

## **COWORKER SUPPORT: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The emergence of coworker support has become a hot topic of debate in academic circles because it has an impact on job satisfaction, performance improvement, and reduces employee desire to resign. This research uses systematic literature review with the aim of providing an overview of the development of the topic through the latest data and providing suggestions for future research development. The literature taken over the last ten years since 2013 was processed using the Watase UAKE application to obtain article extraction in the form of article information, the theory underlying the article, to future research opportunities. The results show that 2022 is the year with the most relevant articles, the International Journal of Hospitality Management as the most cited or cited journal, and China as the country with the most publications. Of the 27 articles extracted, resource conservation theory is the theory most widely used as a basis for research.

**Keywords:** systematic literature review; slr; coworkers; support; social; Watase

### **INTRODUCTION**

Employees are an important element in the organization because the organization will determine the competitive advantage, survival, and welfare of the organization through the employees owned. Efforts to create high organizational welfare through a safe environment can be created with the help of employees, as well as the role of support from colleagues in the organization. A number of literature shows that support from colleagues serves to help employees in increasing work engagement, overcoming fatigue, reducing work stress felt by employees, improving performance, to reduce employee turnover rates (Chauhan et al., 2022) (Syed-Yahya et al., 2022) (Fu & Charoensukmongkol, 2023) (Li & De Clercq, 2020) (Self et al., 2022).

An employee who has the support of colleagues at work will feel that his or her well-being is taken care of, making it less likely that the employee will leave the organization. Other literature on coworker support suggests a relationship or association with employee intent to leave the organization, which will harm the organization because it will interfere with competitive advantage and cause problems within the organization. It states that coworker support is an important thing in organizational life in order to improve employee performance, and can affect physical health. The importance of support from fellow employees in the organization can also increase adaptive actions in order to improve careers. (Nazir & McCutcheon, 2016) (Self et al., 2022) (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017).

The importance of support from colleagues makes employees more committed to the organization, both affective commitment, ongoing commitment, and normative commitment. A study examining employees with disabilities revealed that coworker support is key in the inclusion

of employees with disabilities, that their coworkers are ready to listen to doubts and help employees with disabilities. The breadth of coworker support topics associated with other topics suggests that there is a prospect to dig deeper into coworker support. This study used a systematic literature (Sanclemente et al., 2022) review method. A systematic literature review in this study can contribute to advancing theoretical insights according to the topics discussed. Furthermore, this study will answer the following research questions.

RQ1: What is the general research profile on coworker support in the business management literature?

RQ2: What are the limitations of the coworker support literature and what can future research do to expand the review on the topic?

Research question number one (RQ1) refers to the general characteristics of articles that have been extracted such as publications per year, number of journal citations, countries with the highest number of articles, and other information. Research question number two (RQ2) is intended to provide future research proposals in the business management literature. This research is prepared by defining the concept of social support in which there is a scope of colleagues, methods used for data analysis, data analysis, and closed by conclusions.

### **Key Concept**

Support from colleagues within the organization is one form of social support that often appears in the form of work relationships both formally and informally. Coworkers who provide support will make employees feel able to cope with the situation because they have provided assistance. There are two categories of social support: instrumental and emotional support. Emotional support provided by colleagues is the availability of colleagues who care about other employees so that they can share inner feelings by listening, encouraging, and showing sympathy. Meanwhile, instrumental support is a form of support provided by colleagues by providing resources and practical assistance in the form of action. (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2022);(Khedhaouria et al., 2024) (Wang & Huang, 2021) (Granziera, 2022).

A literature states that the support provided by colleagues becomes very important and if the support is reduced it has an impact on the health and well-being of employees thereby reducing work effectiveness. In addition, it found that day-to-day coworker support became an important resource when work-family (Wan et al., 2022) balance was disrupted by conflicts over daily tasks. Forms of emotional support provided by coworkers have been discussed in a number of literatures such as finding that there is a significant correlation between emotional support from coworkers and work engagement. Employees will feel confident that they will be able to complete their work because they get help in managing emotions. Employees who receive support from colleagues in instrumental form will maintain positive energy, loyalty, and bonds with the organization where the employee works, as demonstrated by .(Pohl et al., 2022) (Kmieciak, 2022).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Systematic literature review (SLR) is a method used in this study, which is a systematic method to answer research questions through analysis and assessment of data from certain literature in which the author's interpretation is limited in order to achieve the highest possible objectivity. This research uses the Watase UAKE application as a data processing application. In addition, it also uses (Kossyva et al., 2023); (Pizzolitto et al., 2023)) grounded theory to expand the depth of academic literature with five stages for reviewing the literature as shown in Table 1 below. (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013)

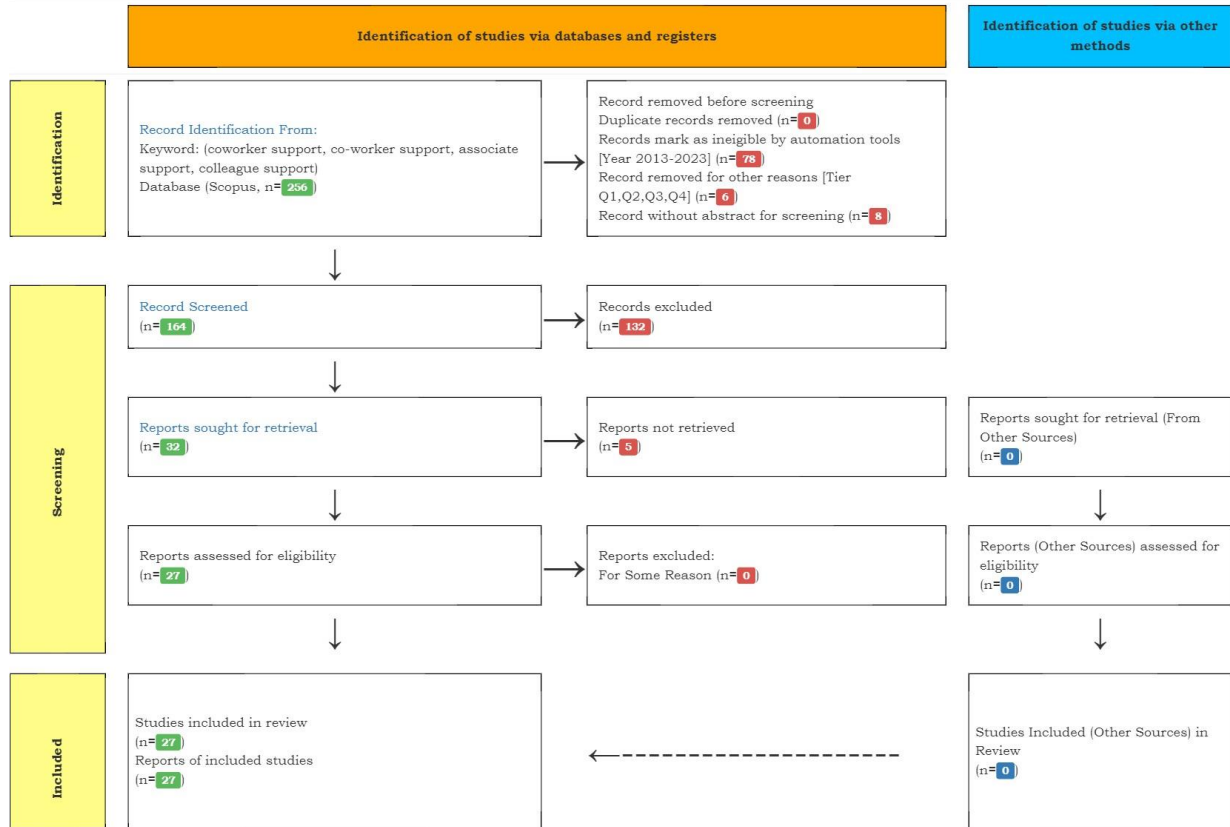
Table 1 Five Stages Grounded-Theory Wolfswinkel

1	Define	
	1.1	Define inclusion or exclusion criteria The articles used in this study are articles published in English and in academic journals.
	1.2	Identification of research areas coworker support has a relationship with other topics as discussed in the introduction, so this study uses articles published in the last ten years since 2013. In addition, the articles used come from journals in the fields of management, business, economics, and psychology.
	1.3	Determine the appropriate source This study uses articles published in Scopus, as the most complete database of articles. (Sai & Pinapati, 2023)
	1.4	Define specific search terms Researchers used the keywords coworker support, coworker support, associate support, and colleague support to expand the search for articles with similar topics.
2	Search	
	2.1	Search The total number of articles found according to the topic is 256 articles. After that, there are exceptions for articles published outside the time range of 2013 to 2023, journal ranking articles, and notes without abstracts, resulting in 164 articles.
3	Select	
	3.1	Refine samples This study extracted articles by looking at abstracts, titles, and keywords resulting in 27 articles. This is because there are articles that are filtered again.
4	Analyze	
	4.1	Open coding This phase allows the researcher to identify a glimpse or in general terms of the existing article. This study extracts categories that correspond to the research question. (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013)
	4.2	Axial coding This encoding allows for the existence of linkages between categories and sub-categories. In this phase the themes and sub-themes of the article are determined. (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013)
	4.3	Selective coding The selective coding phase allows for the refinement and integration of predefined categories and sub-categories in axial coding (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013).
5	Present	
	5.1	Content Structuring and Structuring This stage contains the preparation of descriptive content from articles that have been identified according to the topic, before compiling the entire article.
	5.2	Article preparation

		Article structuring is divided into five parts, namely introduction, methodology, descriptive statistics, discussion, and conclusion
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In addition to using the protocol in Table 1, this study also used PRISMA (preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analyses) as shown in Figure 1. PRISMA was first introduced in 2009 as a reporting guideline for systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021) . Figure 1 shows PRISMA as the relevant article extraction process.

COWORKER SUPPORT



Generate From Watase Uake Tools, based on Prisma 2020 Reporting

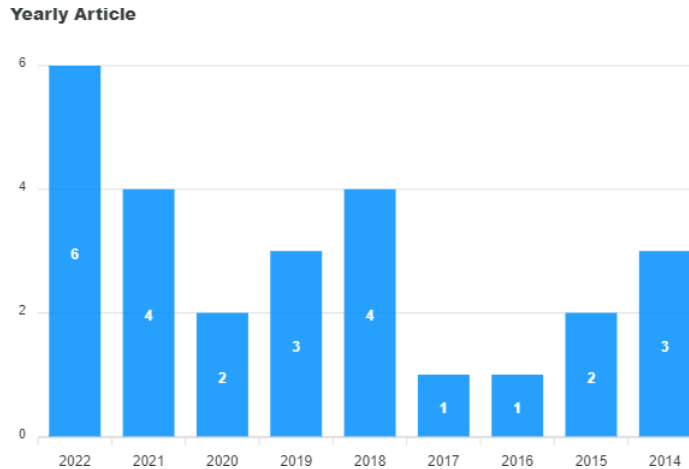
Picture 1 PRISMA  
Source: secondary data processed in 2024

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Analysis

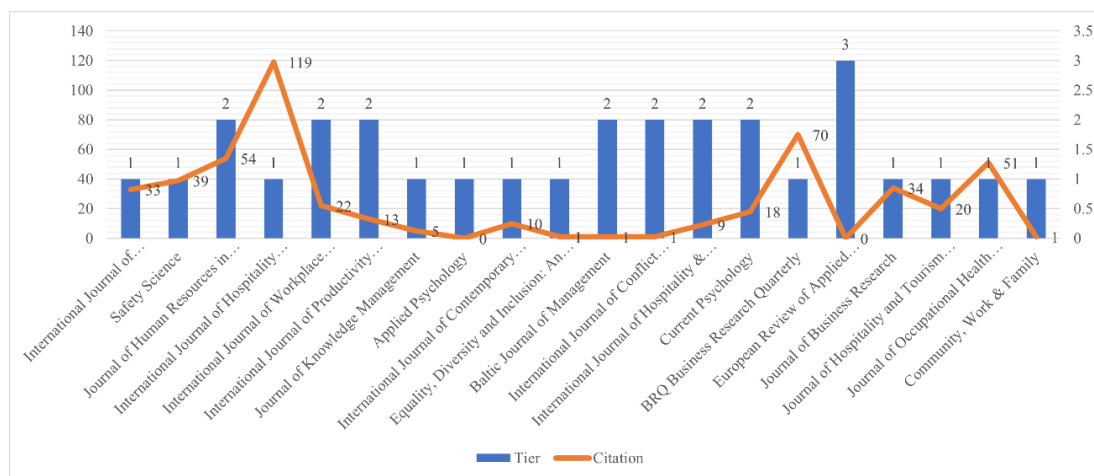
#### Article Information

Figure 2 below shows the year-over-year progress of research on coworker support. In the Watase UAKE application used in this study, it is known that the development of the coworker support topic literature is instable as shown by Figure 2. There were three articles published in 2014 which then decreased until 2016. Then the trend of literature development in 2017 stagnated before finally increasing in 2018 with a total of four articles. But this did not last long, where the development of publications on the topic of coworker support decreased in 2019 by three articles and two articles in 2020. In 2021, there was an increase in publications to four articles, followed by six articles in 2022.



Picture 2 Number of Publications Year on Year  
Source: secondary data processed in 2024

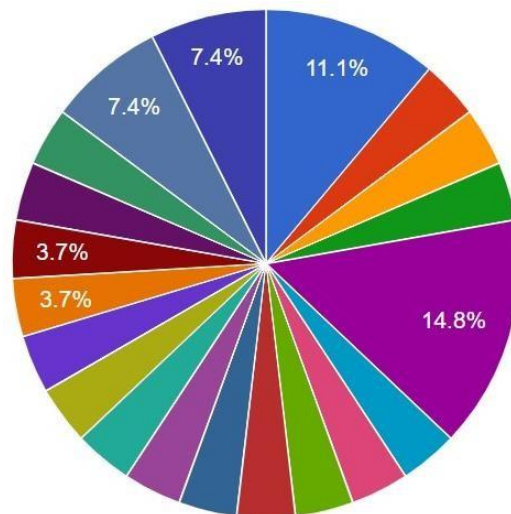
Coworker support is a topic that is not only discussed and debated in the field of management, but also in several other fields such as psychology, business. This can be seen in Figure 3 which shows the top 20 journals along with journal rankings. The International Journal of Hospitality Management is the journal with the most citations, which is 119 citations where the journal is the first or tier one journal. The second journal with the most citations is BRQ Business Research Quarterly which is a tier one journal with 70 citations. Meanwhile, there are seven journals that occupy tier two such as the Journal of Human Resource in Hospitality & Tourism which has 54 citations. The graph shown in Figure 3 shows that coworker support is a topic that is widely discussed and developed by reputable journals both ranked one and two journals. One article in a tier one journal, the International Journal of Hospitality Management, discusses coworker support associated with the topic of turnover intention. The results of the literature showed that coworker support was shown to weaken employees' intention to leave the organization. (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018)



Picture 3 Journal Citations  
Source: secondary data processed in 2024

### Development of Articles from Several Countries

Data processing through Watase UAKE also produces a graph of each country with the most publications as shown in Figure 4 below. The purple circle shows that the country with the most publications at 14.8% is China with four articles. While the circle section with 11.1% is articles that do not attach a country so they cannot be identified. The countries with the next most publications are Thailand and Turkey which each have a percentage of 7.4% with two articles that have been published between 2013 and 2023. Figure 4 shows that China produced the most articles on the topic of coworker support, such as the article titled Supervisory and coworker support for safety: Buffers between job insecurity and safety performance of high-speed railway drivers in China. (Guo et al., 2019)



Picture 4 Country Chart

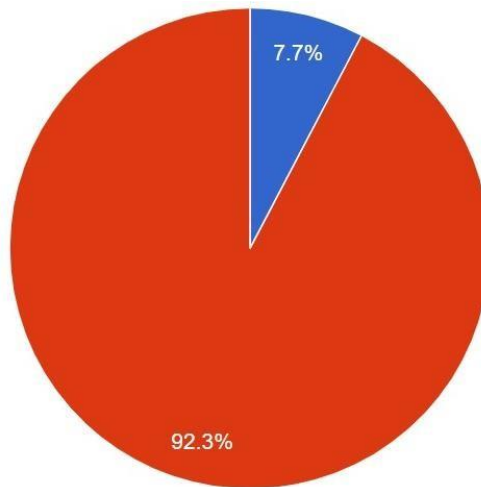
Source: secondary data processed in 2024

The next statistical data can be reviewed from the evolution or development of article literature from several countries. Data that has been processed using Watase UAKE shows a number of articles with statistical samples from various countries. This can be seen in Figure 4 which shows many countries discussing and exploring more coworker support as literature. The number of colors in the circle in Figure 4, which is 21 colors, reflects at least one country in each color. Over the past ten years, China has been the most used country as a statistical unit at 14.8% or as many as four articles. Meanwhile, the distribution of other literature came from other Asian continents such as Thailand, Malaysia, to Pakistan. Not only from the Asian continent, a number of other continents such as America, Africa, and Europe also have countries with publications as shown in Table 2. The presence of literature from various countries in various continents enriches the breadth of topics from coworker support, such as articles from those discussing support from colleagues as well as from (Syed-Yahya et al., 2022) supervisors on fire department employees in Malaysia.

Table 2 Articles for each country

No.	Country	Number of Articles
1	Country cannot be identified	2
2	Australia	1
3	Cameroon	1
4	Canada	1
5	Chinese	4
6	Ecuador	1
7	Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, Ohio, West Virginia, North Carolina, Virginia	1
8	Korean	1
9	South Korea	1
10	Kuwait	1
11	Macau	1
12	Malaysia	1
13	Midwestern States	1
14	Pakistan	1
15	Polish	1
16	Portuguese	1
17	French	1
18	Spanish	1
19	Thailand	2
20	Turkish	2

Source: secondary data processed in 2024



Picture 5 Method Graph

Source: secondary data processed in 2024

Figure 5 shows a graph of the methods used in the article. There are two types of methods that have been used, namely surveys and experiments in articles that have been extracted through Watase UAKE. The part of the circle in red is a collection of articles with survey methods as much

as 92.3%, while experimental methods are represented through blue with a total of 7.7%. This indicates that colleague support articles are analyzed more using the survey method when compared to the experimental method. In addition, Table 3 shows the ten articles with the most citations. The work article became the most cited article with a total of 70 citations, and in the last order is the work article is the article with a total of 26 citations cited. (Kim et al., 2017) (Yang et al., 2019)

Table 3 Most Article Citations

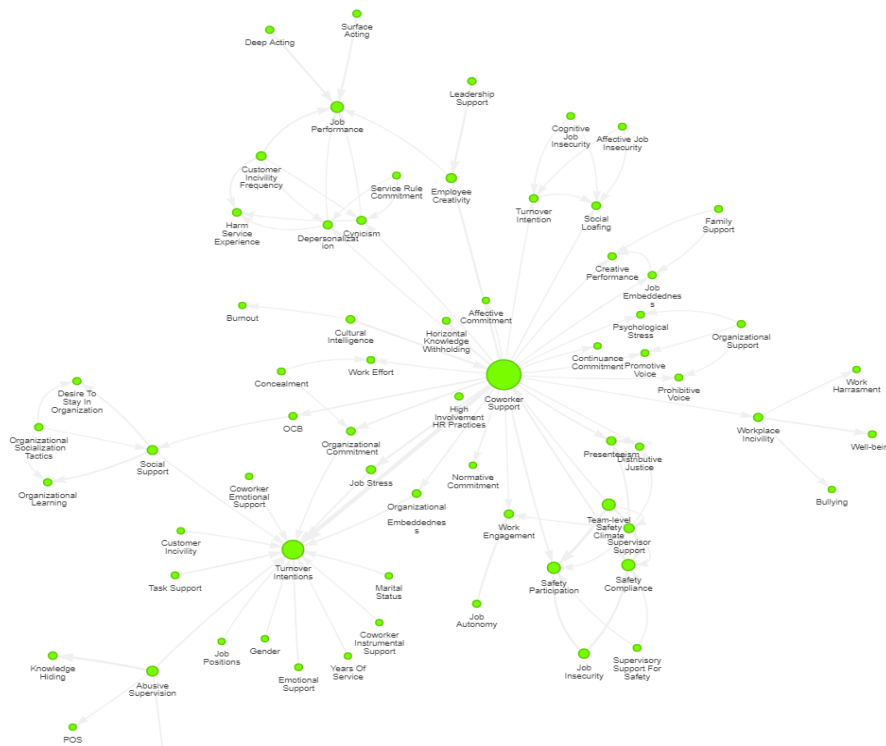
Rank	Heading	Number of Citations	Year	Writer	Journal
1	Is all support equal? The moderating effects of supervisor, coworker, and organizational support on the link between emotional labor and job performance	70	2017	Kim, Hyun Jeong; Hur, Won-Moo; Moon, Tae-Won; Jun, Jea-Kyoon	BRQ Business Research Quarterly
2	Perceived organizational support and coworker support as antecedents of foreign workers voice and psychological stress	66	2014	Loi, Raymond; Ao, Olivia K.Y.; Xu, Angela J.	International Journal of Hospitality Management
3	The Role of Coworker and Supervisor Support in the Relationship Between Job Autonomy and Work Engagement Among Portuguese Nurses: A Multilevel Study	55	2015	Vera, María; Martínez, Isabel M.; Lorente, Laura; Chambel, M <sup>a</sup> José	Social Indicators Research
4	The impact of abusive supervision and coworker support	54	2015	Xu, Shi; Martinez, Larry R.; Van Hoof, Hubert;	Current Issues in Tourism

	on hospitality and tourism student employees turnover intentions in Ecuador			Tews, Michael; Torres, Leonardo; Farfan, Karina	
5	Does turnover intention mediate the effects of job insecurity and coworker support on social loafing?	53	2018	Akgunduz, Yilmaz; Eryilmaz, Gamze	International Journal of Hospitality Management
6	Time pressure and coworker support mediate the curvilinear relationship between age and occupational well-being.	51	2014	Zacher, Hannes; Jimmieson, Nerina L.; Bordia, Prashant	Journal of Occupational Health Psychology
7	Does job embeddedness mediate the effects of coworker and family support on creative performance? An empirical study in the hotel industry	45	2016	Karatepe, Osman M.	Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism
8	Supervisory and coworker support for safety: Buffers between job insecurity and safety performance of high-speed railway drivers in China	39	2019	Guo, Ming; Liu, Shuzhen; Chu, Fulei; Ye, Long; Zhang, Qichao	Safety Science
9	The stress-reducing effect of coworker support on turnover intentions: Moderation by political ineptness and despotic leadership	34	2020	De Clercq, Dirk; Azeem, Muhammad Umer; Haq, Inam Ul; Bouckennooghe, Dave	Journal of Business Research

10	Supervisor Support, Coworker Support and Presenteeism among Healthcare Workers in China: The Mediating Role of Distributive Justice	26	2019	Yang, Tianan; Lei, Run; Jin, Xuan; Li, Yan; Sun, Yangyang; Deng, Jianwei	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
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Source: secondary data processed in 2024

The coworker support debate as a research topic is developed and linked to various other topics as illustrated in Figure 6. The largest circle indicating the coworker support variable became the center of the data analysis with arrows to various other research topics. The arrow indicates that there is literature or findings that link the coworker support variable with the intended variable. Figure 6 also shows that the thickness of the arrow indicates the amount of literature that discusses the theme according to the direction of the arrow.



Picture 6 Meta Data  
Source: secondary data processed in 2024

**Content Analysis**

A literature reveals that employees who have supportive coworkers, truly understand, and sympathize with everything that happens at work can reduce the suffering experienced by employees. The form of support provided is generally divided into two, namely emotional and

instrumental. The emotional support that colleagues provide either by showing sympathy, being a good listener, or supporting the opinions of employees is believed to help employees through and overcome difficult situations. In contrast to emotional support, instrumental support takes the form of actions or assistance of coworkers who are helpful or intended to help. In this section, a conceptual map will be displayed which then the researcher explains what theories are most widely used as (Chung et al., 2021) (Baker & Kim, 2021; Hao et al., 2022) (Deelstra et al., 2003) ground theory. Furthermore, the content analysis section also includes limitations on the findings in the extracted articles along with the possibility of future research.

### **Emotional Support**

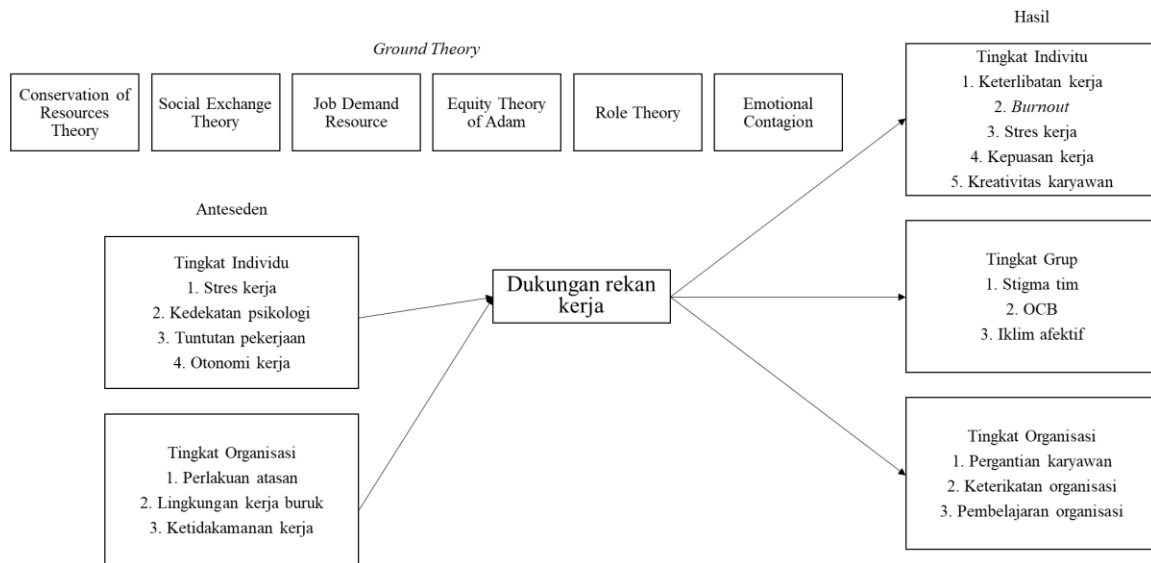
A finding in the literature reveals that employees who have colleagues with full emotional support signify the quality of interaction they have, where solidarity is the result of job satisfaction. In other literature, emotional support is more important among employees in the hospitality and tourism industry because it is considered a means of containing the negative impact of arbitrary superiors so that employees' emotional reserves are replenished. Meanwhile, forms of emotional support are proven to reduce employee turnover rates as described by . In addition to employees, managers also need emotional support from their coworkers to minimize the action of leaving the organization. Organizations can also provide socialization about the importance of building a team that has sustainable relationships. (Aydın Küçük , 2022) (Xu et al., 2018) (Self & Gordon, 2019) (Self et al., 2022) (Xu et al., 2018)

### **Instrumental Support**

In addition to emotional, there are a number of articles that also focus on instrumental support. This is shown by stating that colleagues can create a work environment that is more binding with the organization so as to keep employees in the organization. Furthermore, other literature shows that foreign workers in Thailand with high (Kmieciak, 2022) cultural intelligence receive assistance in the form of providing relevant information and advice. Other literature reveals that social support in the workplace can help employees in reducing the adverse effects of certain situations. Not only that, the actions of colleagues in order to help also have a positive influence on employee creativity, namely by helping to develop ideas from existing experiences . (Fu & Charoensukmongkol , 2023) (Geldart et al., 2018) ( Zaitouni & Ouakouak , 2018) .

**Conceptual Framework**

The following Figure 7 shows the synthesis framework in coworker support by showing the three main parts of antecedents, conceptual framework, and results based on . (Khizar et al., 2023)



Picture 7 Conceptual Framework  
Source: secondary data processed in 2024

In addition to the conceptual framework shown by Figure 7, Table 4 follows a summary of coworker support in terms of the characteristics, factors, and impact of emotional and instrumental forms of support.

Table 4 Forms of CoWorker Support

	Emotional Support	Instrumental Support
Forms of support	Show sympathy, as a good listener, support the opinions of others	Help get work done, provide funding and other resources
Factor	Stress due to work, treatment of superiors, job insecurity, job burdens and demands	
Impact	Performance, job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, reducing the intention to leave the organization	

Source: secondary data processed in 2024

**Theory Used**

This section describes the grand theory widely used by the article on the data on Watase UAKE, shown by Table 5.

Table 5 Most Used Theories

No.	Theory	Explanation	Sample Articles
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1	Conservation of Resources Theory (COR)	A theory that focuses on the resources that the individual values, in which the individual will maintain, as well as add to those resources either of objects, characteristics, conditions or energy . (Hobfoll , 1989)	(Guo et al., 2019) (De Clercq et al., 2020) (Fu & Charoensukmongkol, 2023)
2	Social Exchange Theory (SET)	The theory put forward by Blau explains that in social relationships there are advantages, benefits, and sacrifices where it involves socio-emotional so that there is a reciprocal relationship. (Blau, 1964)	(Loi et al., 2014) (Limpanitgul et al., 2014) (Syed-Yahya et al., 2022)
3	Job Demand Resource (JD-R)	This JD-R model has two classifications of job characteristics, namely job demands and job resources. The JD-R model assumes that job tensions will increase if work demands are high and resources are limited. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)	(Chung et al., 2021) (Goldberg & Willham, 2023)
4	Equity Theory of Adam	This theory focuses on the fair treatment that individuals receive through what is done and what is received . (Adams, 1965)	(Aydın Küçük, 2022)
5	Role Theory	Role theory is a theory that assumes that employees undergo many roles at the same time, namely as employees, family members, colleagues. (Biddle, 1986)	(Zacher et al., 2014)
6	Emotional Contagion	The theory of emotional contagion introduced by Hatfield et al, in which individuals mimic the emotions displayed by	(Vera et al., 2016)

		others in a way of imitating and adjusting . (Hatfield et al., 1994)	
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Source: secondary data processed in 2024

One of the literature that uses COR theory concerns how coworker support helps employees to be able to reduce negative feelings at work due to a stressful work environment. Meanwhile, another literature that raises the COR theory as (De Clercq et al., 2020) a ground theory is where the literature explains that Chinese employees who have knowledge of Thai culture tend to be easier to get support from colleagues when working in Thailand. Furthermore, it is explained in the article that Chinese employees working for organizations in Thailand depend on the characteristics of the employees themselves that are relevant to Thai culture. On the other hand, when employees provide resources in the form of support to other employees, the employee will be motivated and work hard so that it affects performance. COR theory is also used to distinguish perceptions of resource availability, resource investment behavior, and perceptions of investment instruments. (Fu & Charoensukmongkol , 2023) (Guo et al., 2019) (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015)

In the theory of deep social exchange, coworkers become important partners for employees in conducting social exchanges because support from the social environment including colleagues can help employees to improve performance through teamwork and completion of work tasks. The literature explains that social support, including from colleagues, can increase the promotive voice of foreign employees. The SET theory is also fundamental in explaining that employees who receive high support from their coworkers must remain within the organization in order to return the favor. In addition, employees who get support from their coworkers will help employees in showing positive behavior at work where it reduces the employee's intention to quit the job in return for such support. The SET theory is also used as a basis for how employees can comply with occupational safety because it has been supported by the organization's safety climate. (Loi et al., 2014) ( Spleanitum et al., 2014) ( Akgunduz & Eryilmaz , 2018) (Syed-Yahya et al., 2022)

Another theory used to examine coworker support is the JD-R model, in which supportive coworkers as a resource in organizations help transgender employees to cope with the stress of social rejection due to social stigma. Different findings of the impact supportive coworkers had on showed no significant role of coworker support on chilling employees out of work. This can be caused by support that will gradually decrease. Meanwhile, studies conducted show that justice theory explains that employees who get support from colleagues will mitigate perceptions of injustice in the organizational environment. The literature explains that employees have expectations for managers to interact with employees as employees interact with other colleagues. But managers do not do that to all employees, so there is an element of injustice that creates a sense of dissatisfaction at work. (Goldberg & Willham, 2023) (Chung et al., 2021) (Aydin Küçük , 2022)

Unlike the theory of justice, role theory can affect the well-being of employees in organizations because it is influenced by how far employees can meet expectations and obtain resources related to the role of those employees . Furthermore, the literature explains in his study the theory of emotional contagion shown through the social support that employees receive from colleagues. Employees will receive such support through capturing emotions from other individuals i.e. from coworkers. (Zacher et al., 2014) (Vera et al., 2016)

**Literature Limitations**

This section discusses limitations on articles that have been extracted using the Watase UAKE application as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Research Limitations and Advice

No.	Limitations	Future Research Advice
1	Conceptual explanation of coworker support variables as well as from other variables in the model	Explore the understanding of models and variables so that future research can understand the mechanism of variables used in the model
2	Limitations of variables used in the research model	Future research can integrate other variables and expand the research model
3	There are differences in findings from previous literature so that research results are not fixed or changed	Replicating the same study with a wider sample  Can adopt other approaches either through mediation or moderation to explain research differences
4	There are sample limitations that limit findings	Future research can expand the sample to make findings more concrete, both in the object of research between company sectors and between countries
5	Many articles use cross sectional	Using longitudinal research to get results over time

Source: secondary data processed in 2024

Based on Table 5, researchers have also identified opportunities for future research questions contained in the following Table 7.

Table 7 Future Research Question Opportunities

No.	Future Research Opportunities	Sample Articles
1	How can contact between more individualistic employees affect the support provided to colleagues?	(Kim et al., 2017)
2	What are the variables that are most used in expanding the concept of coworker support?	(Baker & Kim, 2021)
3	How can different organizational cultures impact coworker support?  What are some potential mediating (or moderating) variables in coworker support relationships?	(Hao et al., 2022) (Zaitouni & Ouakouak, 2018)
4	How does coworker support affect various industry sectors?	(Kim et al., 2017) (Chung et al., 2021)

	How do the results of coworker support differ in different countries?	
5	What are the differences between cross-sectional and longitudinal research results in literature development?	(Vera et al., 2016)

Source: secondary data processed in 2024

### implication

There are a number of implications for this study, especially for theoretical implications. First, this study summarizes the findings of previous research that are discussed comprehensively so as to add to the knowledge literature regarding coworker support reviews. The second is the summary of limitations in previous findings, which can provide a reference for the development of future research on the topic of social support coming from colleagues. In addition, this study also has practical implications, namely employees need supportive colleagues because it can increase organizational attachment, work engagement, assist employees in reducing stress, to restrain employees from resigning from the organization. Seeing the impact caused by coworker support, the organization can accommodate employees to form good relationships between employees in order to improve performance and benefit the organization. In addition, employees can strengthen interpersonal relationships with other employees in order to gain a sense of solidarity among employees. (Self et al., 2022) (Vera et al., 2016) (De Clercq et al., 2020) (Kmieciak, 2022)

### CONCLUSION

The study, which uses the systematic literature review (SLR) method, identifies coworker support as a topic raised through the extraction of a number of articles in the last ten years until 2023. The information displayed is the result of data processing from the Watase UAKE application which describes important parts of the article to answer research questions. The first research question is about the characteristics that contain article information as shown by Figure 3 regarding citations and journal rankings, and Table 2 which contains the most information related to citations. Furthermore, the second research question regarding the limitations of the extracted literature is indicated in Table 5 so that it can be a reference for similar research in the future.

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