


Organizational Nostalgia: The Construct, the Scale and its Implications for Organizational Functioning

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Organizational nostalgia – a sentimental longing for past events in, and aspects of, one’s organizational life – is a commonly experienced but poorly understood emotion. Qualitative research has explored how it helps employees cope with threat. Here, we examine its motivational properties. Building on the job demands–resources model, we hypothesized that organizational nostalgia – assessed with a newly developed and validated scale – predicts (in-role and extra-role) job performance, creativity and support for organizational change. Study 1 showcased the development of the Organizational Nostalgia Scale. We proceeded to hypothesize that work engagement, via need satisfaction, mediates the above-mentioned positive relations, and tested these hypotheses in three additional studies. In Study 2, a multi-source design with leader–follower dyads, leader organizational nostalgia was associated with increased leader organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), as rated by followers. In Study 3, a lagged correlational design with employees, organizational nostalgia positively predicted OCB via work engagement. Finally, in Study 4, a lagged correlational design, organizational nostalgia predicted increased in-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change. These associations were serially mediated by need satisfaction and work engagement. We conclude that organizational nostalgia has motivational implications. Our research affords a theoretical framework for the emotion and the means (i.e. a scale) to study it.

Introduction

Nostalgia is a commonly felt emotion in organizations (Gabriel, 1993; Ylijoki, 2005). Organizational nostalgia is nostalgia specific to the organization one works in and is defined as ‘a sentimental longing or wistful affection for past events in, and aspects of, one’s organizational life’ (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018, p. 44). Prior studies have shown that organizational nostalgia helps members to cope with the organizational threat by sustaining their organizational or professional identity (Brown and Humphreys, 2002; McDonald, Waring and Harrison, 2006; Ylijoki, 2005). Little is known about the emotion beyond this identity continuity function.

We propose that organizational nostalgia has a broader function than this identity continuity function.

It is a motivational force that enables in-role and extra-role performance, creativity and support for change. To study its motivational property, we build on the job demands–resources (JD-R) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). We argue that organizational nostalgia facilitates satisfaction of fundamental psychological needs, which should increase work engagement. Work engagement, in turn, should positively predict the aforementioned outcome variables.

However, given that past work has been almost exclusively qualitative, no commonly accepted operationalization of the construct ‘organizational nostalgia’ exists. Therefore, we first developed and validated a scale to assess it. This allowed us to explore the nomological network of organizational nostalgia beyond its presumed identity implications.

Hypothesis development

Nostalgia entails fond, tender and valued memories at its core (Hepper *et al.*, 2012; Sedikides *et al.*, 2015; Van Tilburg *et al.*, 2019). Based on their content, researchers have proposed different forms of nostalgia, such as personal (i.e. referring to one's private life; Van Tilburg, Wildschut and Sedikides, 2018; Wildschut *et al.*, 2006) and relational (i.e. referring to one's dyadic relationships; Evans *et al.*, 2022; Mallory *et al.*, 2018). Organizational nostalgia is another form, referring to idiosyncratic and meaningful events that transpired in the workplace (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018). Such events centrally feature the self, and when retrieved, imbue the employee with nostalgia about their organization (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018). The events are appraised positively, although with a tinge of sadness as the cherished moments are irredeemably gone (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018, 2021).

The organizational nostalgia literature is mostly qualitative (Van Dijke and Leunissen, 2022). Brown and Humphreys (2002) addressed the changing nature of higher education, suggesting that shared nostalgic narratives among educators sustain organizational identity during organizational change. Milligan (2003) proposed that, following organizational change, organizational nostalgia facilitates identity continuity among employees. Ylijoki (2005) and McDonald, Waring and Harrison (2006) reported similar results among medical practitioners and academics, respectively. Finally, experiments showed that organizational nostalgia increases work meaningfulness and decreases turnover intentions, especially among employees who experience burnout (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018). In summary, the literature has concentrated on the identity or coping implications of organizational nostalgia in the presence of a threat. We provide a broader perspective, focusing on its motivational implications.

The job demands–resources model

We position organizational nostalgia in the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, 2017). The model links resources and demands in the workplace to job performance via a motivational component (i.e. work engagement) and a health impairment process (i.e. strain). Work engagement has a positive, whereas health impairment has a negative, influence on job performance. We focus on work engagement as the process that tethers organizational nostalgia to job performance. Work engagement, 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption' (Seppälä *et al.*, 2009, p. 460), entails energy (i.e. vigour), willingness to invest effort and persist in one's job (i.e. dedication) and immersion in

one's work (i.e. absorption). Resources – physical, social or organizational aspects of one's occupation that stimulate personal growth in the workplace – increase work engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, 2017). The JD-R model distinguishes between job resources, such as performance feedback or learning opportunities, and personal resources, such as self-efficacy, optimism and assertiveness (Bakker and Wingerden, 2021; Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007).

Organizational nostalgia is a personal resource

We conceptualize organizational nostalgia as a personal resource, defined as 'aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully' (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007, p. 123). Organizational nostalgia is an aspect of the self (i.e. a self-relevant emotion; Van Tilburg, Wildschut and Sedikides, 2018), with the self-being defined as a cognitive representation of one's life events, roles, aptitudes and social relationships (Sedikides and Gregg, 2003). The self within the organization (Ferris, Johnson and Sedikides, 2018) contains memories about social interactions with important others in the workplace (e.g. colleagues, managers, clients), job-related events or challenges and physical surroundings (e.g. buildings, a lounge room; Gabriel, 1993; Ylijoki, 2005). When retrieved, these memories trigger the emotion of organizational nostalgia (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018).

Organizational nostalgia is associated with resilience and the ability to control and impact one's environment. Organizational nostalgia acts as a source of psychological need satisfaction – a source upon which members can draw when their needs are threatened (see below). This source enables members to cope with adversity and hence be more resilient (Hobfoll, 2002). Evidence suggests a link between organizational nostalgia and resilience. The emotion helps to counteract the threat imposed by identity discontinuity, as in the closure of a community hub (i.e. coffeeshop; Milligan, 2003) or a fast-changing organizational environment (Brown and Humphreys, 2002; Ylijoki, 2005). The emotion's coping potential has been illustrated experimentally: induced organizational nostalgia aids employees who experienced threat (i.e. burnout) to maintain wellbeing (i.e. work meaningfulness; Leunissen *et al.*, 2018). Taken together, organizational nostalgia qualifies as a personal resource within the JD-R model.

Organizational nostalgia predicts work engagement

Here, we address the motivational property of organizational nostalgia, capitalizing on the JD-R model. According to the model, resources are linked to performance via work engagement. To explain these links, the

model borrows from other theories (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017), in particular self-determination theory (SDT), which posits that motivation is fuelled by the satisfaction of three psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). Consequently, the JD-R model suggests that resources increase work engagement because they satisfy these basic psychological needs (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2008).

The JD-R model builds on SDT to explain why resources increase work engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2008). Building on this theoretical foundation, we propose that, as a personal resource, organizational nostalgia conduces to need satisfaction. The emotion pertains to personally important autobiographical memories of the workplace. A key function of autobiographical memory is to satisfy psychological needs through the retrieval of stored moments in which these needs had been satisfied (Bauer, McAdams and Sakaeda, 2005; Lokes *et al.*, 2014; Philippe *et al.*, 2011).

Organizational nostalgia, then, likely centres on episodes in which psychological needs were satisfied in the workplace. Indeed, nostalgic narratives contain more autonomy, relatedness and competence content than non-nostalgic narratives (Abeyta *et al.*, 2015), and nostalgic memories satisfy basic psychological needs (Wulf *et al.*, 2020). Organizational nostalgia likely has a similar needs satisfaction function, as it refers, for example, to pursuing one's academic interests (autonomy; Ylijoki, 2005), interacting with colleagues (relatedness; Gabriel, 1993; Milligan, 2003) and relying on one's medical expertise in the operating theatre (competence; McDonald, Waring and Harrison, 2006). In all, we propose that organizational nostalgia is linked to work engagement via its capacity to satisfy psychological needs.

H1 : Organizational nostalgia is positively associated with work engagement.

H2 : Need satisfaction mediates the positive association between organizational nostalgia and work engagement.

Organizational nostalgia and job performance

Several theoretical statements (Hobfoll, 1989; Locke and Latham, 2006; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Vallerand and Houliort, 2019) consider motivation necessary for job performance. Motivation determines workers' effort and persistence in enacting behaviours beneficial to the organization (Van Iddekinge *et al.*, 2018). We provide two reasons why work engagement increases performance (Cerasoli *et al.*, 2014). First, engaged employees are more absorbed in their work, which renders them more likely to endorse and become involved in their tasks. Second, engaged employees display higher vigour

(i.e. energy) and dedication to their work, and are therefore more likely to invest effort in their tasks and persist in them. Indeed, meta-analyses indicate that work engagement positively predicts job performance (Christian, Garza and Slaughter, 2011; Mazzetti *et al.*, 2021).

We are concerned with both in-role performance (i.e. behaviours that are part of one's job description) and extra-role job performance (i.e. behaviours that are not part of one's job description but benefit the organization; Becker and Kernan, 2003). We hypothesized above that organizational nostalgia would be related to stronger work engagement. Given a positive link between work engagement and in-role performance (Bakker, Demerouti and Lieke, 2012a, 2012b), we surmise that (1) organizational nostalgia is also related to in-role performance and (2) work engagement carries the relation between organizational nostalgia and in-role performance.

H3 : Organizational nostalgia is positively associated with in-role performance.

H4 : Work engagement mediates the positive association between organizational nostalgia and in-role performance.

We operationalized extra-role performance as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). This is discretionary individual behaviour, not recognized explicitly by the formal reward system, that is intended to advantage the collective (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). Given the positive relation between work engagement and OCB (Demerouti, Bakker and Gevers, 2015; Salanova *et al.*, 2011), we surmise that (1) organizational nostalgia is related to OCB and (2) work engagement transmits the association between organizational nostalgia and OCB.

H5 : Organizational nostalgia is positively associated with OCB.

H6 : Work engagement mediates the positive association between organizational nostalgia and OCB.

In addition to job performance, we were concerned with willingness to engage in novel experiences. We examined two indicators of this construct. The first, creativity, is the tendency 'to imagine, synthesise, connect, invent and explore' (Rogaten and Moneta, 2015, p. 294). Creativity is effortful (Amabile, 1997), and need satisfaction fuels creative efforts via intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Sheldon *et al.*, 2003). Hence, work engagement is positively associated with creativity because (at least in part) motivation fuels creativity. In support, more engaged school principals are rated as more creative by their school's teachers (Bakker and Xanthopoulou, 2013). We hypothesize that organizational nostalgia is positively linked to work engagement; as such, we expect that organizational nostalgia, via work engagement, is positively linked to creativity.

H7 : Organizational nostalgia is positively associated with creativity.

H8 : Work engagement mediates the positive association between organizational nostalgia and creativity.

The second indicator of willingness to engage in novel experiences was support for organizational change. During such change, employees need to adopt and become accustomed to novel ways of working (Wanberg and Banas, 2000). We advocate that work engagement is positively associated with support for change. Organizational change often benefits the organization. Given that highly motivated workers are willing to expend effort into behaviours that profit the organization (Li, Liang and Crant, 2010), such employees will be more supportive of organizational change (Elias, 2009). We hypothesize that organizational nostalgia is a source of work engagement; as such, we expect that organizational nostalgia is positively related to support for organizational change, and that this relation is transmitted by work engagement.

H9 : Organizational nostalgia is positively associated with support for organizational change.

H10 : Work engagement mediates the positive association between organizational nostalgia and support for organizational change.

Distinguishing organizational nostalgia from related constructs

We aimed to illustrate the incremental validity of organizational nostalgia vis-à-vis six related constructs (Table 1). The first four of these were organizational identification, affective organizational commitment, job embeddedness and perceived organizational support. These constructs describe how an employee relates to the organization. In contrast, organizational nostalgia refers to experiences within the organization – experiences involving other employees or one's duties. Moreover, organizational nostalgia pertains to past experiences within the organization, and so does not centre on the current organization or work environment. We assessed organizational identification in Studies 2 and 3, and affective organizational commitment, job embeddedness and perceived organizational support in Study 4.

Further, we distinguished organizational nostalgia from personal nostalgia (Study 3), as the latter predicts increased OCB and motivation in the workplace, but only under conditions of threat (Van Dijke *et al.*, 2015, 2019). Organizational nostalgia is likely a stronger predictor than personal nostalgia for organizational outcomes, because the former is specific to the context of

the outcomes (Wildschut *et al.*, 2014). Finally, we distinguished organizational nostalgia from past focus (Study 4). Past focus captures generalized attention to the past, whereas organizational nostalgia centres on specific events. Some authors have suggested that nostalgia undermines willingness to change, and increases conservatism and disengagement from the present (Karniol and Ross, 1996; Strangleman, 1999). We submit that organizational nostalgia is different from past focus. Organizational nostalgia satisfies psychological needs, sustaining work engagement and conducing to performance as well as willingness to engage in novel experiences. It involves using the past to navigate the present and future.

Overview

We developed the Organizational Nostalgia Scale (ONS) in Study 1. In Study 2, a multi-source investigation, we tested if organizational nostalgia predicts higher OCB (*H5*). In Study 3, a two-wave investigation, we examined if organizational nostalgia predicts higher OCB as mediated by work engagement (*H1*, *H5* and *H6*). Finally, in Study 4, a four-wave investigation, we tested whether the positive relation between nostalgia and work engagement is mediated by relatedness-need and autonomy-need satisfaction (*H1* and *H2*). In Study 4, we further tested whether organizational nostalgia predicts, via work engagement, in-role performance (*H3* and *H4*), creativity (*H7* and *H8*) and support for organizational change (*H9* and *H10*).

Study 1

We developed the ONS following an inductive approach to scale construction (Broughton, 1984). Nostalgia, as a self-relevant emotion (Van Tilburg, Wildschut and Sedikides, 2018), requires self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-representation (Tracy and Robins, 2004). These self-processes are based on memories (Tangney and Tracy, 2012). We therefore sought to identify the most typical, if not prototypical (Rosch, 1978), types of memories that evoke organizational nostalgia. This approach has also been used in personal-nostalgia scale construction. For example, Batcho's (1995) Nostalgia Inventory assesses the extent to which people bring to mind 20 nostalgic objects from their past (e.g. family, friends, TV shows, pets).

We thematically analysed organizational nostalgia narratives to distil the prototypical features of organizational nostalgia. We distinguished between two sets of features: agentic and communal organizational nostalgia. Subsequently, we generated and validated a pool of items that reflects the prototypical features of organi-

Table 1. Distinctions between organizational nostalgia and related constructs

Construct	Definition	Distinction from organizational nostalgia
Organizational identification	The perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organization (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008).	Organizational nostalgia does not require identifying with, or valuing membership of, the organization. Organizational nostalgia centres on valued idiosyncratic experiences that do not require a sense of oneness with the organization. Organizational nostalgia refers to interpersonal relationships with other organizational members, which can create a sense of belonging with other people in the organization or with people who have left the organization. However, the organization as a collective is not necessarily the target of this belongingness.
Affective organizational commitment	Commitment based on identification with, involvement in and emotional attachment to the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Includes (1) strong acceptance of the organization's goals, (2) willingness to exert substantial effort on behalf of the organization and (3) a desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979).	Organizational nostalgia increases willingness to exert effort in the organization, but this stems from need satisfaction and work engagement rather than support for the organization's goals. Organizational nostalgia does not require a focus on the organization's goals, nor does it necessitate a desire to maintain membership in the organization.
Job embeddedness	The combined forces that keep a person from leaving their job, such as marital status, community involvement or job tenure (Crossley <i>et al.</i> , 2007).	Organizational nostalgia solely centres on past events that have taken place in the organization. Job embeddedness represents factors outside the workplace as well.
Perceived organizational support	The extent to which employees perceive that the organization values their contributions, cares about their wellbeing and will provide assistance when it is needed to carry out one's job effectively and to deal with stressful situations (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).	Organizational nostalgia aids in carrying out one's duties and coping with stressful situations. It does so by increasing work engagement via need satisfaction. Organizational nostalgia does not hinge on the belief that the organization values its employees or their wellbeing.
Personal nostalgia	A sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past (Sedikides and Wildschut, 2018).	Personal nostalgia refers to events from one's private life. Organizational nostalgia solely centres on past events that have taken place in the organization.
Past focus	The amount of attention that people devote to the past (Shipp, Edwards and Lambert, 2009).	Organizational nostalgia refers to past events that have taken place in the organization. Organizational nostalgia does not capture generalized attention to the past.

zational nostalgia (for a similar approach, see Hepper *et al.*, 2012, 2014). We determined the ONS's goodness of fit and established its discriminant validity and test-retest reliability.

Participants

We collected three samples through Prolific.co. Participants in Samples 1 and 2 completed cross-sectional surveys. Participants in Sample 3 engaged in a two-

wave survey. Sample 1 comprised 403 participants (41% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 32.26$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 9.44$), who worked on average 5.31 ($SD = 7.64$) years in their current organization. We recruited participants in Sample 1 from 10 cultural clusters to ensure representativeness of the nostalgic narratives for multiple cultures (Gupta and Hanges, 2004). Sample 2 comprised 253 participants (61% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 36.87$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.88$), who worked on average 7.37 ($SD = 10.73$) years in their current organization. Sample 3 participants, who worked on average 5.62 ($SD = 7.82$) years in their current organization, were involved in a two-wave study, with waves being separated by 1 month. We recruited 300 employees in Wave 1 and invited all of them to take part in Wave 2. A total of 254 employees (85%) did so. Our analyses included those 254 individuals only (41% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 34.14$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 10.28$). Participation in one sample implied exclusion from other samples.

Item development for the Organizational Nostalgia Scale

We thematically analysed organizational nostalgic memories collected from our multicultural Sample 1. Participants listed a nostalgic event they had experienced in their current organization. Specifically: 'try to think of a past event you experienced in your current organization that makes you feel most nostalgic' (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018, p. 47). Next, they responded to a three-item measure of organizational nostalgia intensity (e.g. 'I feel nostalgic about my organization at the moment'; 1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Very much so*; Leunissen *et al.*, 2018). We aggregated responses into an index ($\alpha = 0.97$, $M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.72$) and selected 229 narratives for which the index was above 4 (i.e. above the scale midpoint). We further excluded 19 narratives describing childhood events and analysed the remaining 210 narratives. We identified semantic units in the narratives (i.e. parts conveying a unified, meaningful element) and categorized them under codes that conveyed similar meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006). We grouped these codes in two themes that emerged from the data: agentic organizational nostalgia and communal organizational nostalgia. These themes are common in autobiographical memory, self-perception and person perception (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014; Gebauer *et al.*, 2013; McAdams *et al.*, 1996), and they are also found in nostalgia (Abeyta *et al.*, 2015; Hart *et al.*, 2011).

Agency refers to strivings to be independent, control the environment and assert, protect or expand oneself (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014). Agentic organizational nostalgia is defined as nostalgic experiences when an employee felt a sense of achievement, personal growth at work and/or in control while carrying out their job. For example, one participant wrote:

It was after I completed a tough project for the company that I was working for. The company was delighted with the work I had done and gave me a raise and promotion. I was happy to be rewarded for all my hard work and efforts. The feeling of succeeding after working hard is very nostalgic to me.

Communion refers to strivings to be part of a community, establish close social relationships and subordinate individual needs to the common good (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014). Communal organizational nostalgia is defined as nostalgic experiences when an employee felt close and connected to others in the organization (e.g. colleagues, managers, clients). For example, one participant wrote:

With colleagues we stayed in a house for 2 days near the woods. We cooked, drank, laughed, walked, danced, and it just warms my heart up. I truly felt accepted, like I belonged there, even though everyone was older than me. And it kinda makes my heart ache, I'd really like to go back to those days. But I guess that's what nostalgia is. Happiness and sadness at the same time.

Based on the thematic analysis, we created a 37-item pool (15 for agentic organizational nostalgia, 22 for communal organizational nostalgia). We subjected these items to content validation (Colquitt *et al.*, 2019; Djurdjevic *et al.*, 2017; Schriesheim *et al.*, 1993; see the online Supporting Information). This validation study reinforced the notion that our items reflect agentic and communal organizational nostalgia.

Confirmatory factor analyses

We aimed to develop brief scales of agentic and communal organizational nostalgia that incorporated non-overlapping items covering the entire content domains, so that the scale could easily be included in surveys (Hinkin, 1998; Ostrom *et al.*, 1994). Using data from Sample 2 and confirmatory factor analyses, we fitted a two-factor model with the 37 items loading on their intended factor (i.e. agentic or communal organizational nostalgia). We focused on the comparative fit index (CFI), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) as goodness-of-fit indices (Djurdjevic *et al.*, 2017). Although item loadings were all high ($\lambda > 0.57$, $Z > 8.97$, $p < 0.001$), the model fit was insufficient (CFI = 0.79, SRMR = 0.06, RMSEA = 0.10). For our second model, we selected the eight highest-loading items of each factor ($\lambda > 0.75$, $Z > 13.30$, $p < 0.001$) from the initial model. From each set of eight items, we removed four items that showed much semantic overlap. Our final model thus comprised a diverse set of eight items, four per factor. This is a typical number of items for a psychological scale (Hinkin, 1998). The fit of this

Table 2. Psychometric properties of the Organizational Nostalgia Scale

	Model fit indices				Model comparisons		
	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	p Value
<i>Final model</i>							
Sample 2	0.98	0.03	0.08	49.14			
Sample 3	0.98	0.02	0.05	45.39			
<i>Single-factor model</i>							
Sample 2	0.94	0.04	0.13	103.91	54.77	1	<0.001
Sample 3	0.91	0.05	0.10	130.06	8.62	1	0.003

Note: Chi-square difference tests in the model comparisons panel are the differences from the associated final model. Chi-square difference tests for Sample 3 are scaled chi-square differences (Satorra and Bentler, 2010). Fit indices for Sample 3 are robust fit indices.

Table 3. Item loadings of the Organizational Nostalgia Scale

Item	Sample 2	Sample 3
<i>Agentic organizational nostalgia</i>		
times when I felt my achievements were recognized by my organization	0.80	0.83
times that gave me a sense of accomplishment	0.78	0.78
moments when I felt respected	0.85	0.89
moments when I felt important	0.82	0.86
<i>Communal organizational nostalgia</i>		
times when I felt connected to the people in my organization	0.85	0.92
times when I felt like a true member of my organization	0.81	0.89
moments when I felt like part of a group in my organization	0.86	0.89
good times I had with people from my organization	0.79	0.78

Note: All standardized factor loadings: $p < 0.001$. Question stem: 'When I think about the past in my current organization, I remember...'. Response scale: 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much so).

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the Organizational Nostalgia Scale

Scale	Sample 2			Sample 3, Wave 1			Sample 3, Wave 2		
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	M	SD	α
ONS	4.90	1.27	0.93	5.02	1.34	0.94	4.98	1.42	0.95
Agentic organizational nostalgia	4.88	1.32	0.88	5.16	1.35	0.89	5.09	1.44	0.92
Communal organizational nostalgia	4.92	1.36	0.90	4.88	1.47	0.91	4.87	1.56	0.94

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale.

final model was good (Table 2). The agentic and communal organizational nostalgia factors were positively correlated ($r = 0.88$, $Z = 37.78$, $p < 0.001$). We also conducted an exploratory factor analysis. It indicated that the data were best described with two factors and that the items loaded on these factors, as intended (see the online Supporting Information).

We present the items and item loadings in Table 3, and descriptives in Table 4. To evaluate the validity of our two-factor model, we compared the final model to a one-factor model (Table 2). The two-factor model's fit was superior.

Next, we fitted the two-factor model of the eight-item ONS on Sample 3. Sample 3 participants provided responses to the ONS at Wave 1 and Wave 2. We there-

fore conducted a nested confirmatory factor analysis, with two responses per item nested in each participant. We used the *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012) and *lavaan.survey* (Oberski, 2014) R packages to obtain robust fit estimates. These analyses indicated adequate model fit for the two-factor model (Table 2). As in the previous sample, the agentic and communal organizational nostalgia factors correlated positively ($r = 0.87$, $Z = 37.60$, $p < 0.001$). Again, the two-factor solution had superior fit compared to a one-factor model (Table 2).

Discriminant validity

We determined the discriminant validity of the ONS vis-à-vis personal nostalgia, as measured by the seven-item

Southampton Nostalgia Scale (SNS; e.g. 'How prone are you to feeling nostalgic?'; Sedikides *et al.*, 2015; $M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.42$, $\alpha = 0.93$) and the 20-item Nostalgia Inventory (NI; e.g. 'Please rate the extent to which you feel nostalgic about each of the following aspects of your past' – e.g. 'my childhood toys', 'my pets'; Batcho, 1995; $M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.09$, $\alpha = 0.93$). We determined discriminant validity in three ways (Shaffer *et al.*, 2016). First, we calculated disattenuated correlations between the ONS and the SNS, and between the ONS and the NI. These correlations were 0.32 and 0.34, respectively. Hence, the ONS showed some overlap with the SNS and the NI (about 9% shared variance), but the two measures had a substantial amount of non-overlapping variance. Second, the average variance extracted from the ONS latent variable (0.626) was considerably higher than the squared correlations between the ONS and the SNS ($R^2 = 0.104$) or the ONS and the NI ($R^2 = 0.12$; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Third, we compared models where the ONS items and items from the respective personal nostalgia scales loaded on the same factor to a model where these items loaded on separate factors. A scale shows discriminant validity if the two-factor model fits better than the one-factor model (Shaffer *et al.*, 2016). Indeed, the two-factor model fit was better for a model with ONS and SNS items [$\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1381.20$, $p < 0.001$, $\Delta CFI = 0.44$] or a model with ONS and NI items [$\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1039.00$, $p < 0.001$, $\Delta CFI = 0.31$]. In all, the ONS is empirically distinct from these two established personal nostalgia scales.

Test–retest reliability

We verified the test–retest reliability of the ONS in Sample 3. We found strong correlations between the two waves for the ONS ($r = 0.81$, 95% CI [0.76, 0.85], $p < 0.001$), the agentic organizational nostalgia subscale ($r = 0.81$, 95% CI [0.76, 0.84], $p < 0.001$) and the communal organizational nostalgia subscale ($r = 0.76$, 95% CI [0.70, 0.80], $p < 0.001$). These results attest to the reliability of the ONS.

Summary

Study 1 showed that organizational nostalgia is best conceptualized as comprising two distinct but strongly correlated facets: agentic organizational nostalgia and communal organizational nostalgia. The two-factor model for our eight-item scale fit the data well. Furthermore, the facets demonstrated excellent internal and test–retest reliability, and displayed discriminant validity with personal nostalgia scales. These results offer an empirical foundation for hypothesis testing.

Study 2

Study 2 was a multi-source investigation. Compared to single-source designs, a multi-source design is less susceptible to some of the measurement problems of self-report data, such as consistency bias and social desirability bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). We sampled supervisors, who each nominated one subordinate. Supervisors completed the ONS, and subordinates rated their supervisor on OCB. We expected a positive association between supervisors' organizational nostalgia and subordinates' ratings of their supervisor's OCB (H5). The relevant literature has been concerned with identity implications of organizational nostalgia (Brown and Humphreys, 2002; Milligan, 2003). So, we proceeded to ascertain that organizational nostalgia is not redundant with organizational identification.

Method

Participants. We collected our data via Flycatcher, a Dutch research panel of approximately 16,000 Dutch members. Members voluntarily participate in return for points that are convertible into vouchers (e.g. movie tickets). We invited supervisors, who worked in a variety of organizations, to complete an online questionnaire and provide us with the name and email address of one of their subordinates, so we could contact them (names and email addresses were checked, and suspicious entries were excluded). Subordinates received an email from Flycatcher with information about the survey, the nominating supervisor's name and a survey link. Each subordinate received a unique identification number to ensure anonymity and proper matching with the supervisor. We recruited 100 subordinates whom we matched to 100 leaders (i.e. one subordinate per leader). We conducted a sensitivity analysis (power = 0.80, $\alpha = 0.05$), which indicated that the study was powered to detect associations of $r = 0.24$ or higher.

Supervisors worked in organizations that employed on average 276.30 persons ($SD = 651.16$). Supervisors' mean age was 43.20 years ($SD = 9.16$), and 63 of them were women. Their mean organization tenure was 12.04 years ($SD = 10.09$), and their mean job tenure 8.34 years ($SD = 7.67$). Forty supervisors listed secondary school as their highest educational attainment, 39 vocational training, four a Bachelor's degree and 17 a Master's degree. Nine supervisors were involved in line management, 55 in middle management and 30 in senior/executive management. Five supervisors indicated involvement in non-management positions (i.e. they did not consider themselves managers).¹

¹We tested for differences in age, gender, educational profile and tenure between supervisors who were paired with a follower and those who were not. We found no differences ($p > 0.677$).

Table 5. Scale descriptives and correlations in Study 2

	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. ONS	5.43	0.91	0.91	–	0.92	0.92	0.50	0.44
2. Agentic organizational nostalgia	5.28	0.99	0.86	0.90, 0.94	–	0.70	0.45	0.28
3. Communal organizational nostalgia	5.58	0.99	0.88	0.90, 0.94	0.64, 0.76	–	0.48	0.51
4. Organizational identification	3.71	0.61	0.74	0.41, 0.59	0.35, 0.54	0.39, 0.57	–	0.42
5. OCB	5.24	0.94	0.94	0.26, 0.58	0.09, 0.45	0.35, 0.64	0.25, 0.57	–

Note: Pearson's r above the diagonal, 95% CI below the diagonal. ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. OCB = organizational citizenship behaviour.

Table 6. Regression models in Study 2

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Outcome: OCB		Outcome: OCB		Outcome: OCB		Outcome: OCB	
	β	p	β	p	β	p	β	p
ONS	0.44 [0.26, 0.63]	<0.001	0.29 [0.06, 0.52]	0.014				
Organizational identification			0.23 [0.01, 0.44]	0.032			0.21 [0.01, 0.42]	0.040
Agentic organizational nostalgia					–0.08 [–0.30, 0.14]	0.475	–0.15 [–0.37, 0.08]	0.204
Communal organizational nostalgia					0.58 [0.35, 0.81]	<0.001	0.49 [0.25, 0.73]	<0.001

Note: OCB = organizational citizenship behaviour. ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale, 95% CI in brackets.

The subordinates' mean age was 38.58 years ($SD = 11.59$), and 46 of them were women. Their mean organization tenure was 8.83 years ($SD = 7.93$), and their mean job tenure 6.66 years ($SD = 5.93$). Of them, 55 had a secondary education degree, 30 vocational training, four a Bachelor's degree and 11 a Master's degree. Also, 57 worked in non-management positions, 13 in line management, 18 in middle management, nine as senior/executive manager and five answered 'other'.

Measures. Supervisors completed the eight-item ONS and six-item organizational identification scale (Mael and Ashforth, 1992; e.g. 'When someone praises the organization I work in, it feels like a personal compliment'; 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). Subordinates rated their supervisor's OCB on a 24-item scale (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990; e.g. 'Helps others who have heavy workloads'; 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). We present descriptives and correlations in Table 5.

Results and discussion

We analysed our data using linear regression. Supporting H5, the ONS was positively associated with

OCB (Table 6, Model 1), and this association remained significant when controlling for organizational identification (Table 6, Model 2). Organizational nostalgia predicts job performance independently from organizational identification. Next, we exploratorily tested unique associations of agentic and communal organizational nostalgia with OCB. Communal organizational nostalgia predicted OCB, whereas agentic organizational nostalgia did not (Table 6, Model 3), also when controlling for organizational identification (Table 6, Model 4).

A reason for this discrepancy between agentic and communal organizational nostalgia may be due to supervisors reporting their organizational nostalgia, but subordinates reporting their supervisors' OCB. Prior research has documented a congruence of agentic and communal themes in autobiographical memory with corresponding motives: agentic themes were associated with power and achievement motivation, whereas communal themes were associated with communal motivation including seeking closeness (McAdams *et al.*, 1996). If communal (compared to agentic) organizational nostalgia is likewise more strongly associated with seeking

closeness, then OCB that stems from communal organizational nostalgia will be more easily observed by subordinates.

Study 3

Study 3 had three objectives. First, we found a weak association between agentic (vs. communal) organizational nostalgia and OCB in Study 2. We attributed this pattern to the multi-source design, such that supervisors' OCB flowing from communal (vs. agentic) organizational nostalgia may have been easier for subordinates to note. To address this issue, we used a single-source design.

Second, we examined whether work engagement mediates the association between organizational nostalgia and OCB (H1, H5 and H6). Lagged designs are preferred over cross-sectional designs for testing mediation, because the former implement the temporal sequencing of a proposed model (Götz *et al.*, 2020). Although we do not claim that our two-wave design solves the inherent problem of inferring causality from correlational data, it provides a more stringent test of our model, because the measurement of organizational nostalgia precedes chronologically that of the mediator (work engagement) and outcome variable (OCB). Finally, lagged designs are less susceptible to common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

Third, in addition to controlling for organizational identification, we examined if organizational nostalgia is more prognostic of our outcomes than personal nostalgia. We did so to consolidate the theoretical and practical utility of differentiating between organizational and personal nostalgia and to demonstrate the incremental validity of the ONS.

Method

Participants and design. Study 3 comprised two data collection waves. We recruited 345 participants (from the United Kingdom and the United States) through Prolific.co in Wave 1. A month later, we invited them to take part in Wave 2, with 315 individuals accepting. We removed seven, as they no longer worked in the same organization, leaving 308 in the final sample (89% of participants from Wave 1). A sensitivity analysis indicated that the study was powered for effect sizes of $r = 0.14$ or higher (power = 0.80, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Of the participants, 181 were women, 126 were men and one identified with a different gender. Their mean age was 39.37 (SD = 10.64). Their mean organization tenure was 8.16 years (SD = 7.24), and mean job tenure was 5.67 years (SD = 5.08). For their highest degree, one participant listed less than secondary education, 75 secondary education, 58 vocational training, 122 a Bach-

elor's degree and 52 a Master's degree or higher. A total of 164 participants worked in non-management positions, 84 in line management, 50 in middle management and 10 as senior/executive manager.

Measures. In Wave 1 we measured organizational nostalgia and organizational identification with the same scales as in Study 2, and personal nostalgia with the SNS and the NI as in Study 1. In Wave 2 we measured OCB as in Study 2 and work engagement with a nine-item scale (Seppälä *et al.*, 2009; e.g. 'At my work, I feel that I am bursting with energy', 0 = *Never*, 6 = *Always*). We present descriptives and correlations in Table 7.

Results

We used ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression. In support of H5, organizational nostalgia was positively associated with OCB ($\beta = 0.44$, 95% CI [0.34, 0.55], $p < 0.001$). We fitted a path model to test the mediational sequence from organizational nostalgia via work engagement to OCB (Figure 1, top model). Organizational nostalgia was positively associated with work engagement (supporting H1), and work engagement was positively associated with OCB. The indirect effect of organizational nostalgia via work engagement to OCB is the product of the regression coefficients of the path from organizational nostalgia to work engagement and the path from work engagement to OCB, which we tested with *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012; 5000 bootstrap samples). The 95% confidence interval excluded 0 ($\beta = 0.36$, SE = 0.05, 95% CI [0.26, 0.46]). This supports H6. We ran additional models in which we found that the associations of ONS with OCB and work engagement remained significant when controlling for personal nostalgia (both scales) and organizational identification (Table 8, Models 1 and 2).

Next, we explored the associations of agentic and communal organizational nostalgia with work engagement and OCB. Agentic organizational nostalgia ($\beta = 0.25$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.42], $p = 0.003$) and communal organizational nostalgia ($\beta = 0.22$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.39], $p = 0.011$) simultaneously predicted OCB. Agentic and communal organizational nostalgia also simultaneously predicted work engagement (Figure 1, bottom model). We found significant indirect effects of agentic organizational nostalgia ($\beta = 0.17$, SE = 0.06, 95% CI [0.06, 0.30]) and communal organizational nostalgia ($\beta = 0.21$, SE = 0.06, 95% CI [0.09, 0.33]) via work engagement on OCB.

Discussion

In Study 3, we tested the mediational role of work engagement. Organizational nostalgia predicted work engagement and OCB. Moreover, work engagement me-

Table 7. Scale descriptives and correlations in Study 3

	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. ONS	4.87	1.35	0.94	—	0.95	0.95	0.11	0.13	0.63	0.60	0.44
2. Agentic organizational nostalgia	4.82	1.42	0.92	0.94, 0.96	—	0.80	0.08	0.11	0.60	0.56	0.43
3. Communal organizational nostalgia	4.92	1.42	0.91	0.94, 0.96	0.75, 0.84	—	0.13	0.13	0.59	0.58	0.42
4. SNS	4.44	1.38	0.95	0.00, 0.22	-0.04, 0.19	0.02, 0.24	—	0.63	0.02	-0.04	-0.03
5. NI	4.26	1.00	0.89	0.02, 0.24	0.00, 0.22	0.02, 0.24	0.56, 0.70	—	0.10	0.01	0.06
6. Organizational identification	3.15	0.99	0.89	0.55, 0.69	0.52, 0.67	0.51, 0.65	-0.09, 0.13	-0.01, 0.21	—	0.56	0.46
7. Work engagement	4.50	1.21	0.95	0.53, 0.67	0.48, 0.64	0.50, 0.65	-0.15, 0.07	-0.10, 0.12	0.48, 0.63	—	0.59
8. OCB	5.51	0.73	0.90	0.35, 0.53	0.33, 0.51	0.32, 0.51	-0.14, 0.08	-0.05, 0.17	0.36, 0.54	0.51, 0.66	—

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale, SNS = Southampton Nostalgia Scale, NI = Nostalgia Inventory, OCB = organizational citizenship behaviour, Pearson's r above the diagonal, 95% CI below the diagonal.

diated the positive association between organizational nostalgia and OCB. These associations remained significant when controlling for organizational identification and personal nostalgia. Organizational nostalgia was consistently more prognostic than personal nostalgia, establishing it as a distinct form of nostalgia and demonstrating the ONS's incremental validity. Last, recall that multi-source Study 2 found that only supervisors' communal (and not agentic) organizational nostalgia predicted subordinates' ratings of the supervisors' OCB. We proposed that communal (compared to agentic) organizational nostalgia facilitates types of OCB that are more readily observable by subordinates. Consistent with this possibility, the single-source Study 3 revealed that both agentic and communal organizational nostalgia predicted OCB (and work engagement).

Study 4

In Study 4, we had four objectives. First, we aimed to expand the nomological network of organizational nostalgia by including three additional outcomes: in-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change (H3, H7 and H9). Second, we tested H2: organizational nostalgia increases work engagement via need satisfaction. We therefore examined whether the associations between organizational nostalgia and outcomes are serially mediated by relatedness-need satisfaction (henceforth: relatedness) and autonomy-need satisfaction (henceforth: autonomy), and subsequently by work engagement. Third, we set out to clarify the utility of distinguishing between agentic and communal organizational nostalgia. Given that agentic organizational nostalgia pertains to experiences of achievement or growth, we expected it to be associated with autonomy-need satisfaction. Given that communal organizational nostalgia pertains to a sense of closeness with others in the workplace, we expected it to be associated with relatedness-need satisfaction. Fourth, we controlled for affective organizational commitment, job embeddedness, perceived organizational support and past focus to test the incremental validity of organizational nostalgia.

Method

Participants and procedure. Study 4 comprised four data collection waves to retain the proposed causal ordering of variables in our measurement and alleviate common method variance concerns (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).² In Wave 1 we recruited, via Prolific.co, 349 organizational employees (from the United Kingdom and

²In this study and Study 3, we tested for common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; Williams and McGonagle, 2016). Although we observed common method variance, there was no evidence that it influenced the associations between our

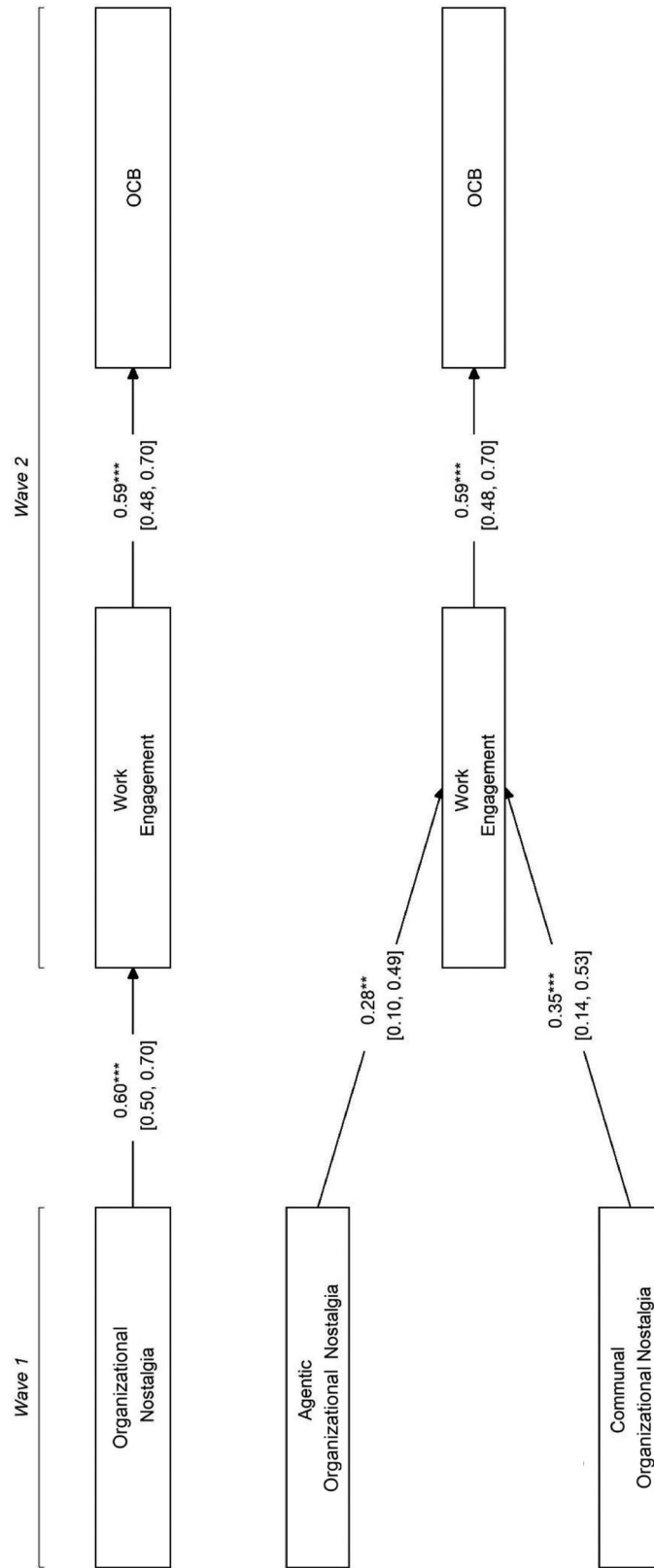


Figure 1. Path models in Study 3. Path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients (95% CI in brackets). Waves indicate the wave in which a variable was measured. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 8. Robustness analyses in Study 3

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2	
	Outcome: OCB		Outcome: Work engagement	
	β	p	β	p
ONS	0.27 [0.15, 0.40]	<0.001	0.43 [0.32, 0.54]	<0.001
SNS	-0.11 [-0.24, 0.02]	0.089	-0.08 [-0.19, 0.03]	0.166
NI	0.07 [-0.06, 0.20]	0.276	-0.02 [-0.14, 0.09]	0.659
Organizational identification	0.28 [0.16, 0.41]	<0.001	0.30 [0.18, 0.41]	<0.001

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. SNS = Southampton Nostalgia Scale. NI = Nostalgia Inventory. 95% CI in brackets.

Table 9. Example items, descriptive statistics and scale reliabilities in Study 4

Scale	Example item	M	SD	α
ONS	See Table 3	4.96	1.32	0.95
Agentic organizational nostalgia	See Table 3	4.84	1.44	0.93
Communal organizational nostalgia	See Table 3	5.08	1.35	0.93
Organizational commitment	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	4.18	1.41	0.91
Organizational embeddedness	I feel tied to this organization	3.73	1.54	0.95
Perceived organizational support	The organization really cares about my wellbeing	4.28	1.60	0.94
Past focus	I think about things from my past	5.00	1.23	0.95
Relatedness	Do you have good relations with your colleagues?	5.94	1.04	0.89
Autonomy	When at work, I feel free to be who I am	4.70	1.27	0.77
Work engagement	At my work, I feel that I am bursting with energy	4.23	1.03	0.94
In-role performance	I meet performance expectations	6.46	0.63	0.90
Support for organizational change	I look forward to changes at work	4.44	1.01	0.95
Creativity	While working on something, I try to generate as many ideas as possible	3.78	0.66	0.84

the United States), inviting them to participate in three additional waves, each spaced 2 days apart ($n_{\text{wave}2} = 336$, $n_{\text{wave}3} = 316$, $n_{\text{wave}4} = 292$). A sensitivity analysis indicated that the study was powered for effect sizes of $r = 0.14$ and higher (power = 0.80, $\alpha = 0.05$).

Our sample included 226 women, 120 men and three who identified with a different gender. Their mean age was 40.50 (SD = 10.30), mean organization tenure was 7.58 years (SD = 6.60) and mean job tenure was 5.44 years (SD = 5.11). As their highest degree, one participant listed less than secondary education, 62 secondary education, 62 vocational training, 160 a Bachelor's degree and 63 a Master's degree or higher. A total of 191 participants worked in non-management positions, 89 in line management, 56 in middle management and 12 as senior/executive manager.

Measures. In Wave 1 we assessed organizational nostalgia with the ONS, affective organizational commitment with an eight-item scale (Allen and Meyer, 1990),

variables. Statistical details and code are available upon request from the corresponding author.

job embeddedness with a seven-item scale (Crossley *et al.*, 2007) and perceived organizational support with a three-item scale (Wo, Ambrose and Schminke, 2015). We assessed past focus with a four-item measure (Shipp, Edwards and Lambert, 2009). In Wave 2 we assessed need satisfaction with three-item measures of relatedness and autonomy (Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke, 2004; La Guardia *et al.*, 2000; see Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2008 for a similar approach). In Wave 3 we assessed work engagement with the same scale as in Study 3. Finally, in Wave 4 we assessed in-role performance with a four-item scale (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998), support for organizational change with an 18-item scale (Dunham *et al.*, 1989) and creativity with a five-item scale (Rogaten and Moneta, 2015). We present example items and descriptives in Table 9, and correlations in Table 10.

Results

Organizational nostalgia. We analysed the data with linear OLS regression. We tested our mediation model using the full ONS first. The ONS was positively associ-

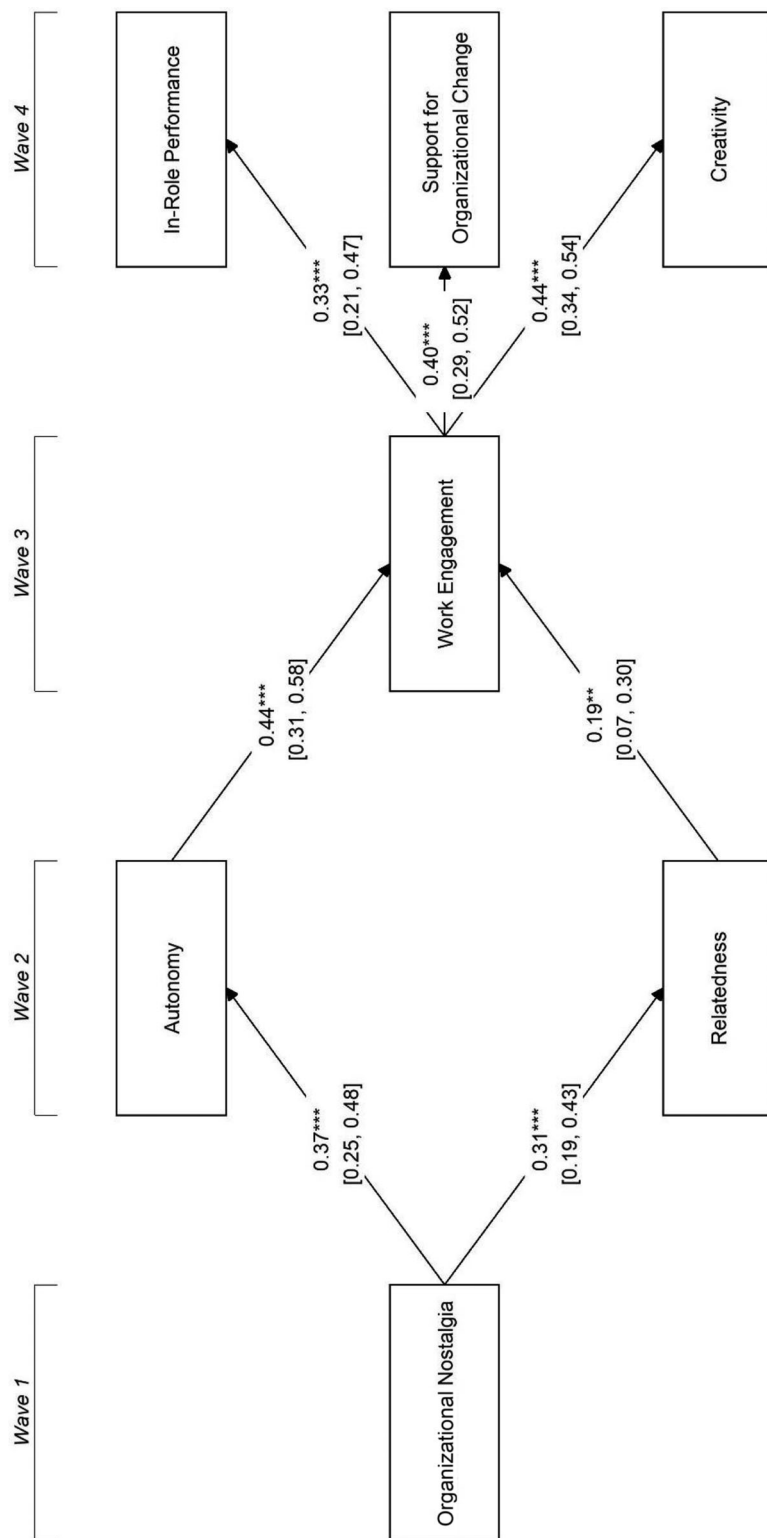


Figure 2. Path model with the ONS in Study 4. Path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients (95% CI in brackets). Path from organizational nostalgia to autonomy controlling for relatedness. Path from organizational nostalgia to relatedness controlling for autonomy. Waves indicate the wave in which a variable was measured. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

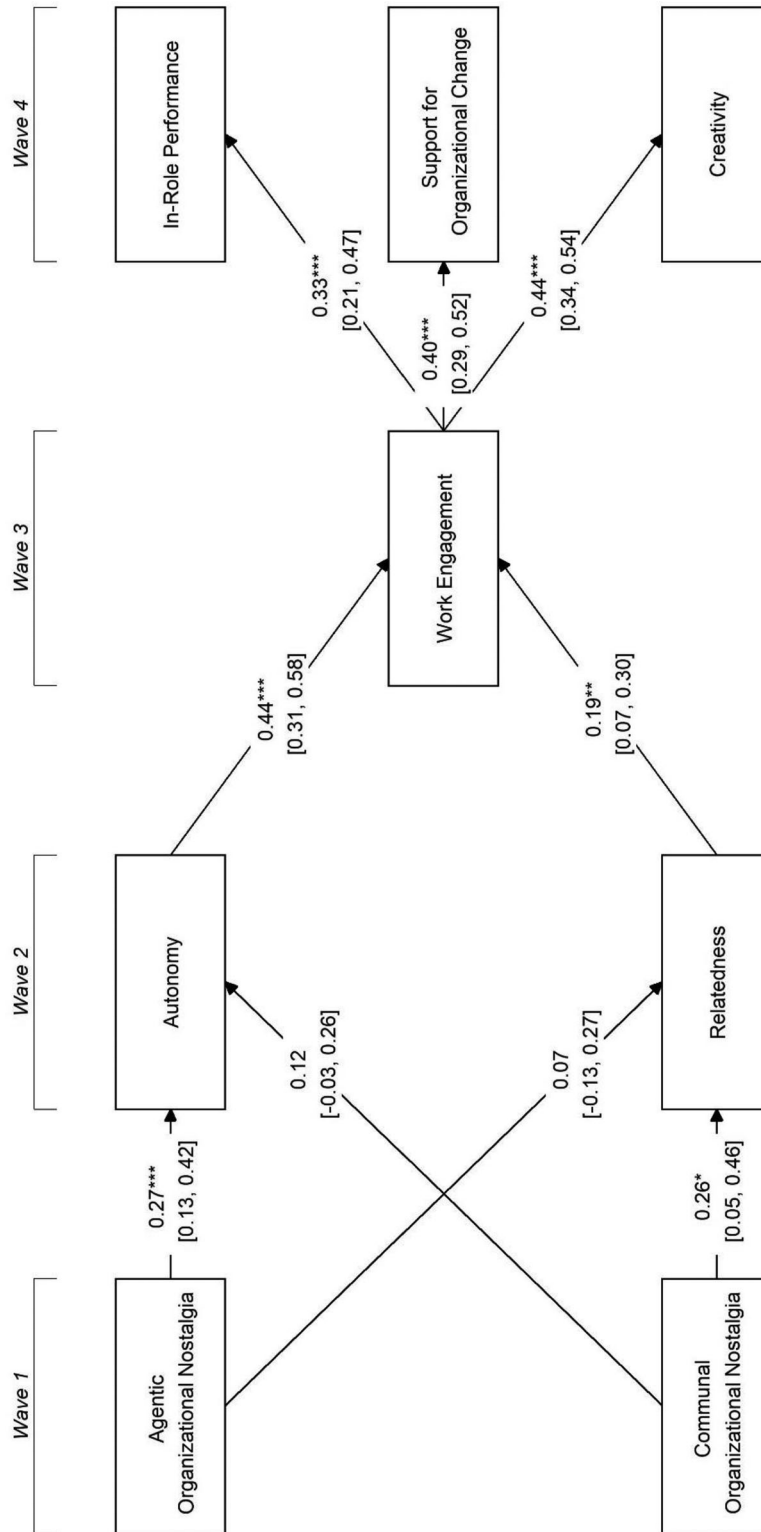


Figure 3. Path model with agentic and communal organizational nostalgia subscales as simultaneous predictors in Study 4. Path coefficients are standardized regression coefficients (95% CI in brackets). Paths from agentic and communal organizational nostalgia to autonomy controlling for relatedness. Paths from agentic and communal organizational nostalgia to relatedness controlling for autonomy. Waves indicate the wave in which a variable was measured. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

ated with in-role performance ($\beta = 0.26$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.37], $p < 0.001$), support for organizational change ($\beta = 0.34$, 95% CI [0.23, 0.45], $p < 0.001$) and creativity ($\beta = 0.37$, 95% CI [0.26, 0.48], $p < 0.001$). These results are consistent with H3, H7 and H9. Next, we tested if these associations are serially mediated by, first, relatedness and autonomy and, second, work engagement, using a path model (Figure 2). Relatedness and autonomy were highly correlated (Table 10). We therefore controlled for relatedness when testing the association between the ONS and autonomy, and we controlled for autonomy when testing the association between the ONS and relatedness. The ONS was positively associated with autonomy (controlling for relatedness, $\beta = 0.37$, 95% CI [0.27, 0.47], $p < 0.001$) and relatedness (controlling for autonomy, $\beta = 0.39$, 95% CI [0.29, 0.49], $p < 0.001$), consistent with H2. Autonomy and relatedness simultaneously predicted work engagement, consistent with H2. Work engagement, in turn, predicted in-role performance, support for organizational change and creativity. Finally, we tested indirect effects of the ONS, via autonomy or relatedness, to work engagement and the ensuing outcomes, using *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012). These indirect effects were significant (i.e. 95% CI excluded 0; Table 11), consistent with H4, H8 and H10.

Supplemental analyses. We tested whether the associations between the ONS and our outcomes remained significant while controlling for affective organizational commitment, organizational embeddedness, perceived organizational support and past focus. The results revealed that they did (Tables 12 and 13). The ONS is not redundant with these constructs. We note that past focus was negatively associated with support for organizational change.

Agentic and communal organizational nostalgia. We proceeded to test our mediation model with agentic and communal organizational nostalgia as simultaneous predictors. First, we regressed in-role performance, support for organizational change and creativity on agentic and communal organizational nostalgia. Agentic, but not communal, organizational nostalgia was positively associated with these outcomes (Table 14, Models 1–3).

Next, we tested the mediational roles of autonomy, relatedness and work engagement (Figure 3). Agentic, but not communal, organizational nostalgia was positively associated with autonomy (controlling for relatedness), whereas communal, but not agentic, organizational nostalgia was positively associated with relatedness (controlling for autonomy). Autonomy and relatedness simultaneously predicted higher work engagement. Work engagement in turn predicted in-role performance, support for organizational change and creativity. We found significant indirect effects of agentic organizational nostalgia on our outcomes (in-role performance, support

Table 10. Correlations in Study 4

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. ONS	—												
2. Agentic organizational nostalgia	0.93, 0.96	—											
3. Communal organizational nostalgia	0.92, 0.95	0.73, 0.81	—										
4. Organizational commitment	0.66, 0.76	0.59, 0.71	0.63, 0.74	—									
5. Organizational embeddedness	0.48, 0.63	0.41, 0.57	0.49, 0.63	0.83, 0.88	—								
6. Perceived organizational support	0.67, 0.77	0.66, 0.76	0.58, 0.70	0.72, 0.80	0.62, 0.73	—							
7. Past focus	0.01, 0.22	0.01, 0.22	0.01, 0.24	−0.06, 0.15	−0.00, 0.21	−0.06, 0.15	—						
8. Relatedness	0.45, 0.60	0.40, 0.56	0.44, 0.59	0.45, 0.60	0.32, 0.50	0.43, 0.59	−0.09, 0.12	—					
9. Autonomy	0.49, 0.64	0.46, 0.62	0.44, 0.60	0.55, 0.68	0.39, 0.56	0.58, 0.70	−0.31, −0.09	0.49, 0.63	—				
10. Work engagement	0.59, 0.72	0.60, 0.72	0.49, 0.63	0.59, 0.72	0.41, 0.58	0.58, 0.71	−0.07, 0.15	0.35, 0.53	0.47, 0.62	—			
11. In-role performance	0.16, 0.37	0.16, 0.37	0.13, 0.34	0.11, 0.32	0.06, 0.28	0.11, 0.33	−0.18, 0.05	0.13, 0.35	0.08, 0.30	0.22, 0.43	—		
12. Support for organizational change	0.24, 0.44	0.26, 0.46	0.17, 0.38	0.17, 0.39	0.10, 0.32	0.26, 0.46	−0.21, 0.01	0.18, 0.39	0.30, 0.49	0.30, 0.49	0.21, 0.42	—	
13. Creativity	0.27, 0.47	0.30, 0.50	0.19, 0.40	0.16, 0.37	0.09, 0.31	0.20, 0.41	−0.13, 0.10	0.17, 0.38	0.16, 0.37	0.34, 0.52	0.24, 0.44	0.44, 0.60	—

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. Pearson's r above the diagonal, 95% CI below the diagonal.

Table 11. Indirect effects in Study 4

Indirect effect	β	SE	95% CI
ONS → Autonomy → Work engagement → In-role performance	0.053	0.015	[0.030, 0.090]
ONS → Autonomy → Work engagement → Support for organizational change	0.065	0.019	[0.034, 0.109]
ONS → Autonomy → Work engagement → Creativity	0.071	0.018	[0.040, 0.113]
ONS → Relatedness → Work engagement → In-role performance	0.019	0.009	[0.006, 0.043]
ONS → Relatedness → Work engagement → Support for organizational change	0.023	0.011	[0.008, 0.050]
ONS → Relatedness → Work engagement → Creativity	0.025	0.011	[0.008, 0.052]
Agentic → Autonomy → Work engagement → In-role performance	0.039	0.015	[0.016, 0.074]
Agentic → Autonomy → Work engagement → Support for organizational change	0.048	0.019	[0.017, 0.090]
Agentic → Autonomy → Work engagement → Creativity	0.052	0.018	[0.020, 0.091]
Communal → Autonomy → Work engagement → In-role performance	0.017	0.012	[−0.003, 0.045]
Communal → Autonomy → Work engagement → Support for organizational change	0.021	0.014	[−0.004, 0.053]
Communal → Autonomy → Work engagement → Creativity	0.023	0.015	[−0.005, 0.055]
Agentic → Relatedness → Work engagement → In-role performance	0.004	0.007	[−0.006, 0.025]
Agentic → Relatedness → Work engagement → Support for organizational change	0.005	0.009	[−0.007, 0.029]
Agentic → Relatedness → Work engagement → Creativity	0.006	0.009	[−0.007, 0.033]
Communal → Relatedness → Work engagement → In-role performance	0.016	0.009	[0.003, 0.041]
Communal → Relatedness → Work engagement → Support for organizational change	0.020	0.011	[0.004, 0.048]
Communal → Relatedness → Work engagement → Creativity	0.021	0.011	[0.004, 0.051]

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. Agentic = agentic organizational nostalgia. Communal = communal organizational nostalgia. SE and 95% CI based on 5000 bootstrap samples.

for organizational change and creativity) via first autonomy and next work engagement. Likewise, we found significant indirect effects of communal organizational nostalgia on our outcomes via first relatedness and next work engagement. Finally, neither the indirect effects of agentic organizational nostalgia via relatedness nor those of communal organizational nostalgia via autonomy were significant (Table 11).

Discussion

We expanded the nomological network of organizational nostalgia by demonstrating its positive associations with in-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change (as per H3, H7 and H9). Agentic organizational nostalgia predicted these outcomes better than communal organizational nostalgia. Although unexpected, these outcomes may be more strongly associated with agency than communion, because adeptness (i.e. in-role performance) and creativity (i.e. openness to novel ideas) are instances of agency (Abele *et al.*, 2008). We note that the indirect effects of communal organizational nostalgia, via relatedness and

work engagement, on these three outcomes were significant.

We clarified the processes linking organizational nostalgia to these outcomes. Organizational nostalgia satisfies autonomy and relatedness needs. Agentic organizational nostalgia is positively associated with autonomy-need satisfaction, whereas communal organizational nostalgia is positively associated with relatedness-need satisfaction (as per H2). Satisfaction of these needs predicts increased work engagement, which in turn predicts in-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change (as per H4, H8 and H10). Finally, the associations of the ONS with these mediators and ensuing outcomes remained significant while controlling for affective organizational commitment, organizational embeddedness, perceived organizational support and past focus. These results illustrate the incremental validity of the ONS.

General discussion

The literature has addressed the identity implications and coping capacity of organizational nostalgia in the

Table 12. Associations between ONS and outcomes controlling for related constructs

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Outcome: In-role performance		Outcome: Support for organizational change		Outcome: Creativity	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
ONS	0.23 [0.05, 0.41]	0.011	0.21 [0.05, 0.38]	0.013	0.34 [0.17, 0.51]	<0.001
Organizational commitment	0.02 [-0.25, 0.29]	0.885	-0.03 [-0.29, 0.23]	0.817	-0.05 [-0.31, 0.21]	0.704
Organizational embeddedness	0.01 [-0.21, 0.23]	0.944	-0.04 [-0.25, 0.17]	0.684	-0.01 [-0.22, 0.20]	0.927
Perceived organizational support	0.04 [-0.15, 0.23]	0.680	0.26 [0.08, 0.44]	0.006	0.11 [-0.08, 0.29]	0.263
Past focus	-0.10 [-0.22, 0.01]	0.079	-0.14 [-0.25, -0.02]	0.016	-0.06 [-0.17, 0.05]	0.293

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. 95% CI in brackets.

Table 13. Associations between ONS and outcomes controlling for related constructs

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Outcome: Autonomy		Outcome: Relatedness		Outcome: Work engagement	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
ONS	0.14 [0.02, 0.26]	0.024	0.24 [0.10, 0.38]	<0.001	0.29 [0.17, 0.41]	<0.001
Organizational commitment	0.38 [0.20, 0.57]	<0.001	0.32 [0.10, 0.53]	0.004	0.46 [0.27, 0.64]	<0.001
Organizational embeddedness	-0.15 [-0.30, -0.00]	0.045	-0.11 [-0.28, 0.07]	0.233	-0.20 [-0.35, -0.05]	0.010
Perceived organizational support	0.36 [0.23, 0.49]	<0.001	0.17 [0.02, 0.32]	0.028	0.22 [0.09, 0.35]	0.001
Past focus	-0.22 [-0.29, -0.14]	<0.001	-0.02 [0.11, 0.07]	0.639	-0.01 [-0.09, 0.07]	0.763

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. 95% CI in brackets.

context of organizational change or threat (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018; Milligan, 2003; Ylijoki, 2005). We moved beyond this prior work by first developing and validating the ONS – a brief instrument that assesses two facets of organizational nostalgia, agentic and communal (Study 1). Subsequently, we found in a multi-source investigation (Study 2) that organizational nostalgia is positively associated with OCB. In the next three studies, we examined the motivational property of organizational nostalgia as it applies to organizational context. In a lagged single-source investigation (Study 3), we replicated the positive association between organizational nostalgia and OCB, with work engagement mediating this association. In a second lagged

single-source investigation (Study 4), we observed that organizational nostalgia predicts in-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change. We also demonstrated that the emotion is prognostic of relatedness-need and autonomy-need satisfaction, with need satisfaction predicting increased work engagement. In turn, work engagement predicted increased in-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change.

Contributions

We made several contributions to the literature. First, we situated organizational nostalgia in the JD-R model,

Table 14. Regression models with agentic and communal organizational nostalgia subscales in Study 4

Predictor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Outcome: In-role performance		Outcome: Support for organizational change		Outcome: Creativity	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
Agentic organizational nostalgia	0.21 [0.03, 0.39]	0.025	0.39 [0.21, 0.56]	<0.001	0.45 [0.28, 0.62]	<0.001
Communal organizational nostalgia	0.07 [-0.10, 0.25]	0.407	-0.02 [-0.20, 0.15]	0.776	-0.05 [-0.22, 0.11]	0.523

Note: ONS = Organizational Nostalgia Scale. 95% CI in brackets.

according to which resources are conducive to work engagement and performance (Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke, 2004, 2014). Indeed, organizational nostalgia positively predicted work engagement and thereby promotes in-role and extra-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change. We documented why it is linked with increased work engagement. We evinced that the emotion is associated with autonomy-need and relatedness-need satisfaction, which in turn predict work engagement. Specifically, agentic organizational nostalgia predicted autonomy-need satisfaction, whereas communal organizational nostalgia predicted relatedness-need satisfaction. Furthermore, our results clarified the construct of organizational nostalgia. Relevant work has indicated that the emotion strengthens work meaningfulness and, via work meaningfulness, weakens turnover intentions (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018). The authors speculated (but did not test) that organizational nostalgia strengthens work meaningfulness due to higher social connectedness. Our research is consistent with this speculation, as organizational nostalgia was associated with relatedness-need satisfaction.

Also, we differentiated organizational nostalgia from related constructs that refer to positive bonds with organizations: organizational identification, organizational commitment, job embeddedness and perceived organizational support. Organizational nostalgia does not concern the organization as an entity, but rather it concerns experiences within the organization. Moreover, the emotion pertains to past experiences, whereas those constructs capture how an employee views the current organization. Second, we differentiated organizational nostalgia from other forms of nostalgia, that is, personal and relational. Organizational nostalgia solely refers to events that occurred in one's organization. Finally, we distinguished organizational nostalgia from past focus. The latter construct captures a generalized reference to the past, whereas organizational nostalgia entails specific events. We showed that organizational nostalgia predicts in-role and extra-role performance, creativity and support for organizational change, controlling for the aforementioned constructs (Studies 3 and 4).

In addition, we developed the ONS to measure organizational nostalgia, consisting of agentic and communal aspects. Agentic organizational nostalgia reflects memories of achievement or personal growth while carrying out one's professional duties. Communal organizational nostalgia represents moments when an employee felt close to others in their organization and experienced belongingness. Thus, we provided researchers with a useful tool for advancing knowledge on the topic.

Finally, we contributed to the literature on time perspective in occupational settings. Scholars have argued that an orientation towards the past (i.e. past temporal focus) is maladaptive (Briker, Walter and Cole, 2020; Gamache and McNamar, 2019; Shipp and Aeon, 2019). Our findings challenge the idea that such a focus is inherently associated with reluctance to change. Although past focus was negatively linked to support for organizational change, organizational nostalgia was positively related to it. This calls for a more nuanced understanding of how different ways of pondering the past influence willingness to change.

Practical implications

An implication of prior work is that managers should appreciate organizational nostalgia in change situations, because it helps employees to cope with them. Our research indicates that organizational nostalgia is more broadly beneficial to employees and organizations: the emotion predicts improved work engagement, performance both on formal and informal organizational tasks, creativity and willingness to support organizational changes.

Our research additionally suggests *how* managers can elicit organizational nostalgia. We identified two themes of the emotion: agentic, referring to achievement or personal growth at work and communal, referring to closeness to or connection with organization members. Managers might foster organizational nostalgia by decorating the physical environment with referents of the emotion, such as photos of group outings or New Year

parties. Also, certain events – such as office parties, leaving jobs or opportunities for personal growth – have the potential to become the fodder for organizational nostalgia. Finally, in appraisal and development meetings, managers might encourage employees to think back about and reflect on experiences of achievement, success and connectedness with fellow organization members.

Limitations and directions for future research

A first limitation that should be addressed in future research is that we based the ONS items on organizational memories from participants originating in 10 cultural contexts (e.g. Anglo, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa; Gupta and Hanges, 2004). However, we tested associations between organizational nostalgia and outcomes (Studies 2–4) in Western cultures. Research has revealed strong cross-cultural agreement concerning the prototypical features of nostalgia (Hepper *et al.*, 2014). As such, we would expect our current findings to replicate cross-culturally, but this deserves empirical scrutiny. Second, although our theoretical thinking implied a directional ordering of variables, our studies are correlational. Therefore, the findings should be replicated experimentally (Leunissen *et al.*, 2018).

Our research provides avenues for further research. First, we linked organizational nostalgia to the JD-R model (Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke, 2004, 2014). This link could stimulate further research into the role of the emotion. For example, one central tenet of the JD-R model is that the positive association between job resources and outcomes becomes more pronounced as job demands increase. Does organizational nostalgia help employees to cope with job demands, and does it become more helpful as these demands increase? Second, prior studies have found that personal nostalgia can play a positive role in organizations (Van Dijke *et al.*, 2015, 2019). However, this seems to be the case only in situations characterized by threat. Follow-up work would need to specify the circumstances under which personal versus organizational nostalgia predicts organizational outcomes. Third, there is suggestive evidence that shared narratives of organizational nostalgia can divide people into ingroups and outgroups (Milligan, 2003; Ybema, 1997). Are organizational nostalgic narratives perceived as positive or exclusionary from the perspective of those who did not experience the relevant events? Does introducing newcomers to such nostalgic narratives help or hurt their integration? This line of inquiry has the potential to uncover adverse consequences of organizational nostalgia. Last, future research may analyse organizational nostalgia with other models than the JD-R model, such as the circumplex model of emotions (Feldman Barrett and Russell, 1998). Nostalgia is positive in valence and low in arousal (Van Tilburg, 2023; Van Tilburg, Wildschut and Sedikides, 2018).

Organizational nostalgia may thus link differently with work motivation than emotions that are typically associated with this outcome, such as excitement, which is positive in valence and high in arousal.

Conclusion

We conceptualized organizational nostalgia as an emotion with motivational properties, and developed and validated a pertinent scale. Further, we demonstrated that organizational nostalgia is positively associated with outcomes that are integral to well-functioning organizations, attesting to the emotion's practical significance in occupational contexts.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.