

Supervisors and Support: Critical Levers for Creating & Maintaining Ethical Organizations



DII Best Practices Forum
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Outline

- Setting the scene: Genesis of the project
- Research questions related to support:
 - Can we replicate our earlier work at the ERC?
 - What is support? (organizational v. supervisory; ethical v. generic)
 - Does it influence outcomes (ethical pressure, ethical behavior, performance)?
- What this means for you



Setting the scene

- Our previous research (DII 2005) explored two issues:
 - Leadership influences on pressure to behave unethically
 - Aspects of training that matter most



Setting the scene

■ Leadership

- What levels of leadership exert the strongest influence on employees' perceived pressure to behave unethically? (top, supervisors, coworker)
- What specific aspects of leader behavior affect that pressure? (trust, talk, set example, support)

■ Training

- What training characteristics are most critical to understanding training impact and effectiveness? (frequency, duration, instructor, methods)
- Support exerted 1x to 10x the influence of these!



This led us to ask:

- What is supervisory support?
- Is there something unique about ethical support?
- How does it relate to outcomes?
 - *Is it an important lever?*



Sample, procedures:

- New sample (DII 2008)
- 3 years later
- 3 firms (also participated in 1st study)
- > 5000 participants
- A variety of functional areas, organizational levels
- All online responses



Can we replicate? Yes

- Supervisor influences were strongest influence on pressure to violate ethical standards (top, supervisors, coworkers)
- Support was the most important aspect of supervisory actions (trust, talk, set example, support)



Measuring support (via Robert Eisenberger's work):

- POS (perceived organizational support)
 - The organization really cares about my well-being
 - The organization strongly considers my goals and values
- PSS (perceived supervisory support)
 - My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work
 - My supervisor tries to make my job as interesting as possible.



Distinguishing ethical support from general support

- POS-E (Organizational support for ethics)
 - The organization cares about my opinions **related to ethical issues at work**
 - The organization is willing to help me when I need assistance **in upholding the company's ethical standards**
- PSS-E (Supervisory support for ethics)
 - Help is available from my supervisor when I have **an ethical problem**
 - My supervisor cares about my general satisfaction **with ethical standards at work**



In all, we measure four types of support:

- POS: Perceived organizational support
- PSS: Perceived supervisory support
- POS-E: Perceived organizational support-ethics
- PSS-E: Perceived supervisory support-ethics
- (They are reliable, distinct from one another, etc.)

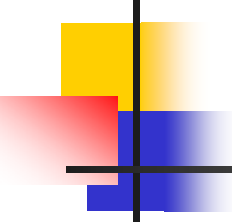


Exploratory analyses for DII:

	Mean value
POS	4.9
PSS	5.2
POS-E	4.7
PSS-E	5.5

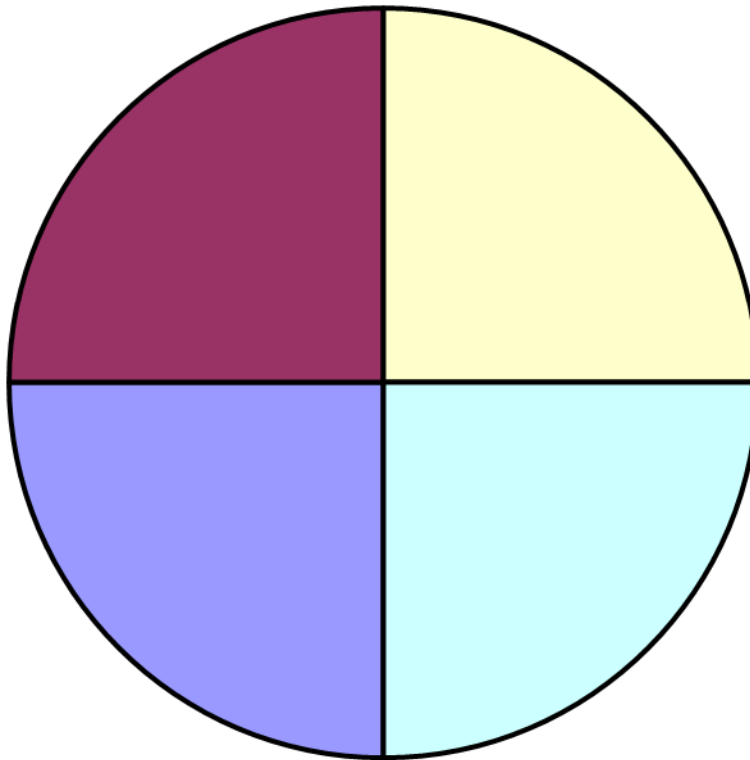
7-point scale; higher values = more support

Note: Higher than typical in POS studies (3.4-3.5)



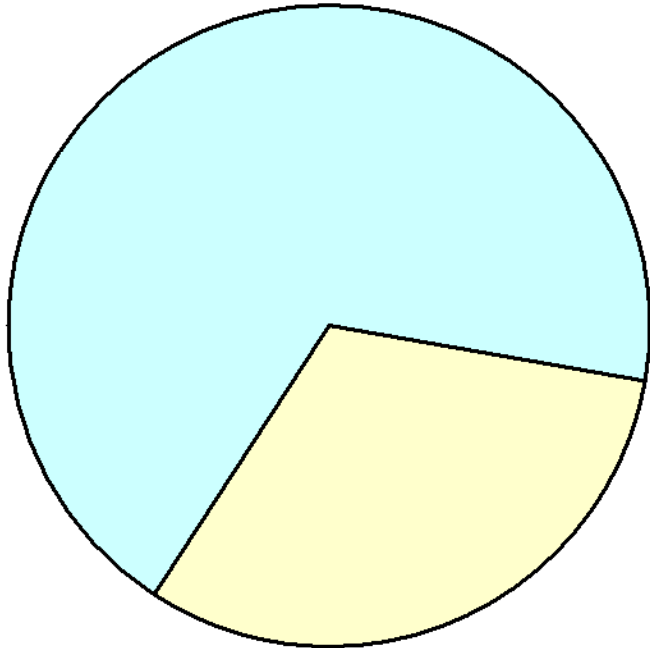
Are the four types of support useful in predicting pressure to violate standards?

If all equally powerful influences:

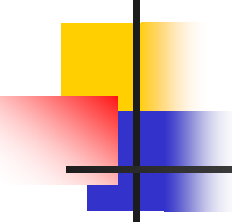


- POS
- PSS
- POS-E
- PSS-E

Influences of various support types on pressure to violate company ethical standards

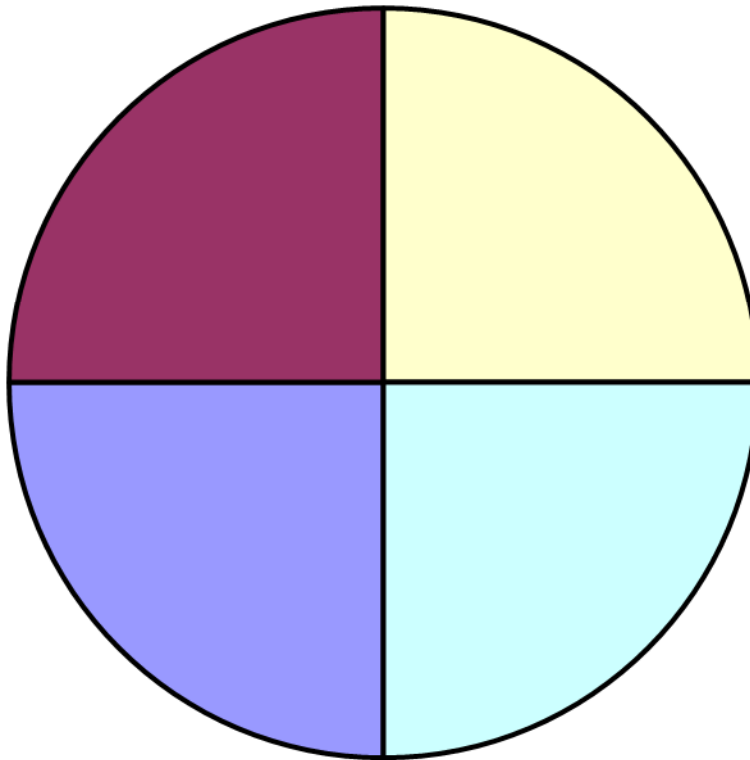


- POS
- PSS
- POSE
- PSSE



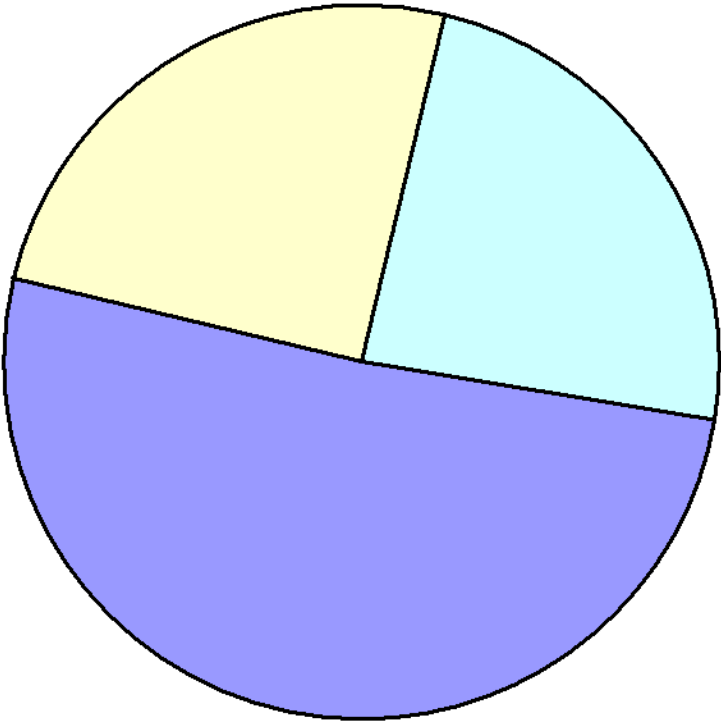
Are the four types of support useful in predicting fear of retaliation for questioning decisions of management?

If all equally powerful influences:



- POS
- PSS
- POS-E
- PSS-E

Influences of various support types on fear of retaliation



- POS
- PSS
- POSE
- PSSE



What other factors are impacted by support?

- Observed unethical behavior
- Reporting unethical behavior
- Satisfaction w/ response to report
- Satisfaction w/ company overall
- Usefulness of training
- Department performance
- (Rather than more pie charts, all in one table)

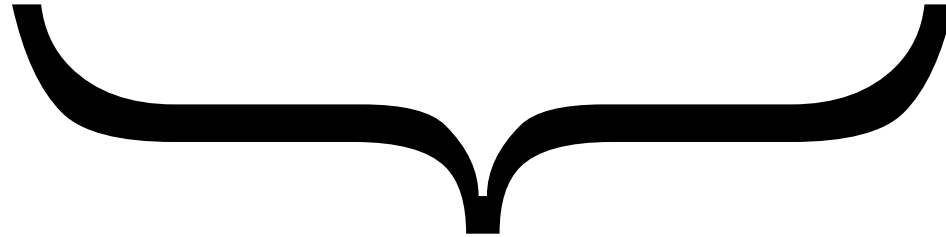
POS

PSS

POS-E

PSS-E

Pressure to
violate
standards



Fear of
retaliation

These are the factors we will use
(all at once) to predict outcomes

Observed
unethical
behavior

Reporting
unethical
behavior

Etc...

POS

PSS

POS-E

PSS-E

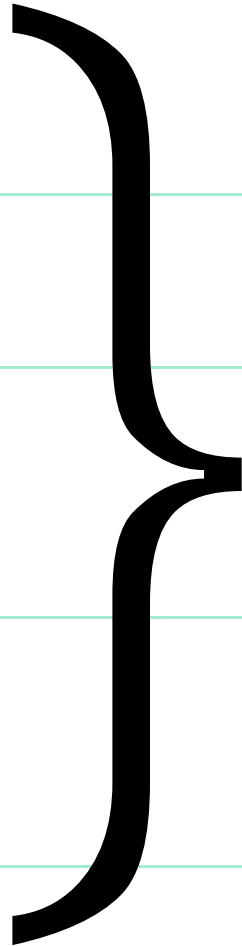
Pressure to
violate
standards

Fear of
retaliation

Observed
unethical
behavior

Reporting
unethical
behavior

Etc...



These are the outcomes we are
trying to predict (one at a time)

POS

PSS

POS-E

PSS-E

Pressure to
violate
standards

25

25

25

25

Fear of
retaliation

Observed
unethical
behavior

So, if all four types of support were equally important in predicting whether employees feel pressured to violate ethical standards, it would look like this

Reporting
unethical
behavior

Etc...

POS

PSS

POS-E

PSS-E

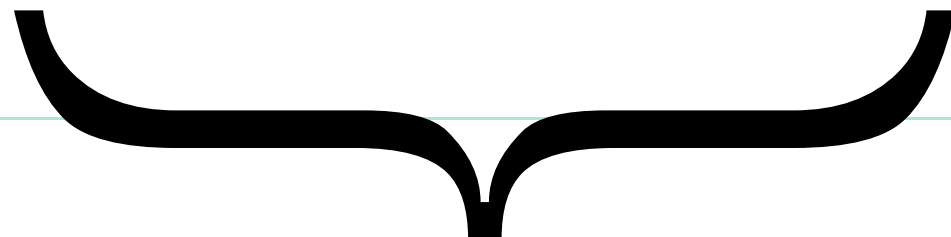
Pressure to violate standards

25

25

25

25



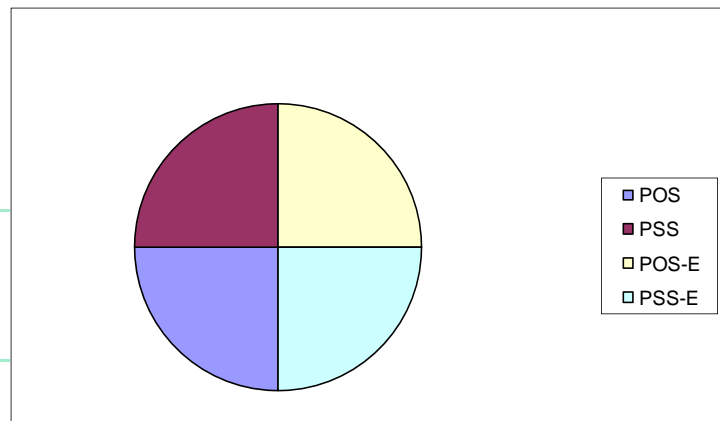
Fear of retaliation

Observed unethical behavior

So, if all four types of support were equally important in predicting whether employees feel pressured to violate ethical standards, it would look like this

Reporting unethical behavior

Etc...

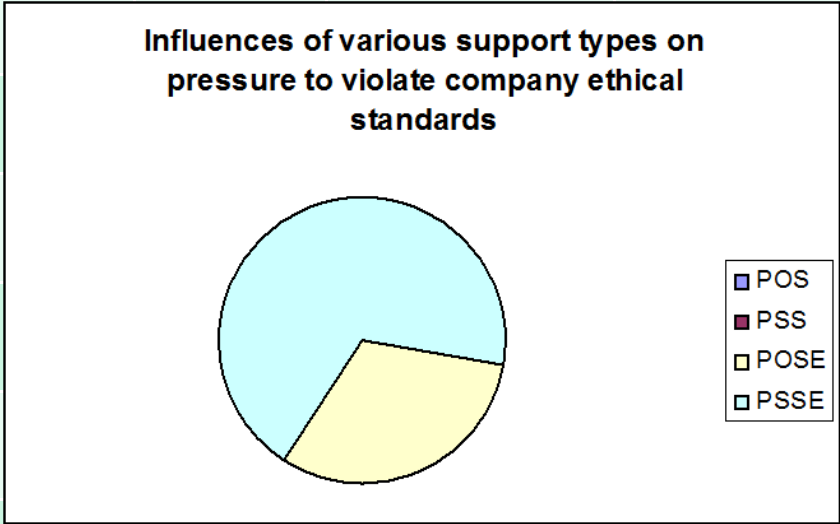


Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate				
Fear of retaliation				
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

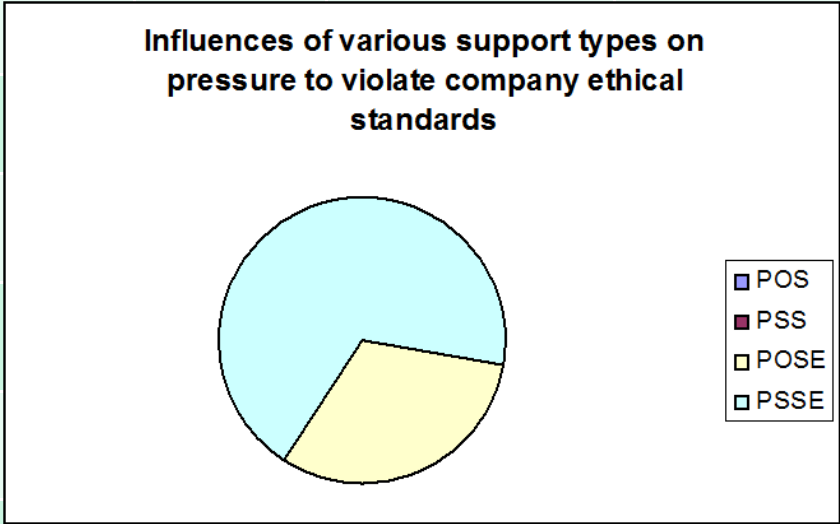
Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate				
Fear of retaliation				
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				



Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation				
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

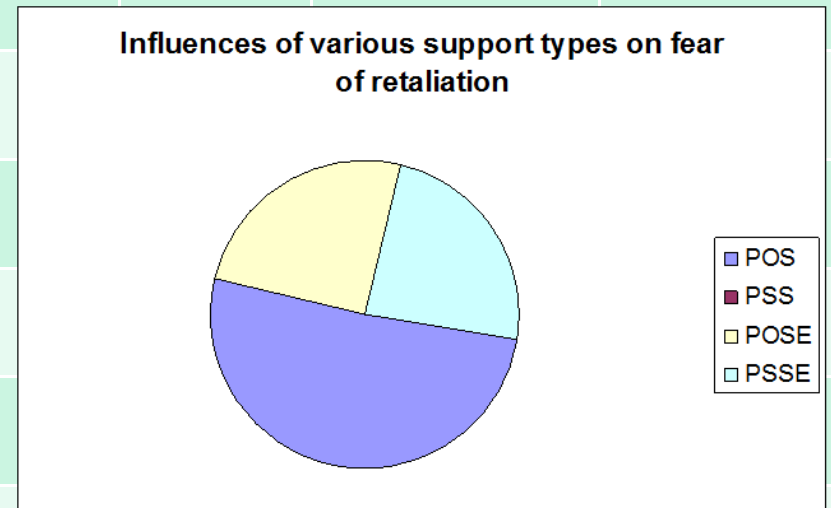


Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation				
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

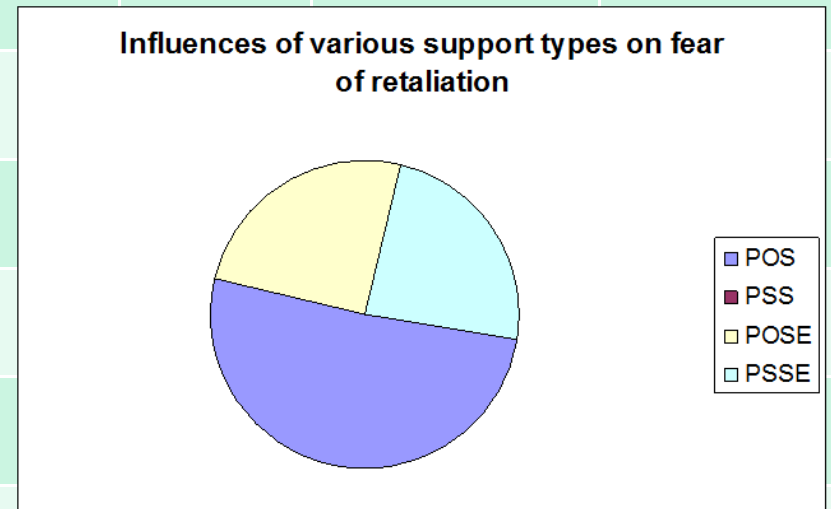
Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate				
Fear of retaliation				
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				



Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate				
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				



Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior				
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior				
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response				
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response			59	41
Training usefulness				
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response			59	41
Training usefulness	37		52	11
Satisfaction w/ company				
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response			59	41
Training usefulness	37		52	11
Satisfaction w/ company	64	8	8	20
Performance-overall				
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response			59	41
Training usefulness	37		52	11
Satisfaction w/ company	64	8	8	20
Performance-overall	32	28	22	18
Performance-quality				

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response			59	41
Training usefulness	37		52	11
Satisfaction w/ company	64	8	8	20
Performance-overall	32	28	22	18
Performance-quality	27	22	22	30

Global summary:

	POS	PSS	POS-E	PSS-E
Pressure to violate			31	69
Fear of retaliation	51		25	24
Observe uneth behavior	15	19	14	53
Report uneth behavior	100			
Satisfaction w/ response			59	41
Training usefulness	37		52	11
Satisfaction w/ company	64	8	8	20
Performance-overall	32	28	22	18
Performance-quality	27	22	22	30



Overall summary:

- These results support Eisenberger's earlier work, that (general) POS and PSS matter
- Also, earlier results that supervisory support minimizes pressure to violate standards
- But they provide new insights as well:
 - Ethical support is distinct
 - It matters, above & beyond general support
 - Ethical support from *supervisors* matters in particular, especially with respect to pressure



Lessons:

- PSS-E appears to be a powerful lever
- It's also a focused, specific lever, influencing specific outcomes
- PSS (general) is a good thing (see performance)
- But it's not enough. PSS-E does not automatically follow from PSS



Questions: What does PSS-E consist of? Items included:

- Help is available from my supervisor when I have an ethical problem.
- My supervisor cares about my general satisfaction with ethical standards at work.
- My supervisor would grant a reasonable request for a change in my working conditions if it would help me uphold the company's ethical standards.
- *These are examples, but not exhaustive. We're working on this.*



Other questions:

- It's probably more complex than: Have supportive supervisors, get ethics
 - e.g., How does support tie into other organizational relationships, outcomes?
- To study that, we would need supervisor-subordinate pairings, links to other organizational data (e.g., ethics, performance, accidents)



Questions?
