of quality of life benefits. Finally, we found that POS partially mediated relationships between benefit experiences and affective commitment, turnover intention, and job satisfaction, suggesting that benefits are related to outcomes through and independent of POS. Here, we discuss the findings along with their theoretical and practical implications in more detail. As we discuss each set of findings, we discuss implications for HR practitioners that are also listed in Table 9, roughly in the order they are discussed.

Differences Across Benefit Availability, Use, and Subjective Evaluation

The results of this meta-analysis indicate that employees' subjective evaluations of their benefits are more strongly related to employee relations outcomes than are their perceptions of benefit availability or their use of benefits. This finding suggests that, for

Table 9
Summary of Major Findings With Practical Implications

Major finding	Practical implication
Employees' subjective evaluations of benefits were more strongly related to employee relations outcomes (e.g., affective commitment, turnover intent, job satisfaction) than were benefit availability or use.	• Ensuring that employees value the benefits that are offered is more important than making new benefits available. • Investments toward improving the perceived value of existing benefits are likely as important for employee relations as investing in new benefits. • Personalizing and customizing benefits may help to increase the perceived value of benefit offerings to employees.[a] • Factors that potentially influence employees' subjective evaluation of benefits, which include distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness[b]; effective communication of the availability, purpose, and value of benefit offerings[c]; and differentiation from competing employers[d], are important for employee relations outcomes. • Employers should regularly monitor their employees' subjective evaluation of their benefits package. • Surveys and conjoint analyses may be useful for understanding employees' subjective evaluation of benefit changes.[e]
Benefit availability was more strongly related to POS, affective commitment, and job satisfaction than was benefit use.	• For employee relations, offering valuable benefits is important for employees who are aware of them even if they do not use them. Increasing awareness of benefits, even among nonusers, may be helpful for employee relations.
Common benefits such as health care, retirement, and leave were more strongly related to employees' intent to stay/leave than were quality of life benefits.	• Organizations seeking to improve retention should consider ways to improve the availability and value of their health care, retirement, and leave offerings.
Training benefit availability showed a moderately strong relationship with job satisfaction and affective commitment.	• Organizations seeking to improve commitment and satisfaction should consider ways to increase the availability of training and development benefits.
The availability of quality of life benefits was weakly related to employee well-being.	• To be effective, quality of life benefits need to be designed effectively and combined with job design and informal support from organizational representatives (e.g., supervisors, managers).[f]
Benefit availability and subjective evaluation are comparable to pay and job design constructs in relations with employee attitudinal outcomes.	• Employee benefits should be considered equally alongside pay and job design in an organization's employee relations and total reward strategy.

Note. POS = perceived organizational support.
[a] See Fulmer et al. (2021) and Fulmer and Li (2022) for additional discussions of benefit customization. [b] See Cole and Flint (2005) for a discussion of factors influencing perceived benefit fairness. [c] See Pegg (2009) for further discussion of the importance of benefits communication. [d] See Werner and Balkin (2021) for further discussion of the importance of offering benefits beyond the industry norm to retain workers. [e] See also Roberts (2013). [f] See Kossek (2006) and Thompson et al. (1999) for further discussion of the importance of organizational culture alongside work–life benefits.

employee relations and well-being, making more benefits available is less important than ensuring employees value the benefits that are offered. This result is consistent with social exchange theory's notion that the value of what the provider provides to the receiver, in this case the employee, is critical to the employee–organization relationship (De la Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Shore et al., 2009). Offering new benefits may be ineffective toward the organization's goals if employees do not value those benefits positively.

From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that if organizations are focused on improving employee commitment, retention, and job satisfaction, they should consider improving the perceived value of their existing benefits before offering new ones that employees may not value. Increasing the quality of the benefits the organization offers in ways that employees find valuable is likely to show benefits for social exchange outcomes, such as commitment and POS. Organizations might increase employees' subjective evaluation of their benefits package by increasing their investment in those benefits, increasing employees' awareness of the benefits offered through effective communication, making benefits easier and more transparent to use, and increasing the fairness with which benefits are distributed. Further research is needed on these and other potential factors that improve employees' benefit subjective evaluation.

To ensure that employees evaluate their rewards positively, practitioners have also noted the importance of personalizing and optimizing their rewards approach (Grensing-Pophal, 2022; Roberts, 2013). To get the most out of their benefits offerings, employers should regularly monitor not only their employees' use of benefits but also their evaluations of their benefits package. When considering potential benefit changes, employers might consider using conjoint survey methods to assess the value employees place on those changes (Roberts, 2013). For example, an employer considering increasing a 401K match or a nonproduction (e.g., holiday) bonus might survey their employees to determine which they value more. Such methods can be used to monitor the effectiveness of benefit programs and anticipate how changes to new or existing benefits will influence employees' subjective evaluation of their benefits.

In one exception to this general pattern of findings, employee well-being was positively related to benefit availability but not to benefit subjective evaluation. While this was unexpected, benefits

may help to meet employees' well-being needs, regardless of whether employees evaluate them positively. For example, an employee might evaluate a childcare benefit negatively because it is expensive or offers inconvenient hours, but they may still experience lower stress and work–family conflict than if the benefit was not offered. Offering additional, distinct benefits may also help the organization to meet employees' distinct needs and improve their well-being. For example, increasing a 401K match may increase employees' subjective evaluation of their benefits but may not influence their well-being as much as having an additional training or quality of life benefit that meets different needs for growth or personal life. As such, making available additional benefits that target employees' psychological and personal needs may have additional effects on well-being. Altogether, this means that employees' subjective evaluation of their benefits may be more important for job- and organization-focused attitudes, whereas the availability of benefits, especially if they help address employees' needs in different ways, may still be as important for their well-being.

Benefit availability also showed stronger relationships with POS, affective commitment, and job satisfaction than did benefit use. This finding suggests that employees interpret benefit availability as an indicator of the organization's concern for their well-being, even when they do not use the benefits. This is consistent with the resource theory of social exchange (U. G. Foa & Foa, 1980), which argues that this display of concern is a socioemotional resource that facilitates a positive social exchange relationship. From a practical standpoint, this finding suggests that organizations should work to ensure employee awareness of their benefit offerings, even among nonusers.

Specific Employee Benefit-Outcome Relationships

In one of the more interesting results for specific types of employee benefits, health care, retirement, and leave (e.g., paid family leave, paid sick leave, paid vacation), benefit availability was weakly related to job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .05$, .09, and .12, respectively, whereas they showed comparatively stronger relationships with turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.20$, $-.23$, and $-.25$. This suggests that the availability of health, retirement, and leave benefits, which are some of the more common benefits available, plays a stronger role in employee retention than in employee satisfaction. The availability of quality of life benefits (e.g., childcare, employee assistance programs, wellness programs), on the other hand, showed a weaker relationship with turnover intentions, $\bar{\rho} = -.11$, than did health care, retirement, and leave benefits, and a comparable relationship with job satisfaction, $\bar{\rho} = .11$, while training programs showed a more positive relationship with job satisfaction $\bar{\rho} = .23$.

These findings suggest that the availability of more common, basic benefits such as health care, retirement, and leave may have a stronger relationship with retention than to overall job satisfaction. One potential explanation for this is that it is difficult for an organization to positively differentiate itself on common employee benefits because common benefits and benefit packages can be copied by competitors (Kaplan, 2005). Theory on social information processing suggests that part of what drives job satisfaction is comparing one's job conditions to the conditions of other jobs (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), and offering health care, retirement, and leave benefits is less likely to lead to a positive comparison to other jobs. This constraint on positive comparisons may limit the influence of common benefits on job satisfaction.

However, health care and retirement benefits especially help to fulfill critical basic needs. Health care benefits help employees pay for preventive and life-saving medical treatment, and retirement benefits are critical for employees with plans to stop working at retirement age. Because they are so important to a longer, healthier life, health care and retirement benefits may increase the employee's dependence on the organization, supporting the mutual interdependence mechanism in social exchange relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Meeker, 1971). This dependence on the organization may be a stronger factor in employee intent to stay, even if it does not relate as strongly to job satisfaction.

Another distinction worth noting was the positive relationship of affective commitment and job satisfaction with training benefit availability ($\bar{\rho} = .28$ and .23). These estimates had confidence intervals that overlapped with other estimates, but this trend suggests training benefits may be more important for satisfaction and commitment than are the health care, retirement, and leave benefits previously discussed. This is somewhat consistent with other research suggesting training in general is more strongly associated with affective commitment than are some other policies (Kooij et al., 2010). Training programs that we reviewed for our meta-analysis include employers' formal training opportunities, assistance for continuing education, and career development courses to improve performance management skills, leadership, communication skills, and computer competency. Employees may interpret the employers' investment in their own development as an indicator of support from the organization, which they reciprocate with greater concern for the organization.

From a practical perspective, it is also critical for organizations to be specific about their goals when developing a benefit strategy (Kaplan, 2005). Although all types of benefits were related to employee attitudes, our findings suggest that the availability of training programs may be more strongly associated with job satisfaction, whereas retirement and health care benefits are more strongly related to intent to stay. This suggests that an employer's rewards strategy should consider whether the primary goal is to reduce turnover or to increase satisfaction. If an organization has very low turnover but is concerned about employee satisfaction and engagement, it may make sense to invest in training benefits because those benefits are related more to satisfaction. On the other hand, if high turnover is creating staffing problems, then it may make more sense to invest in better retirement or health care benefits, because these are more strongly related to retention.

A final finding of note was the relatively weak relationship between the availability and use of quality-of-life benefits and well-being. Other research has found similarly weak relationships between work–family conflict and work–family policy availability (T. D. Allen et al., 2013; Butts et al., 2013). These results suggest that making additional quality of life benefits available may not show a strong relationship with well-being. Instead, compatible job designs and manager support may be necessary to make quality-of-life benefits more successful toward their goals.

The Mediating Role of POS

Employee benefits are a starting mechanism through which the organization initiates a social exchange relationship with employees

that results in nonnegotiated outcomes such as commitment, retention, and other positive attitudes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). The social exchange theory literature suggests that benefits can influence employee outcomes through (a) facilitating a social exchange relationship in which employees perceive the organization cares about them (i.e., POS) and in turn show positive affection toward the organization, (b) enhancing mutual interdependence between employees and the organization in which each depends on the other, and (c) directly helping to meet employees' needs.

The findings related to the mediating role of POS provide insight and raise new questions about mechanisms of social exchange. We found that POS only partially mediated the relationship of benefit subjective evaluation and availability with affective commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction, suggesting that benefits are related to these outcomes for additional reasons beyond POS. Benefit experiences were related to affective commitment and job satisfaction partially through POS, suggesting the socioemotional resources that benefits symbolize are important for employee affective commitment and satisfaction, whereas benefit subjective evaluation was also related to these outcomes independent of POS, suggesting the more instrumental effects of benefits, such as helping with workers' personal lives and providing health care, influence employees' attitudes beyond the symbolic socioemotional resources that benefits offer. Regarding turnover intention, employees may desire to stay in their organization partially because they believe the organization cares about them but also partially because they depend on the organization's benefits, consistent with the mutual interdependence social exchange mechanism (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Meeker, 1971). As such, the employee's intent to stay for benefits may reflect their continuance commitment, which is not strongly associated with other employee attitudes or performance (Meyer et al., 1989, 2002).

Age and National Context

Our subgroup analysis did not find any significantly different benefit-outcome relationships between U.S. samples and non-U.S. samples. There was one pattern worth noting for future consideration. Benefit subjective evaluation was positively related to job satisfaction at an effect size of .36 in U.S. samples, but the effect was only .21 in non-U.S. samples, which was not significant. Benefit subjective evaluation may be more important in the United States than outside of the United States because of the mandated or government-provided benefits in other countries. It is possible that benefits are more likely to distinguish an employer in the United States than outside of the United States because some benefits that are required or provided by the government outside of the United States are not within the United States. For example, the United States is one of the few countries that does not mandate paid family leave benefits, meaning that paid family leave may distinguish an employer more in the United States. We should be cautious in drawing strong conclusions about this difference given that it was not statistically significant, but we highlight it as a topic for future research.

Somewhat surprisingly, we did not find age to moderate any of the effects after controlling for Type I error. We expected that older workers might find health care and retirement benefits more valuable because they are more likely to use health care benefits extensively and are nearer to retirement, but we found no significant difference in effect sizes across the average age of the sample. It is possible that differences across age in benefit-outcome relationships are nonexistent or weak. It may also be more powerful to test age as a moderator of benefit-outcome effects at the individual level than at the study or sample level.

Other General Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, we can also put benefit-outcome effect sizes in context relative to other potential HR initiatives. One HR initiative to which we can compare benefits is pay. We found that the effect sizes for benefit availability are comparable to effect sizes for pay level. Judge et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis found a correlation between pay level and job satisfaction of .15, which is comparable to our estimate of .13 for the correlation between benefit availability and job satisfaction and much lower than the correlation between benefit subjective evaluation and job satisfaction of .36. Additionally, the negative relationship between benefit subjective evaluation and turnover intention (−.32) was similar to the negative relationship between pay satisfaction and turnover intention (−.31) found in a previous meta-analysis (Williams et al., 2006). These results suggest that the relationship between benefits and employee outcomes is comparable to that between pay and employee outcomes.

Job design is another HR initiative that can be compared to benefits. Job redesign initiatives might involve increasing work autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback, or social support, among other things. A meta-analysis (Humphrey et al., 2007) found correlations between job design factors and job satisfaction that ranged from .23 for working conditions to .56 for social support. These correlations are higher than those for benefit availability of .13 and comparable to those for benefit subjective evaluation of .36. Regarding turnover intentions, effect sizes for job design factors ranged from .00 for task identity and −.01 for autonomy to −.34 for social support. Benefit availability (−.22) and subjective evaluation (−.32) showed stronger negative relationships with turnover intention than did some job design factors, whereas some effect sizes were similar. This suggests that if jobs can be redesigned to improve working conditions, some of those conditions may show a stronger relationship with satisfaction, whereas others may show effects similar to those of benefit improvements. Benefit improvements may also show equal or stronger relationships with turnover intentions. Further research is needed comparing benefits to other HR initiatives.

Given the importance of benefit subjective evaluation, it is also important for organizations to take steps to increase the perceived value of their benefits to employees. This involves (a) designing benefits more strategically to meet employees' needs and (b) improving employees' evaluations of their benefits through improvements in the benefit administration process. To make benefits more valuable, in addition to investing more in those benefits when feasible, organizations might consider giving employees more options and control to personalize their benefits (Collinson, 2023). To this end, they may offer employees the option to enroll in benefit packages with tradeoffs among different copays, premiums, deductibles, and prescription drug plans. These benefit packages may be differentially valuable to workers with different needs. For example, older workers may desire coverage for age-related health conditions, middle-aged workers may desire mental health care for their teenage children, some

families may have greater reproductive health needs, and some younger workers may prefer advanced primary care targeted at their specific needs (Kambitsi, 2022). Financial wellness and insurance needs can also vary considerably across the workforce, with some workers focused on paying off loans or paying health care expenses and others focused more on paying off their mortgage or supporting their children (Collinson, 2023), and benefit options can target these different needs. By giving employees more options and control to customize their benefits, employers can personalize and increase the perceived value of benefits they offer, and they can offer benefits that better meet the needs of a diverse workforce.

Beyond taking a targeted strategic approach to benefit offerings, employers can also increase the quality of the benefit administration process. This may include improving benefit communication, fairness, and ease of use. Regarding communication, many employees, and even supervisors, are unaware of all of the benefits available to them (e.g., Casper et al., 2004; Hennessey et al., 1992). Employees may be preoccupied with their job responsibilities and nonwork demands, confused about their benefit options, and even regret some of their benefit decisions (Harkin, 2018). Organizations often rely on onboarding processes to communicate benefits packages, but many employees prefer to learn about their benefits on an ongoing basis through other sources, such as personal meetings with HR managers or supervisors, and through user-friendly online systems through which they can explore benefit offerings (Pegg, 2009). This suggests ongoing communication about benefits through HR and line managers and user-friendly internal websites are potential ways to increase the perceived value of benefits.

Even if employees are aware of their benefits, they often do not understand how much their employers invest in them (e.g., Harkin, 2018). Tools that help employees understand their benefits, including their costs and value, may further improve employees' evaluation of their benefits. For example, retirement benefits can be supplemented with retirement calculators, consultations, and simplified investment features that help employees understand and maximize the value of their retirement benefits (Held, 2023). Employers can also communicate their benefits budget and contribution to each employee's benefits while also making explicit comparisons with other employers to help employees understand the value of their benefits (Buckey, 2023).

Regarding fairness, the common justice philosophy behind traditional benefit plans has been need-based distribution (Cole & Flint, 2005). This philosophy means that the fair distribution of benefits requires making them available to those who need them and paying benefits out as employees need them. Thus, disparities in benefit access may decrease employees' evaluation of their benefits (Despard et al., 2023). Unfortunately, in some cases, there are differences in benefit access across employee groupings, such as geographical location or type of employment relationship (Laundon et al., 2019). Ensuring equal access to benefits based on need should, in general, increase employees' perceived fairness and benefit subjective evaluation. When employees' needs differ, however, even need-based distribution can result in perceptions of unfairness among some employees who do not need the benefits that are offered. One example of this is backlash among some employees toward family-friendly benefits (Parker & Allen, 2001; Perrigino et al., 2018). One way to address this perceived unfairness is to give employees a voice in the benefit plan design (Cole & Flint, 2005) and identify similarly valuable benefits that employees with different needs can enroll in, thus giving employees more control over their benefit plan. Transparency and consistent support for benefit use among managers are also important factors in the fairness of benefit delivery (Laundon et al., 2019) and should further contribute to employees' benefit subjective evaluation.

Future Research Directions

Building on our findings about the importance of benefit subjective evaluation, further research is needed on how employees evaluate their overall benefits package. This may include factors such as the extent to which the benefits meet their needs, the perceived intent of the organization, how the benefits compare to those of other employers, the transparency and ease of use of the benefits, and equity in the benefits offered across the workforce. These factors go beyond the objective value of the benefits and will likely add explanatory value as well as practical implications for organizations.

Another notable area in need of research is the subjective evaluation of specific benefits or benefit domains (e.g., health care, retirement). Understanding how employees evaluate specific benefits may call attention to more specific factors within each benefit domain. For example, health care benefit subjective evaluation might be influenced by the employer's and the employee's contribution, copays, the breadth of one's network, and one's own health care needs, among other things. Retirement, leave, quality of life, nonproduction bonus/pay, and other financial benefits could have their own factors in subjective evaluation. There may also be common factors across domains that are important for specific benefit satisfaction.

Future research should also delve more into the consequences of different types of benefits. We found that health care and retirement benefits showed stronger relationships with turnover intent, whereas training benefits tended to show stronger relationships with job satisfaction. We might expect these effects to have downstream consequences for employee performance, citizenship, and turnover, but as of now, empirical research is lacking. It would also be useful for studies to assess more specific outcomes aligned with the purpose of each type of benefit. For example, paid family leave benefits should be related to family outcomes, health care benefits should be related to employee health, training benefits should be related to employees' skills and motivation, and wellness benefits should be related to employees' physical and mental well-being. Some of the outcomes in our meta-analysis aligned with the purpose of the benefits, such as the relationship between quality of life benefits and well-being, but there are other outcomes that may even more closely align. It would be important to assess the extent to which benefits accomplish their intended goals.

Furthermore, it would be useful to examine how benefit changes affect employee outcomes. Employees may experience benefit changes differently than they do benefit levels. For example, taking a generous benefit away, such as a sabbatical program, may have a more negative influence than not having it in the first place if employees feel entitled to the benefits that are currently offered. Applying theory on gain or loss framing (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981), which suggests that people place greater value on losses than gains, may help to understand the relative effects of benefit additions or cuts as organizations consider how to optimize their benefit packages. Conservation of resources theory also suggests that resource

losses are more salient than gains (Hobfoll et al., 2018), and this too may yield predictions about the impact of benefit changes.

Research may also delve more into the role of context on employee benefit-outcome relationships. Research on benefit-outcome relationships outside of the United States is still relatively sparse, and there were not enough studies for our review to examine reactions to specific types of benefits. There were also not enough studies in our review to test how employees in different types of occupations or industries reacted to benefit experiences, but it is possible that employees react differently to the extent that benefits are normative in their industry. For example, leave policies can be very different across academic, corporate, and blue-collar settings, and this may change employees' reactions to leave benefits across these settings. Furthermore, public and private sector employees may react differently to benefits based on normative differences.

Further theory and empirical research are also needed on overall benefits packages. It is currently not clear which packages have the optimal positive association with employee relations, satisfaction, well-being, and/or retention. Packages could be customized or standardized, and they could focus on high-value standard benefits such as health insurance or include more unique benefits, such as the use of company products and services, that are difficult for competing employers to imitate. For an example of a unique benefit, L. L. Bean allows employees to borrow outdoor gear for their own adventures and offers substantial discounts on merchandise. Also, Delta Airlines provides employees and their eligible family members with flight privileges to domestic and international destinations. Such benefits would be difficult for other employers to copy.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this meta-analysis that should be noted. First, most of the studies we reviewed reported cross-sectional correlations between benefit experiences and outcomes. Thus, it is not possible to show that benefit experiences temporally preceded outcomes from the reviewed studies. The estimates from this meta-analysis also do not account for correlations with other human resource practices that may be related to the outcomes. It is possible that the observed relationship between benefits and employee outcomes is at least in part due to organizations with high-quality benefits also engaging in other favorable HR practices. Future research should examine all factors in an organization's total rewards package, including working conditions, pay, benefits, and other forms of support, simultaneously to isolate the effects of benefits and other rewards.

Additionally, the lack of studies in the literature on some of the more specific benefits identified in Table 1 precluded their inclusion in meta-analytic estimates. For example, financial benefits such as flexible spending accounts and financial planning services are popular, yet there is little research on their influence on employee relations. We recommend that future researchers investigate the effects of specific employee benefits that have not been the subject of much empirical research on employee relations. Finally, we were unable to distinguish actual benefit availability from perceived benefit availability in our analysis because our analysis focused primarily on employees' perceptions of availability. Sometimes benefits are available but employees are unaware of them, in which case they probably do not have much effect on employee relations and retention. We encourage future research on the disconnect between actual and perceived benefit availability.

Conclusion

Despite the large investments that organizations make in employee benefits and practitioners' concerns about how to effectively manage benefits as part of their compensation strategy, there has been no previous meta-analytic integration of findings on the relationship between employee benefit experiences and employee outcomes. The current meta-analysis provides scholars and practitioners with a quantitative summary of the empirical literature for different types of employee benefits and benefit experiences while integrating these experiences and their outcomes through the lens of social exchange theory. Our findings suggest that the relationships between benefit availability and outcomes are modest by effect size norms (Bosco et al., 2015) but comparable to the effects associated with pay and job design characteristics. The results also suggest that organizations should attend closely to employees' subjective evaluation of their benefits, consider the goals of the benefit package with respect to employee commitment, retention, satisfaction, and well-being, and include benefits alongside pay and working conditions as part of their employee relations and total reward strategy.

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