DISSERTATION

APPRAISING ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND SUPPORT: CHALLENGING

EMPLOYEES TO ENGAGE

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

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Organizational politics are an inevitable part of organizational life (Hochwarter, Ferris, Laird, Treadway, & Gallagher, 2010) and yet research has largely demonstrated that perceptions of politics are typically negative and, consequently, have a negative influence on employees (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Rosen & Hochwarter, 2014). Because politics are so prevalent – and indeed necessary – in organizations (e.g., Pfeffer, 1992), researchers have recently called for a broader perspective that considers the positive aspects of politics. Although some have forged new roads to examine the positive side of politics (Albrecht & Landells, 2012; Hochwarter, 2012), the journey has only just begun. Therefore, contributing to this line of research, the current study flips the focus on politics research from negative outcomes to positive by exploring when and how a negative perception of politics can lead to positive outcomes for employees and the organization. By experimentally manipulating participants' perceptions of politics and organizational support, I hypothesized that some work environments lead employees to perceive politics as a challenge stressor (Byrne, Manning, Weston, & Hochwarter, 2017; Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000) encouraging them to act (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and increase engagement at work. Results of analyses using 258 participants demonstrates experimentally that organizational politics and organizational support impact participants' appraisals of the environment as challenging or hindering. Additionally, political environments are negatively associated with persisting on a frustrating task. This experimental study provides a

nuanced and novel view of political environments without re-conceptualizing what

organizational politics are, and helps to explain how employees perceive positive outcomes at

work even though organizational politics are so prevalent and most often considered a negative

influence at work.

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INTRODUCTION

Picture the following hypothetical scenario: after several debates amongst the top management group, a team of employees is told by their supervisor that because of these top management disagreements, she was forced to give their resources to another team. Since their supervisor is vying for a promotion, she demands they still meet an aggressive deadline, despite their now reduced resources. Virtually all employees – like those in this scenario – face organizational politics at work and scholars have argued that this maneuvering of power and influence is necessary for the productive functioning of an organization (Hochwarter et al., 2010). No surprise, research has largely demonstrated that perceptions of politics, like those within the scenario, are typically negative and, consequently, have a negative influence on employees (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Rosen & Hochwarter, 2014). Recently, however, researchers have demonstrated that perceptions of politics are associated with negative outcomes mainly because the conceptualization of politics in the literature is dominantly a negative experience (Albrecht & Landells, 2012). Hence, scholars argue that to really understand the full spectrum of perceptions of politics at work, researchers should reconsider what politics are and how they are experienced by employees (Albrecht & Landells, 2012). Other scholars, in turn, have suggested rather than toss out a substantial body of literature, a more fruitful research agenda is to understand when politics perceptions – as they are currently conceptualized – can lead to positive work outcomes (Byrne et al., 2017). It is this research agenda that sets the foundation for this study.

Perceptions of politics are generally considered stressors at work (Hochwarter et al., 2010). Stressors are events in the environment that act on individuals to elicit strain (i.e., the outcomes of stressors, such as emotional or physical pain; Schaubroeck, Cotton, & Jennings,

1989). For example, in the scenario above the politics leading to a reallocation of resources from the one team to another team may be considered a stressor. However, stressors do not always result in negative outcomes for individuals. For example, in the scenario above, employees within the same team may perceive the same political influence of the situation, but react differently. One of the team members, Craig, views the situation of no resources but aggressive timeline as impossible and becomes demotivated, feeling exhausted and defeated. In contrast, another team member, Isabella, views the situation as a challenge, an opportunity to show that the team did not deserve to lose its resources, and she becomes even more motivated to prove the quality of the team despite the reduced resources and aggressive schedule. People like Isabella may evaluate stressors as challenges to overcome that present opportunities to gain rewards and personal growth (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Alternatively, others like Craig may evaluate stressors as a potential threat to personal goal attainment. In his case, stressors are threatening, considered hindering, standing in the way of goal achievement.

Craig is not alone in his response to the politics of the situation. Organizational politics have traditionally been categorized as a hindrance stressor that leads to negative outcomes (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), and substantial research has been conducted providing empirical support for these effects (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). However, researchers have since demonstrated that appraisals of stressors are not identical across individuals and some stressors may be appraised as both a hindrance (i.e., thwarts or obstructs progress towards goals) and challenge (i.e., potential gains if overcome; Searle & Auton, 2015; Webster, Beehr, & Love, 2011). As a result, scholars have recently proposed that perceptions of organizational politics may fall into this new understanding and represent a challenge instead of a hindrance stressor in some contexts, leading to positive work outcomes such as employee engagement (Byrne et al.,

2017; Kane-Frieder, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2014). Additionally, because researchers examining organizational politics within this challenge-hindrance framework have relied on cross-sectional designs (Eldor, 2017), their ability to empirically determine whether perceived politics caused the positive outcomes in their studies is limited. Moreover, this research did not examine whether politics is actually appraised as a challenge stressor, leaving further doubt as to whether positive outcomes could be attributed to the perceptions of politics rather than some unmeasured variable. Thus, the supposition that perceived politics may be either a hindrance or challenge stressor remains just that – a supposition.

The aims of this study are to advance the literature by (1) examining when perceived politics are appraised as challenge or hindrance stressors and (2) determining causality of perceived politics using experimental methods. Extending organizational support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), I propose that work contexts characterized by high levels of perceived organizational support create a psychologically safe work environment that provides employees with alternative options to the inherent detachment they typically seek when faced with initial perceptions of politics as a hindrance stressor. Thus, in this study I consider whether and how perceptions of organizational politics may act as challenge stressors in supportive work environments, resulting in employees actively overcoming the political challenges in the organization and being engaged (Albrecht & Landells, 2012; Byrne et al., 2017). In contrast, perceptions of politics serve as a hindrance stressor when organizational support is lacking, resulting in employees purposefully detaching from work, experiencing disengagement.

To present an alternative view to the impact perceived organizational politics has on employees in supportive and unsupportive work environments, I first review research on

perceived organizational support and organizational politics. Next, I describe how perceived organizational support influences individuals' appraisals of perceived organizational politics. I then turn to how organizational politics has been categorized as a hindrance stressor in the challenge-hindrance stressor framework and why it could also be considered a challenge stressor. I then review employee engagement and disengagement, and describe how different supportive and political work environments will lead employees to engage and/or disengage. Finally, I present the methods for testing the proposals in the study.

BACKGROUND

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' belief that their organization values their individual contributions and cares about their well-being and success (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Consistent with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) in which organizational support theory is rooted (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), actions taken by the organization or leaders, such as discretionary rewards and acting in the benefit of the employee beyond what is legally and contractually required, increase employees' level of POS. Employees with high levels of POS "payback" the organization with high levels of commitment and task persistence or productivity.

POS is associated with high levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and engagement (Eisenberger & Fasolo, 1990; Shore & Tetrick, 1991), and with low turnover, withdrawal, and strain (Ahmed & Nawaz, 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Positive work outcomes, such as these, provide support for the claim that employees work to return the support provided to them by the organization and its leaders. When employees perceive high organizational support, they develop trust in the organization and their supervisors, and the employees believe that if they make mistakes, their good intentions will be taken into account when the organization reacts (Eisenberger & Neves, 2014). In this way, POS creates perceptions of high psychological safety – employees' belief that they can express their preferred self (i.e., engage) at work without risking negative consequences to their status or career (Kahn, 1990). Psychological safety is one of the three psychological conditions that theoretically (Kahn, 1990) and empirically (Manning, 2015) lead to employee engagement. When employees

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perceive high organizational support, they also believe that because the organization cares about their well-being and success, when they engage in behaviors with the intention to benefit the organization, they will not be punished even if they fail to benefit the organization or make a mistake that could potentially harm the organization (Eisenberger & Neves, 2014). Thus, a supportive work environment is safer and less prone to reflexive punishment without appropriate investigation. Through psychological safety, POS influences how employees appraise and react to perceptions of organizational politics.

Perceptions of Organizational Politics

Perceptions of organizational politics – individuals' evaluations of the degree to which others advance their own interests by participating in illegitimate, self-serving behaviors (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Gandz & Murray, 1980) – is generally considered to have a negative influence on work outcomes (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Rosen & Hochwarter, 2014). Individuals' perceptions of organizational politics are informed by observing others form unofficial coalitions and inner circles, tear down those who are not members of the inner circles, always agree with powerful organizational members even if they privately disagree, and allocate resources and rewards in ways that do not align with organizational policies (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Because organizational politics are not explicitly sanctioned by the organization, they can quickly run counter to organizational goals (Ferris et al., 2002), having a negative impact on the organization and employees (Rosen, Ferris, Brown, Chen, & Yan, 2014).

Perceptions of organizational politics have been associated with a variety of negative workplace outcomes. Meta-analytic work has found that politics are associated with high levels of psychological strain, burnout, turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behaviors and low job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational trust, organizational justice, and

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organizational citizenship behaviors (Bedi & Schat, 2013; Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009; Miller, Rutherford, & Kolodinsky, 2008). These negative outcomes are associated with organizational politics because political environments typically cause an increase in the job demands employees face at work (Change et al., 2009). Job demands refer to the stressors in the work environment that require employees to exert physical and psychological effort (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). In an organization where employees perceive high politics, they must not only attend to the in-role requirements of their job, but must also commit energy to monitoring others' behaviors and maintaining their own reputation. Responding to these additional demands wears on employees and results in increased strain and poor work outcomes, such as low task persistence (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Although perceptions of politics are considered precursors to negative outcomes, politics are inevitable in organizations and some researchers have argued that non-sanctioned behaviors may *actually help* employees and managers secure resources, cut through the red tape, and get things done (Hochwarter & Byrne, 2006; Hochwarter et al., 2010). Furthermore, employees who perceive the job demands of politics as a game to be played – or a challenge to overcome – may perceive the benefits of political behavior and not experience the negative outcomes generally associated with such politics perceptions (Byrne et al., 2017). Still unclear is what could lead employees to appraise organizational politics as a challenge rather than a hindrance stressor. Because POS creates a psychologically safe environment, it may be the context required to lead employees to view politics as a challenge.

Organizational politics and POS

Perceptions of organizational politics and POS are highly related to each other (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Organizational politics and POS are ultimately

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about employees' perceptions of an overall level of how they are cared for by the organization. Because of the high relationships amongst the constructs, researchers have worked to determine if the concepts represent unique constructs. Although some have found evidence to consider perceptions of organizational politics and POS as indicative of the same underlying construct (Nye & Witt, 1993; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999), meta-analytic evidence has found that the two explain variance in outcomes over and above each other (Manning, 2018). Hence, current conceptualizations are that organizational politics and POS are distinct, but highly related constructs.

Challenge and Hindrance Stressors

The stressor-strain relationship has historically been the guiding theory for occupational stress research aimed at understanding and predicting employee well-being (Schaubroeck et al., 1989). Within this framework, stressful events (stressors) lead to the stress process and individuals' experience of strain. Psychological strains (e.g., anxiety) and physical strains (e.g., high blood pressure) lead to low performance and poor health outcomes for employees (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Building on the stress process, the transactional model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) explains that individuals evaluate stressors and determine if they are threatening or nonthreatening. The theory proposes that individuals' evaluation of the stressors, not necessarily the stressors themselves, determines how they react or respond (Lazarus, Kanner, & Folkman, 1980). Thus, when faced with a stressor, individuals first cognitively evaluate whether the stressor represents a potential opportunity to gain rewards and experience growth or as a potential to lose or experience harm before reacting. Extending from the transactional model, Cavanaugh et al. (2000) argued that individuals' appraisals are what categorize stressors as either challenge or hindrance (threatening) stressors. When stressors are perceived as challenging, they

present individuals with a problem to solve, an obstacle to overcome (e.g., job demands, time pressure, workload), and have the potential to lead to personal growth, mastery, or other positive rewards (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Skinner & Brewer, 2002; Webster et al., 2011). In this way, challenge stressors motivate individuals to act (LePine et al., 2005) and experience eustress (i.e., positive stress; Selye, 1991). Alternatively, hindrance stressors are perceived as unnecessary barriers (e.g., organizational bureaucracy, ambiguity, role conflict) that threaten goal attainment or personal development (LePine et al., 2005). Appraising events as hindrances leads individuals to experience distress (Selye, 1991), which leads to strain and consequently poor performance (LePine et al., 2005).

Challenge stressors are indeed demanding and may require that individuals expend significant effort to overcome them. However, because there is potential to gain from the stressors – in the form of rewards, recognition, or personal growth – they are associated with positive outcomes, such as persistence (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). Hindrance stressors are also demanding, but represent potential loss or harm and are associated with negative outcomes (LePine et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2007). Rather than assuming all stressors lead to negative outcomes, researchers have used this challenge-hindrance model to take a nuanced view of how stressors impact individuals' experience in the work place (Kane-Frieder et al., 2014).

Challenge and hindrance stressor appraisals have been used to understand why some stressors lead to positive work outcomes when they are expected to lead to strain and poor performance (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005). For example, to empirically test the challenge-hindrance framework, Cavanaugh et al. (2000) conducted a factor analysis on job demands for managers and demonstrated that stressors such as workload, time pressure, and level of responsibility loaded on a challenge stressor factor, whereas stressors such as politics,

ambiguity, and job insecurity loaded on a hindrance stressor factor. Hindrance stressors were positively associated with outcomes such as voluntary turnover and negatively related to job satisfaction, whereas challenge stressors had the opposite relationships with these outcomes. Building on Cavanaugh et al.'s (2000) work, Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, and LePine (2004) found that challenge stressors (as categorized by Cavanaugh et al.) were associated with positive work outcomes (loyalty, decreased withdrawal, lower job search behaviors and intentions to quit) and hindrance stressor with negative outcomes (work withdrawal, job search behaviors, turnover intentions, and psychological strain). Meta-analytic work has supported the challenge-hindrance framework and found that challenge stressors have positive relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment and negative relationships with turnover intentions (Podsakoff et al., 2007). In contrast, hindrance stressors showed the opposite relationships with these outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2007). Furthermore, LePine et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis showed that hindrance stressors have a negative relationship with performance and motivation, while challenge stressors showed the opposite relationships. Together, this research supports the two-dimensional framework of challenge-hindrance stressors and suggests that researchers should distinguish between these types of stressors.

Although research has supported the challenge-hindrance stressor framework, the difference between these stressors is based on Cavanaugh et al.'s (2000) classification of job demands, which makes assumptions about how stressors are appraised. Specifically, although stressors labeled as challenges or hindrances have differential relationships with strain and job outcomes, this does not provide evidence that the stressors are actually appraised as being challenging or hindering. Moreover, individuals do not necessarily agree about which stressors are challenging and which are hindering. Individuals' own life experience and contextual

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information from the work environment influence how sensitive or vulnerable they are to stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus, categorizing all stressors as either challenging or hindering does not take into account individual differences. Furthermore, stressors may also be appraised simultaneously as challenging and hindering (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Webster et al., 2011). For example, a promotion at work presents additional responsibilities that may help an individual benefit financially and grow professionally, but may also create the potential for work overload and risk failing in the new position. This combination of risk and reward may lead some individuals to appraise a promotion as both a challenge and hindrance stressor to varying degrees (Webster et al., 2011). Instead of using broad pre-determined categories to organize stressors (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2007), research on challenge and hindrance stressors should be conducted that allows for individuals to report on their unique appraisals of stressors.

Recent research has directly tested and found support for the appraisal of stressors and their differential relationships with work outcomes. For instance, in a recent study where researchers asked participants, using single item measures in experimental conditions, if they felt challenged or hindered, participants demonstrated that workload, role conflict, and ambiguity were appraised as challenge and hindrance stressors simultaneously (Webster et al., 2011). Additionally, appraisal of the stressors partially mediated the relationship between stressors and work outcomes, such as job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, and strain. These findings support Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model and assertion that stressors may be simultaneously challenging and/or threatening and are not inherently one or the other. Extending Webster et al.'s findings, Searle and Auton (2015) developed and obtained validity evidence for a new scale for measuring appraisals. They showed that when controlling for the effect of perceived stressors,

the appraisals of the stressors explained variance in outcomes, indicating that appraisals – above and beyond the stressors – influence how individuals respond. They also showed that appraisals statistically mediated the relationships between stressors and work outcomes; however, because their data were cross-sectional Searle and Auton (2015) could not draw causal conclusions.

The work conducted by researchers to test and better understand the role of appraisals in the challenge-hindrance framework opens the door for continued exploration of how stressors are experienced at work and how some stressful environments might lead to positive work outcomes. For example, politics is categorized by Cavanaugh et al. (2000) as a hindrance stressor. However there may be conditions where politics can be appraised as challenge stressors. For instance, if employees believe that politics can be used to gain resources, rewards, or attain goals, they may appraise politics as a challenge stressor, or both hindrance and challenge, but at varying levels. Although perceptions of organizational politics are stressful, if employees believe they have support from their organization to act and overcome the potential hindrances or roadblocks presented by the politics, they may be more likely to perceive politics as a challenging situation. In this case, positive outcomes could result from a seemingly stressful environment due, at least in part, to how the political environment is appraised.

Because politics and POS predict outcomes in different ways and theoretically influence people differently, it is worth exploring how the constructs interact to influence employees' appraisal of work and subsequently reactions. For instance, in a work environment with high POS, employees feel the environment is psychologically safe, warrants their investment of their preferred selves into their work, and invites them to take risks to benefit the organization (Eisenberger & Neves, 2014). Hence, in a high POS environment, employees are more likely to appraise stressors as challenges rather than hindrances.

Applied to the political scenario presented in the beginning of this manuscript, if these employees perceive a high level of organizational support, they will be prone to react positively to the political situation presented. Employees in the scenario have lost expected resources due to politics and must complete the same work within the same timeline but without the resources they had anticipated. Because employees perceive high levels of support and believe they work in a psychologically safe environment, they will appraise the political situation as a challenge, have high levels of engagement in their work, and complete the project within the deadline despite the lack of additional resources. Thus, in alignment with organizational support theory, the employees in this scenario would pay back the organization for its support by rising to the political challenge and engaging in their work. In contrast, within the same political scenario but in an organization where employees perceive low levels of support, they will appraise organizational politics as a hindrance. Because POS is low, perceived psychological safety is low – employees do not believe it is safe to engage or take risks to benefit the organization. Furthermore, these same employees will not believe the environment is psychologically safe, will not trust the organization to reciprocate any extra efforts to achieve the deadline with no resources, and will appraise the organizational politics as a hindrance stressor. Thus, perceptions of politics are just another barrier that stands in the way of completing the work; consequently, employees will disengage in a political and unsupportive environment. Because of the effect POS has on employees' appraisal of organizational politics as a hindrance or challenge stressor, organizational politics can lead to engagement in a supportive work environment and disengagement in an unsupportive environment. This demonstrates that instead of automatically conceptualizing it as a single negative stressor, organizational politics would be better

understood in terms of how it is appraised by employees who perceived organizational politics in their work environment.

Appraising organizational politics

Researchers have traditionally categorized organizational politics as a hindrance stressor (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005). However, because politics are an inevitable part of organizational life (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002; Hochwarter et al., 2010) and researchers have called for a more comprehensive view of how politics are perceived at work (Albrecht & Landells, 2012; Byrne et al., 2017; Hochwarter, 2012), an *a priori* categorization of politics as a hindrance stressor may lead to a misunderstanding of how politics are appraised. Specifically, depending on information from the work context, some employees will appraise politics as hindrance stressors and others will appraise politics as a challenge. Aligning with this view, Albrecht and Landells (2012) argued that the challenge-hindrance framework should be incorporated to extend the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), such that a positive view of organizational politics would be categorized as challenge stressors. However, Albrecht and Landells' definition of positive politics omitted components of politics, such as informal processes, non-sanctioned behaviors, self-serving behavior, and impression management. These components of politics have been distinctive in all other definitions (Fedor, Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Russ, 1998; Mintzberg, 1983). Although perceiving politics as a shared understanding that organizational members will use power, influence, and networks to impact organizational decisions and resource allocation (Albrecht & Landells) is a more positive view of politics, it removes many of the stressful components of politics. Even challenge stressors must have a stressful component (Cavanaugh et al, 2000; Lazaraus & Folkman, 1984) to spur individuals into action. If we err too far on the positive side,

employees may not perceive politics as sufficiently challenging, when in fact they are.

Somewhat negative politics may still lead to positive outcomes if they are perceived as a

challenge stressor.

In this study, I explore under what conditions organizational politics can be perceived as challenging and lead to positive work outcomes. When organizational politics are not *a priori* categorized as hindrance and instead examined for how they are appraised under different conditions, we may have better understanding of how politics are perceived by and impact employees. Aligning with Byrne et al.'s (2017) propositions, I expect that when organizational politics are appraised as challenging, employees will be more likely to engage in their work (i.e., positive outcome; Kahn, 1990; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010). When organizational politics are perceived as hindering, employees will be more likely to attenuate their engagement or disengage from work (i.e., negative outcomes; Manning, 2015).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a motivational state where employees invest their affective, cognitive, and physical energies into their work (Kahn, 1990). Employees engage in their work when they believe they can express their preferred self and emotionally connect with the work (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement is preceded by experiencing the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, availability, and safety. When employees feel valued and useful at work, they experience psychological meaningfulness. Psychological availability refers to employees' belief they have the resources needed to complete their work and are free from non-work related distractions. Lastly, employees experience psychological safety when they believe they can invest their preferred self without negative consequences to their status or career (Kahn, 1990; Shuck, 2011). When one or more of these psychological conditions are met, employees may engage in their work role (Byrne, Peters, & Weston, 2016; Rich et al., 2010). Engaged

employees benefit organizations in a number of ways. They are committed to their work and the organization (Byrne, et al., 2016; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), productive because they are persistent at work (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011), and demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviors (Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010).

Challenge and hindrance stressors have been demonstrated to relate to engagement in predictable ways. For example, job demands categorized as challenging, such as increased responsibility and time pressure, are positively associated with engagement, whereas hindrance stressors, such as bureaucracy, conflict, overload and politics are negatively associated with engagement (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010). Organizational support (as a job resource) is also positively associated with engagement (Crawford et al., 2010).

Although organizational politics has been associated with low levels of engagement (Karatepe, Babakus, & Yavas, 2012), the research findings are mixed and some show politics perceptions also associated with high engagement. For example, engaged employees in highly political environments appear more inclined to act in creative and proactive ways (Eldor, 2017) and have higher performance, job satisfaction, work intensity, and lower job tension (Kane-Frieder, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2014) when compared to engaged employees in low politics workplaces. Thus, engaged employees seem likely to perceive organizational politics as challenging stressors (Albrecht & Landells, 2012Elder, 2017; Kane-Frieder et al., 2014), which contradicts research showing low levels of engagement in politically charged workplaces (Karatepe et al., 2012).

The causal relationships showing how organizational politics might lead to positive outcomes have not been empirically tested. Thus, certain workplace environments with varying levels of politics and support may lead employees to be more or less engaged (Byrne et al., 2017).

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If we align the challenge-stressor framework with organizational support theory (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Eisenberger et al., 1986), we can hypothesize that in highly political and supportive organizations employees will appraise the environment as challenging. Employees in such organizations will feel they should payback the support the organization provides and are challenged to do so because of the level of organizational politics. In work environments with low politics and high support, employees will payback the organization through high engagement, but will feel neither challenged by politics nor hindered by the work environment. Their engagement levels are in direct response to the support they feel. Thus, they will experience lower engagement than those in highly political and supportive environments, but higher engagement than when politics are high and there is no support.

Employee Disengagement

When employees are disengaged, they simultaneously withdraw and protect their preferred selves from the work environment (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010). Employees disengage when the work environment threatens their preferred self and violates one or more of the psychological conditions established as precursors to engagement (meaningfulness, availability, and safety; Manning, 2015). Though researchers have often studied low engagement and called it disengagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), disengagement is actually an active and conscious decision that extends beyond the mere absence of engagement (Kahn, 1990; Wollard, 2011), and is distinct from and not as severe as burnout (Byrne et al., 2016; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Different from burnout, disengaged employees, despite being withdrawn and sheltered from the work environment, continue to perform their work, just not with the same passion or attention they might normally employ (Kahn, 1990; Manning 2015). Because disengaged employees simply go through the motions at work as if on autopilot, they may

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become easily frustrated when work requires the investment of additional energies, or they may even stay away from work to avoid these demanding situations. In support, researchers have demonstrated that low engagement is associated with absenteeism and low commitment (Karatepe, Beirami, Bouzari, & Safavi, 2014).

Due to its effects on psychological conditions, such as availability or safety, one can theorize that organizational politics is positively associated with high disengagement and POS is negatively associated with disengagement. Because challenge stressors motivate employees to act, they are likely to decrease disengagement. In contrast, hindrance stressors that represent a threat should increase employees' disengagement because they are encouraged to retract and protect themselves. In highly political environments with low support, employees have little reason to work hard for their employer and will be more likely to perceive politics as a hindrance stressor. As a result, these environments will result in employee disengagement.

In work environments with low politics and low POS, employees do not necessarily perceive the environment as being hindering but also have no obligation to give to the organization, since no support was forthcoming. The conditions in these environments may not be severe enough to lead to disengagement; instead, employees will simply narrow their engagement to cope with low support.

Hypotheses

Summarizing the above review and suppositions, the following hypotheses are put forward:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational politics has significant negative main effects on challenge appraisals, psychological safety, engagement, and task persistence.

Hypothesis 2: Organizational politics has significant positive main effects on hindrance appraisals and disengagement.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational support has significant positive main effects on challenge appraisals, psychological safety, engagement, and task persistence.

Hypothesis 4: Organizational support has significant negative main effects on hindrance stressors and disengagement.

As discussed earlier in the manuscript, the difference between perceiving politics as challenging or hindering will depend on the level of perceived organizational support.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant interaction between organizational politics and organizational support on challenge appraisals, psychological safety, engagement, disengagement, and task persistence.

Lastly, as suggested, as long as POS is high, employees perceiving organizational politics will appraise the situation as challenging and reciprocate the high support with high engagement. Inversely, when employees perceive high politics but there is no support forthcoming from the organization, employees will perceive the politics as a hindrance stressor and respond by disengaging.

Hypothesis 6: Challenge appraisals mediate the relationship between a highly political and supportive work environment and engagement.

Hypothesis 7: Hindrance appraisals mediate the relationship between a highly political and low support work environment and disengagement.

Manipulating Work Environments

As mentioned earlier in the manuscript, researchers previously exploring how politics are appraised and lead to work outcomes have made *a priori* appraisal categorizations and relied on

cross-sectional data. Similarly, interactions between perceived politics and support have not explored in an experimental design. Politics have been categorized as hindering without an examination of under what conditions they may challenge employees to act despite evidence that they generally lead to positive outcomes (Eldor, 2017; Kane-Frieder, 2014). Experimental designs allow researchers to rule out confounding variables. Thus, in this study, I control and manipulate participants' perceptions in an experiment. Perceptions of the work environment were manipulated using vignettes that describe varying levels of politics and organizational support. Researchers have used vignettes successfully to better understand behavior in organizations (Aguinis & Bradley, 2010; e.g., Colquitt & Jackson, 2006; De Cremer, van Dijke, & Bos, 2007; Hitlan, Kelly, Schepman, Schneider, & Zarate, 2006; Kwon & Weingart, 2004; Scott & Colquitt, 2007; van Knippenberg & Van Knippenberg, 2005), and thus I attempt the same.

STUDY 1: VIGNETTE MANIPULATIONS

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine whether four vignettes describe combinations of low and high organizational support and politics in the work environment, successfully manipulate participants' perceptions of POS and organizational politics in expected ways. Other than the information related to the independent variables, all information about the workplace was kept constant in the vignettes. Vignettes for the study appear in Appendix A.

METHOD

Participants

Responses from 59 MTurk workers were gathered to test the manipulation for the study. Twelve participants responded incorrectly to verification items or incorrectly responded to one or more verification items, and spent less than 60 seconds reading the vignette. Therefore, these participants were removed from subsequent analysis leaving a final sample of $n = 47$. In the final sample, the majority of respondents were female (53.2%; 44.7% male; 2.1% genderqueer), Caucasian or white (66%; 10.6% Latino; 10.6% Black or African American; 6.4% Asian; 6.4% Multi-racial), and were employed full-time (48.9%; 23.4% employed part-time; 14.9% self-employed; 12.8% unemployed). On average, participants were 38.11 ($SD = 12.41$) years old, had 17.77 ($SD = 13.19$) years of work experience, and had 3.51 ($SD = 2.18$) years of post-secondary education.

Procedure

The study was posted on Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) website. Generally, MTurk samples, made up of individuals completing surveys for small pay, tend to be more diverse than student undergraduate samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Given the phenomenon under study, it was expected that MTurk workers would draw similar meaning from the vignettes used to manipulate perceptions of organizational politics and support for the study as would be experienced by other samples, such as undergraduate students or employees in an organization (Ramsey, Thompson, McKenzie, & Rosenbaum, 2016). Therefore, MTurk workers were considered a viable and sufficient sample for assessing the manipulations (i.e., vignettes), which form the independent variable of this research project.

The study was made available only to MTurk workers with low rejection rates (less than or equal to 5% of tasks rejected) and who were located in the United States. To ensure quality responses, MTurk workers were paid $1.00 for their time, which is consistent with current pay rates for this type and length of task (Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2013). Aligning with recommendations from researchers (e.g., Mason & Suri, 2012; Meade & Craig, 2012), validity checks, such as verification items to ensure workers read every statement and a minimum time limit (more than 60 seconds), were included to ensure vignettes were read and respondents were attentive.

Participants were randomly assigned to four different experimental conditions: (1) high politics, high support; (2) low politics, high support; (3) high politics, low support; or (4) low politics, low support. For each of the conditions, participants read a vignette (Appendix A) describing an organizational environment where they have hypothetically worked for two years. Low and high support portions of the vignettes were adapted from vignettes used by Hunter (2012) that successfully manipulated levels of perceived organizational support. The organizational politics portions were developed for this study. Vignettes varied only in their description of the political or supportive work environment. All other details remained constant. It is expected that the vignettes describing high support would lead participants to perceived high support and respond on average above a three on a validated measure. Similarly, low support vignettes would lead to lower perceptions of support and thus responses below a three on a validated measure. More importantly, there should be significant differences on the POS measure between participants who read the high support vignettes and those who read the low support vignettes. These criteria and differences were examined using manipulation checks that measured participants' perceptions of organizational support and politics.

Measures

Other than the demographics questionnaire, responses to measures were gathered on a

five-point (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*) Likert scale.

Perceived organizational politics

Fourteen items from Kacmar and Carlson's (1997) 15-item Perceptions of Organizational

Politics Scale (POPS) were used to measure participants' perception of politics in the

organization described in the vignette. One item ("I can't remember when a person received a

pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies") was removed

because participants are not be working in the hypothetical organization and thus would not

remember such instances. Other items were adapted to fit the nature of the study. For example,

"None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be

determined." was revised to "None of the raises I will receive will be consistent with the policies

on how raises should be determined." Additionally, a revised item, "I will never see the pay and

promotion policies applied politically in this organization." was reversed scored but had negative

correlations with the other items in the scale after reverse coding and low correlations before

reverse coding. This indicated that the revised item confused participants and was removed from

the scale. The POPS has been widely used in the organizational politics literature. Kacmar and

Carlson reported reliability of scores at $\alpha = .87$ when using the 15-item POPS. For this study,

reliability of scores using the 13-item scale was $\alpha = .95$.

Perceived organizational support

Eisenberger et al.'s (1997) 8-item Perceived Organizational Support (POS) scale was

adapted to measure participants' perception of support in the organization. Rather than referring

to "my organization" the items were revised to refer to "this organization." Both the long

(Eisenberger et al., 1986) and short (Eisenberger et al., 1997) POS scales are widely used in the literature. Eisenberger et al. (1997) reported reliability of scores at α = .90 when using the 8-item POS scale. In this study, the reliability of scores when using the 8-item scale was α = .96.

Validity

To check for inattentive responses (Meade & Craig, 2012), three validity items were included throughout the survey. The two items included with the POS and POPS items were, "I often ride wild animals at the zoo" and "My best friends are all astronauts." A final item, "What was the name of the team leader in the in the workplace scenario you read?" was used to ensure that participants read the vignettes.

Demographics

Demographic information was also gathered from participants to provide sample characteristics. Demographic items included gender, ethnicity, employment status, student status, English ability in relation to other languages, years of work experience, and years of post-secondary education. Details about the items are included in Appendix B.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities, and correlations for the Study 1 variables are presented in Table 1. One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine if participants varied in their perceptions of organizational politics and organizational support based on the vignettes they were randomly assigned to read in the study. The tests for perceptions of organizational politics ($F(3,43) = 42.37$, $\eta^2 = .75$, $p < .001$) and organizational support ($F(3,43) = 52.89$, $\eta^2 = .79$, $p <.001$) were significant, indicating there are significant differences in perceptions between the conditions. The differences in perceived organizational politics and support for the different conditions are illustrated in Figures 1-2.

Post-hoc tests revealed participants reading the high politics, high support condition ($n = 13$) had significantly higher perceptions of organizational politics (M = 3.85) when compared to those reading the low politics, high support ($n = 14$, M = 1.96, $p < .001$) and low politics, low support ($n = 10$, M = 2.13, $p < .001$) conditions. The high politics, low support condition ($n = 10$) participants reported significantly higher perceptions of organizational politics (M = 4.28) than did participants in the low politics, high support ($p < .001$) and low politics, low support conditions ($p < .001$). Perceptions of organizational politics were not significantly different between those reported in the high politics, high support and high politics, low support ($p = .353$) or the low politics, high support and low politics, low support ($p = .917$) conditions.

Perceptions of organizational support were significantly higher for participants in the high politics, high support condition (M = 3.71) when compared to those in the high politics, low support (M = 1.41, $p < .001$) and low politics, low support (M = 2.40, $p <.001$) conditions. The low politics, high support condition participants reported significantly higher POS (M = 4.42)

than the high politics, low support ($p < .001$) and low politics, low support ($p < .001$) conditions. Interestingly, the differences in POS between the high politics, high support and low politics, high support ($p = .027$) conditions as well as the high politics, low support and low politics, low support ($p = .006$) conditions were significant at $\alpha = .05$ level. However, after applying the Bonferroni correction for all of the mean difference comparisons ($\alpha = .05/12 = .004$), these differences become non-significant while all other differences remained significant.

Based on the findings in Study 1, the vignettes developed for this study successfully manipulate the independent variables for the study. Participants who read about supportive and low political work environments reported perceiving high POS and low organizational politics. This pattern held for each of the vignettes and participants differed significantly in their perceptions of support and politics in the hypothetical organizations.

STUDY 2: PILOT STUDY

Study 1 demonstrated that the workplace vignettes manipulated participants' perceptions of organizational politics and support in expected ways. Although MTurk and undergraduate participants were expected to interpret organizational politics and support in similar ways Ramsey et al., 2016), there are differences between the samples. Specifically, researchers have found that MTurk worker samples tend to be more diverse than undergraduate samples and tend to have more work experience (Buhrmester et al., 2011). MTurk workers are participating in online research for fun or money instead of fulfilling formal education requirements like undergraduates participating in research pools. Additionally, Study 1 only tested the vignette manipulations and did not require participants to go through the full study procedures. Because of these differences, there were two primary goals for Study 2. First, to account for differences between the samples, I wanted to ensure that the vignettes manipulated student participants' perceptions of organizational politics and support in the same expected ways as they did for the MTurk workers. Second, Study 2 provided a pilot of the procedures for the main study, to identify any potential issues before conducting the study with a large number of participants.

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of 28 undergraduate male and female students enrolled in psychology courses at a large, public university in the Western United States. As part of their course requirements, students receive credit for participating in research projects at the university, and this study was one of the projects in which students could voluntarily participate. Validity checks identical to Study 1 were included to ensure attentive responses. Two participants failed two or more of the validity checks and were removed, leaving a final sample of $n = 26$ participants. The majority of the respondents were female (69.2%; 26.9% male; 3.8% gender non-conforming), Caucasian (73.1%; 8.3% Latino; 7.7% Asian; 7.7% Multi-racial; 3.8% preferred not to respond), employed part-time (53.8%; 46.2% unemployed), and a full-time student (100%). On average, participants were 19.69 ($SD = 1.57$) years old, had 3.84 ($SD = 1.74$) years of work experience, and 1.62 ($SD = 1.19$) years of post-secondary education.

Procedure

Details about the procedure in the pilot study are described in detail in the main study. Briefly, the participants were randomly assigned to read one of the workplace vignettes. After reading about the workplace, participants appraised the environment as presenting challenge and hindrance stressors. Next, participants received a faux email from their supervisor (Appendix C) informing them of a new product from the organization and asking for their help with testing the product. To test the product, participants completed 10 solvable and 10 unsolvable anagrams. Finally, participants rated their engagement and disengagement, and to check for vignette manipulation, their perceptions of organizational politics and support.

Measures

With the exception of the demographic questionnaire, all survey responses were recorded on a 5-point (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*) Likert scale. Survey items are presented in Appendix B. Perceived organizational support (α = .93) and perceived organizational politics (α = .93) measures to test the manipulation and the demographic questionnaire are identical to those used in Study 1.

Stressor appraisal

Much of the challenge and hindrance stressor literature has used factor analysis to determine which characteristics and tasks in a job are classified as challenges or hindrances (See Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). However, Searle and Auton (2015) developed scales to assess individuals' appraisals of stressors. The 4-item challenge and hindrance stressor appraisal scales assess participants' appraisal of the work environment described by the vignette. Searle and Auton (2015) reported reliability of scores at α = .80 for challenge appraisals and α = .90 for hindrance appraisals. For this study, reliability of scores using the challenge (α = .94) and hindrance (α = .94) scales show acceptable levels.

Engagement in task

Rich et al.'s (2010) 18-item Job Engagement Scale (JES) was adapted to measure participant engagement in an anagram task. Rich et al. (2010) reported a coefficient of α = .95 for reliability of scores using the JES. Since the study does not assess participants in a workplace setting, task engagement was used rather than work engagement. Therefore, items were modified to refer to the task rather than the individual's job. For example, "I work with intensity on my job" was changed to "I worked with intensity on the task." Changing the reference for the items from job to task to measure task engagement in this way is consistent with other studies (e.g., Sandell,

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2012). Although task engagement is a narrower construct than job engagement, measuring engagement in the task is more appropriate for this study. Participants' engagement in their job – as described by the vignettes – could only be measured as a hypothetical (i.e., how engaged participants think they would be in the job). Measuring engagement in the task allows participants to report the level of engagement they actually experienced in the study. The reliability of scores estimated in this study using the engagement in task measure was acceptable at $\alpha = .95$.

Disengagement from task

Eight items from Manning's (2015) 12-item disengagement scale were adapted to measure participants' disengagement from the anagram task. Four of the items, such as "Unless it is required, I avoid attending social gatherings with my coworkers," refer to physical, social disengagement at work and are not relevant to the anagram task in this study. Thus, they were removed. Similar to the changes made to the engagement items, the remaining items were adapted to refer to the task rather than work in general. This modification provided participants with an opportunity to report the disengagement they experienced during the study. For example, "I often daydream at work" was revised to "I often daydreamed during the task." Manning (2015) reported reliability of scores at $\alpha = .89$ for the full disengagement scale. The reliability of scores estimated in this study was $\alpha = .86$ using the 8-item task disengagement measure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for Study 2 are presented in Table 2. Because of the small sample size in the pilot study, tests of statistical significance were not conducted. Rather, means were examined across the measures to gather directional information and to identify where changes should be made in the main study. As expected, mean scores on the organizational politics measure were highest for those in the high politics conditions (High Politics, High Support = 3.46; High Politics, Low Support = 3.84) and lowest for those in the low politics conditions (Low Politics, High Support = 1.87; Low Politics, Low Support = 2.70). Mean scores for perceived organizational support were also highest for high support conditions (High Politics, High Support = 3.06; Low Politics, High Support = 4.58) and lowest for low support conditions (High Politics, Low Support = 1.82; Low Politics, Low Support = 2.48). For mean scores on other measures, such as task disengagement (High Politics, High Support = 2.85; High Politics, Low Support = 3.18; Low Politics, High Support = 2.92; Low Politics, Low Support = 2.47), it was difficult to determine a pattern and mean differences would be too small to find an effect.

In the workplace scenario vignettes, participants read three paragraphs. The first provides background information and is identical in all conditions. The second paragraph differs only in the description of politics in the organization. Finally, the third differs only in the description of organizational support. In Study 1 and Study 2, information about politics was always introduced first and organizational support second. It is possible that participants could form judgments about the workplace environment (either negative or positive) based on the first paragraph and these conclusions would be difficult to change regardless of the information presented in the

second. Thus, for the main study, the order of these paragraphs was randomly assigned to remove the effect of reading about politics or support first.

Because of concerns identified in Study 2, additional variables were added to Study 3 to detect potential differences between groups. First, participants were asked to rate their potential engagement and disengagement in the organizations described in the vignette. To not influence their responses to the task engagement and disengagement measures, participants rated hypothetical engagement and disengagement near the end of the survey along with the manipulation checks. Second, to ensure the hypothetical situation was salient and fresh in participants' memory, the vignettes were displayed a second time after participants completed the anagram task and responded to the engagement and disengagement measures. Last, potential covariates, including proactive personality, Big Five personality inventory, positive affect, and negative affect were added to examine individual differences that could influence and/or explain results.

STUDY 3: POS INFLUENCE ON APPRAISALS OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS
METHOD

Participants

Participants were 318 undergraduate male and female students from a large, public university in the Western United States, of which 251 were from psychology courses and 67 were from management courses. Students enrolled in specific psychology courses receive course credit for voluntarily participating in research projects at the university. Additionally, students enrolled in an undergraduate management course could participate in the study for extra credit in their course. Two participants were under 18 years of age and removed from the analysis. Additionally, after being debriefed about the procedures and purposes of the study, 11 participants requested their data be excluded. The participants who requested to have their data excluded did not appear to have a single characteristic in common. All the experimental conditions were represented among the participants. In terms of demographics, excluded participants included males and females, multiple races, and a variety of majors, ages, and years of work experience. Because there were no singularly defining characteristics for the 11 participants, their exclusion may be considered random for the purposes of the study. Finally, validity checks identical to those included in Study 1 were included to check for attentive responses. Participants who failed two or more validity checks ($n = 47$) were removed from the study.

The final sample was $n = 258$ participants, of which the majority were female (62%; 37.6% male; 0.4% preferred not to respond), Caucasian (76.7%; 10.5% Latino; 5.8% Asian; 3.5% Multi-racial; 2.7% Black or African American; 0.4% preferred not to respond), employed part-time (47.7%; 47.7% unemployed; 2.7% employed full-time; 1.9% self-employed), and full-

time students (98.1%; 1.9% part-time student). On average, participants were 19.74 ($SD = 2.38$)

years old, had 3.25 ($SD = 5.34$) years of work experience, and had 1.22 ($SD = 1.41$) years of

post-secondary education.

Because organizational politics and support are concerned with perceptions of the work

environment, research on these topics is not generally conducted on student samples unless the

students have jobs outside of their school responsibility. Because workplaces do not allow for the

manipulation of politics, support, or controlling other aspects of work that might influence

employees' perceptions, using working students is a reasonable approach for studies concerned

with how organizational politics and support are perceived in the workplace. Therefore, to

examine the research questions posed within this study, levels of politics and support were

manipulated with artificial work environments described by vignettes to elicit controlled

perceptions of these constructs. As such, there are known limitations with the approach, which

are addressed in the Discussion.

Procedure

The experiment was administered online, using Qualtrics, a product that provides survey

design and implementation solutions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four

conditions: (1) high politics, high support; (2) low politics, high support; (3) high politics, low

support; or (4) low politics, low support.

Experimental vignette methodology was used for this study and has been applied to

similar organizational research (Mroz & Allen, 2017; Hunter, 2012). The experimental vignette

methodology is considered a valuable approach for understanding what influences workplace

behavior (Aguinis & Bradley, 2010), especially when the actual workplace cannot be

manipulated. Although student samples may not have as much experience with organizational

politics as do full-time working adults, the students are generally familiar with national politics and do consider how politics might influence their future careers. For example, Kaplan (2008) found that students' level of political skill is related to which occupations they planned to enter in the future. Thus, considering the need for the experimental conditions and students' ability to judge political situations, a student sample was considered adequate for this experimental study.

To avoid confounding variables inadvertently impacting the manipulation, the location, industry, and other details about the organization were not included in the vignettes. Instead, the vignettes identify a large organization that hired participants out of college. Participants were also told their position fit their education and college major, and that they are generally satisfied with the day-to-day work they do. By not reading about a very specific organizational setting, the participants can imagine an organization where they work or would like to work, and envision the work they would like to do. Specific information about industry (e.g., technology, hospitality, manufacturing), location, or type of organization (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, public, private) might influence participants' opinions in unexpected and uncontrollable ways due to their positive or negative opinions about such organization types and locations; therefore, these details were left out of the vignettes.

After reading the vignette, participants rated their appraisal of the environment as a challenge or hindrance stressor (Seale & Auton, 2015), and rated their perceptions of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) in the environment. Participants rated their perceptions of organizational politics and organizational support at the end of the study rather than the beginning for two reasons: (1) the effectiveness of the vignettes to manipulate participants' perceptions of organizational politics and support was previously demonstrated in the pilot study, thus reassessing to test the manipulation was not necessary, and (2) to avoid confounding their

ratings with appraisals, which could potentially influence the results in unpredictable ways (Kidd, 1976; Perdue & Summers, 1986).

After rating the organizational environment, participants read an email (Appendix C) from their supervisor asking them to complete a task to test a new product the company was promoting. Participants were informed in the email that their performance on the task could make them eligible for a promotion. An anagram task (Aspinwall & Richter, 1999) was used to assess participants' level of persistence in a difficult and frustrating task, and to later assess their engagement levels. During the task, participants were shown a series of five scrambled letters and asked to determine which word could be spelled with the letters. For example, the letters "aordi" can be rearranged to spell "radio". After being shown three examples of the anagrams, participants were asked to solve as many anagrams as they could within 25 minutes. Participants were reminded not to seek assistance from others or outside resources (e.g., the Internet). A total of 20 (10 solvable, 10 unsolvable; See Appendix D) anagrams were presented, one at a time. The first 10 anagrams were solvable followed by 10 unsolvable anagrams. Participants were allowed to skip anagrams they could not solve. If participants did not complete the anagram task within 25 minutes, they were sent to the next portion of the study. The dependent variable for the study was not how many anagrams participants solved or how quickly they were solved, but rather how long participants persisted in the frustrating task of solving unsolvable anagrams. Time spent on each page and the entire task was measured within the Qualtrics software.

After working through the anagram task, participants rated their level of engagement (Rich et al., 2010) and disengagement (Manning, 2015) in the task using measures adapted to refer to the task rather than work in general. Participants read the workplace scenarios again to refresh their memory. They were then asked to rate how engaged (Rich et al., 2010) or

disengaged (Manning, 2015) they expected to be in the workplace identified in the scenario. Additionally, as a manipulation check, participants rated their perceptions of politics (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) and organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1997) in the organizations. Next, participants completed measures assessing proactive personality (Bateman & Crant, 1993), Big Five Inventory of personality (Gerlitz & Schupp 2005; Lang, John, Lüdtke, Schupp, & Wagner, 2011), positive and negative affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) and demographics. Lastly, participants were debriefed online on the purpose of the experiment and the unsolvable nature of the anagram task.

The insolvability of the anagrams is the only deception used in this study – participants were informed at the start of the study of all other aspects of the study with full transparency. Participants could not be told at the start of the study that the dependent variable was their persistence on an insolvable task and that the researchers expected their persistence to vary by levels of perceived support and politics because participants could potentially modify their persistence level based on knowing the task was unsolvable. They could either attempt to persist to satisfy the researcher (i.e., being helpful), or give up faster than they would normally because they knew the task could not be completed. Regardless, using deception was essential for studying this specific outcome given the scenarios. This deception was not considered harmful, as people in general often do not know when a task is insolvable.

Measures

With the exception of the demographic questionnaire, all survey responses were recorded on a 5-point (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*) Likert scale. Alpha reliabilities shown here were estimated on the sample for Study 3. Survey items are presented in Appendix B. Perceived organizational support, perceived organizational politics, challenge appraisal (α = .92),

hindrance appraisal (α = .94), engagement (α = .95) disengagement (α = .86), and the demographic questionnaire were identical to the measures used in the pilot study.

Psychological safety

Edmondson's (1999) 7-item team psychological safety scale was used to assess psychological safety. Consistent with other studies using this measure (Byrne et al., 2016), items were adapted to relate to the organization rather than the team. For example, the item "People on this team sometimes reject others for being different" was adapted to "People in this organization sometimes reject others for being different." Using this version of the psychological safety scale, Manning (2015) reported reliability of scores at α = .88. For this study, reliability of scores was acceptable at α = .90.

Employee engagement

The 18-item JES (Rich et al., 2010) was adapted to measure participants anticipated level of engagement in the organization described in the scenario. Items were adapted to conditional rather than present tense to refer to participants' expected level of engagement. For example, "I am enthusiastic in my job" was changed to, "I would be enthusiastic in my job." Reliability of scores for this sample was α = .98.

Employee disengagement

All 12 items from Manning's (2015) disengagement scale were used to measure participants' expected level of disengagement in the organization described by the scenarios. Similar to the JES changes, items were adapted to the conditional tense. For example, "I feel detached from my job" will be changed to, "I would feel detached from my job." Reliability of scores using the 12-item measure was α = .94.

Proactive personality

Bateman and Crant's (1993) 17-item proactive personality scale was used to assess proactive personality. Proactive personality was measured to use as a possible covariate as those with a proactive personality may be more likely to perceive a political environment as a challenge stressor rather than a hindrance stressor, and may be more likely to report high engagement. Bateman and Crant previously reported reliability of scores at $\alpha = .89$; for this study, reliability of scores was $\alpha = .91$.

Personality

The 15-item version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-S; Gerlitz & Schupp 2005; Lang et al., 2011) was used to assess participants' overall personality traits. The BFI-S is designed to assess personality in large surveys, where space is limited, using three items for each of the five personality traits in the Big Five model (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness). Reliability of scores for the three-item measures for Neuroticism ($\alpha = .73$), Extraversion ($\alpha = 76$), and Openness ($\alpha = .74$) were acceptable. However, reliability of scores with using the Agreeableness ($\alpha = .64$), and Conscientiousness ($\alpha = .60$) scale items were considered unacceptable and not used in the analyses or results.

Positive and negative affect

Participants' mood or state affect was measured using the Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). Participants were shown 20 items describing different emotions related to positive ($\alpha = .92$) or negative ($\alpha = .88$) affect and asked to indicate to what extent they felt these emotions currently at the present moment. Responses to the items were gathered on a 5-point (1 = *Very slightly, not at all*; 5 = *Extremely*) Likert scale.

Manipulation Check

Correlations and reliability of scores for Study 3 variables are presented in Table 3.

Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4. To confirm that participants varied in

their perceptions of organizational politics and support based on the vignettes they were

randomly assigned to read (i.e., to check manipulations), one-way ANOVAs were conducted.

The tests for perceptions of organizational politics ($F(3,254) = 87.13$, $\eta^2 = .51$, $p < .001$) and

organizational support ($F(3,254) = 149.91$, $\eta^2 = .64$, $p < .001$) were significant, indicating there

are significant differences in perceptions between the four conditions. The differences in

perceived organizational politics and support for the different conditions are illustrated in Figures

3-4.

Post-hoc tests for group differences in perceived organizational politics demonstrated that

participants in the High Politics, High Support (M = 3.79) and High Politics, Low Support (M =

3.87) conditions had significantly higher perceptions of organizational politics when compared to

participants in the Low Politics, High Support (M = 2.20, $p < .001$) and Low Politics, Low

Support conditions (M = 2.65, $p < .001$). The difference between High Politics, High Support

and High Politics, Low Support conditions was not significant ($p = .566$). However, the Low

Politics, High Support condition had significantly lower perceptions of organizational politics

compared to the Low Politics, Low Support condition ($p < .01$).

For perceptions of organizational support, differences between all conditions were

significant. Importantly, the High Politics, High support (M = 3.06) and Low Politics, High

Support (M = 4.22) conditions had significantly higher perceptions of organizational support

when compared to High Politics, Low Support (M = 1.54, *p* < .001) and Low Politics, Low

Support (M = 2.44, *p* < .001) conditions. Additionally, the High Politics, High Support condition

had significantly lower perceptions of organizational support compared to the Low Politics, High

Support (*p* < .001) condition. Similarly, the High Politics, Low Support condition was

significantly lower than the Low Politics, Low Support (*p* < .001) condition. Together, the group

differences in perceived organizational politics and support confirm that the vignettes

manipulated perceptions in the expected directions. Participants in the high politics conditions

had the highest perceptions of politics and participants in the low politics conditions had the

lowest perceptions. Participants in the high support conditions had the highest perceptions of

support and low conditions has the lowest.

Hypothesis Testing

Data from the study were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) in R

(Version 3.2.3; R Core Team, 2015). Traditionally, data with randomly assigned groups are

analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) or analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) methods.

Some suspect that researchers incorrectly assume that the benefits of structural equation models

only apply to non-experimental data (Breitsohl, 2018). However, in contrast to traditional

methods, using SEM to analyze experimental designs allows for modeling of multiple and latent

dependent variables rather than observed variables that assume measurement without error

(Bagozzi, 1977; Bagozzi & Yi, 1989; Breitsohl, 2018). Estimating latent variables serves to

model measurement error and increases statistical power to detect differences (Breitsohl, 2018;

Russell, Kahn, Spoth, & Altmaier, 1998). Thus, with certain research (such as this study), SEM

provides a superior method for researchers to analyze data and test their hypotheses.

Hypotheses 1-3 posited that organizational politics and organizational support have main effects on the dependent variables (challenge appraisals, hindrance appraisals, psychological safety, engagement, disengagement, persistence in the anagram task). To test these hypotheses, the levels of the independent variable were coded using the effect coding technique (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Effect coding allows for the main and interaction effects of the levels of the independent variable to be analyzed and is one of the recommended coding techniques when using regression based analyses for experimental designs (Cohen et al., 2003). After coding the observed groups for levels of the independent variables, assessing their main effects and interaction effects on the dependent variables in SEM follows the same approach as regular SEM.

Measurement Models

Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) measurement models were specified for each individual latent dependent variable and a full five-factor measurement model including all latent dependent variables. Assessment of the model fit for each of the measurement models was guided by values of the chi-square test of goodness of fit (χ^2), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) using traditionally accepted cutoffs (e.g., RMSEA < .06 CFI & TLI > .90; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Each of the measurement models had appropriate fit as presented in Table 5.

Because the focal concern in this study was with the relationships of latent variables and not of their individual items or dimensions (Williams & O'Boyle, 2008), I followed partial disaggregation, using the item-to-construct balance approach (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002; Williams & O'Boyle, 2008) to create indicators for latent variables with seven or more scale items for the full measurement model. This method involves conducting an

exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the scale items for the latent variable. The items are then evenly distributed across parcels based on their factor loadings from the EFA to create parcels comprising at least three items (Little et al., 2002) that are balanced by item difficulty and discrimination.

Structural Model

To conduct the SEM, the 7 latent dependent variables (i.e., challenge and hindrance appraisals, psychological safety, task engagement and disengagement, employee engagement, and employee disengagement) and one manifest dependent variable (i.e., time spent persisting in the unsolvable task) were regressed on the effect codes for the levels of the independent variables (i.e., high and low politics; high and low support; which were constrained to be orthogonal) with three covariate latent variables (i.e., persistence, personality, positive and negative affect). The model fit the data well (χ^2(452) = 681.42, CFI = .972, TLI = .966, RMSEA = .044). Results are presented in Table 6. Organizational politics had a significant main effect on challenge appraisals (β = -.32, p <.001), hindrance appraisals (β = .50, p <.001), psychological safety (β = -.75, p <.001), employee engagement (β = -33, p <.001), employee disengagement (β = .40, p <.001) and persistence in the task (β = -.13, p <.05). Main effects of organizational politics on task engagement (β = .09, p = .128) and task disengagement (β = -.07, p = .257) were not significant. These results provide partial support for Hypothesis 1 and 2.

Organizational support had significant main effects on challenge appraisals (β = .62, p < .001), hindrance appraisals (β = -.47, p <.001), psychological safety (β = .35, p <.001), task disengagement (β = .16, p <.01), employee engagement (β = .53, p <.001), and employee disengagement (β = -.36, p <.001) providing partial support for Hypothesis 3 and 4. There were

no significant main effects for organization support on task engagement (β = -.07, p = .239) or task persistence (β = .02, p = .737).

There were significant interaction effects for perceptions of politics and organizational support on hindrance appraisals (β = .20, p <.001) and psychological safety (β = -.09, p <.05), providing some support for Hypothesis 5. However, interaction effects on challenge appraisal (β = -.09, p = .059), task engagement (β = .08, p = .154), task disengagement (β = -.02, p = .732), employee engagement (β = .03, p = .535), employee disengagement (β = .01, p = .826), and task persistence (β = .08, p = .176) were not significant. Effects and interactions for each of the dependent variables across all levels of the independent variables are plotted in Figures 5-12.

Mediation

Mediation hypotheses (Hypothesis 6-7) were analyzed using SEM. Because politics and support factors had significant main and interaction effects on psychological safety, and because psychological safety is a theoretical (Kahn, 1990) and empirically tested (Manning, 2015) antecedent to employee engagement and disengagement, it was included as a mediator in the mediation models. Additionally, because main and interaction effects on task engagement and disengagement were largely non-significant, participants' ratings of their hypothetical employee engagement and disengagement were included instead of task measures. To compare the High Politics, High Support condition and High Politics, Low Support conditions to all other conditions, two separate structural models were estimated using dummy codes for the experimental conditions as exogenous variables. In the first model, a High Politics, High Support dummy code (1 = High Politics, High Support condition; 0 = all other conditions) was included. In the second model a High Politics, Low Support dummy code (1 = High Politics, Low Support; 0 = all other conditions).

A 5-factor measurement model including mediator (challenge appraisal, psychological safety), outcome (employee engagement), and covariate (negative affect, proactive personality) latent variables fit the data well ($\chi^2(80) = 131.50$, CFI = .985, TLI = .981, RMSEA = .050). The first structural model (Figure 13) had acceptable model fit ($\chi^2(93) = 285.76$, CFI = .946, TLI = .930, RMSEA = .090). Compared to other experimental groups, the High Politics, High Support condition had a significant direct effect on employee engagement ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$) and a significant, negative indirect effect on engagement through psychological safety ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of the condition through challenge appraisals was not significant ($\beta = .04$, $p = .109$). Additionally, the High Politics, High Support condition was associated with decreased psychological safety ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$) and psychological safety is significantly related to employee engagement ($\beta = .43$, $p < .001$). However, the condition was not significantly related to challenge appraisal ($\beta = .11$, $p = .094$), which was significantly related to employee engagement ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$). This indicates that Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

For the second model testing Hypothesis 7, a 5-factor measurement model including mediator (hindrance appraisal, psychological safety), outcome (employee disengagement), and covariate (negative affect, proactive personality) latent variables fit the data well ($\chi^2(80) = 100.14$, CFI = .994, TLI = .992, RMSEA = .031), and the first structural model (Figure 14) had acceptable model fit ($\chi^2(93) = 259.04$, CFI = .950, TLI = .936, RMSEA = .083). The direct effect of the High Politics, High Support condition on employee disengagement was non-significant ($\beta = .11$, $p = .093$). However, the indirect effects of the condition on disengagement through both hindrance appraisal ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$) and psychology safety ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$) were significant. Finally, the High Politics, Low Support condition had a significant relationship with hindrance appraisals ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$), which is significantly related to disengagement ($\beta = .21$, $p < .01$).

Additionally, the condition had a significant, negative association with psychological safety ($\beta =$ -.56, $p < .001$) and psychological safety is negatively related to employee disengagement ($\beta =$ -.40, $p < .001$). Hypothesis 7 was supported.

DISCUSSION

There appears to be consensus in the literature that organizational politics, as it is currently conceptualized, will invariably lead to negative outcomes for employees. However, we know that organizational politics are an inescapable part of work, and yet employees still have varying levels of engagement and disengagement at work. I set out to determine under what circumstances organizational politics could lead to positive outcomes for employees. The study demonstrated, experimentally, that organizational politics and support – regardless of the level of the other – have effects on employee engagement, disengagement, (as measured by participants expected levels of engagement) and challenge appraisals. High politics also lead to persisting less on an unsolvable, frustrating task. Further, although challenge appraisals are impacted by politics and support independently, hindrance appraisals and perceptions of psychological safety depend on the levels of both politics and support. Finally, in highly political and low supportive environments, employees are likely to disengage from work because they appraise the environment as a hindrance stressor. Although not all of the suppositions of this study were supported, the results offer insight into how employees might react to environments with a mixture of organizational politics and organizational support, and how they affect their engagement and disengagement at work.

The results of this experiment show that organizational politics has a negative effect on employees' challenge appraisals and their expected level of engagement. Additionally, participants expected to be more disengaged in political environments and organizational politics influenced how long participants worked on a frustrating and unsolvable task. These effects occur regardless of the level of support in the environment. Employees are unlikely to appraise

political environments as challenging stressors regardless of the level of support. To determine whether the addition of support in the environment might flip participants' appraisal of politics as hindrance to a challenge stressor, participants were presented with a high political high support environment. In this condition, participants remained less likely to view it as a challenge stressor, regardless of the high level of support in the environment. Hence, organizational politics may be too salient to overlook, thus overriding any positive effects that perceptions of organizational support may have. Though organizational support leads to positive outcomes, support alone appears not enough to combat some of the negative effects that come with perceived organizational politics.

Organizational support had significant effects on challenge appraisals and expected engagement and disengagement in expected ways. Employees are likely to appraise supportive environments as providing opportunities to challenge themselves. It is possible that in supportive environments, employees will feel safe to take on challenges knowing that the organization supports them Additionally, the lack of support might be enough to push employees to disengage from their work. Similar to engagement, researchers examining disengagement have posited that the lack of positive aspects in the workplace (e.g., organizational support) are unfortunate and may decrease engagement, but it takes persistent, negative events or attitudes to push employees to move from not engaged to disengaged (Manning, 2015). Results from this study demonstrate that a lack of positive elements in the environment, such as organizational support, may be enough to move employees towards disengagement

Interestingly, organizational support also had a significant, positive effect on task disengagement. Regardless of levels of politics, participants in highly supportive environments were more likely than those in low support environments to report disengaging from the anagram

task. This result stands in contrast to participants expected level of disengagement in the environment where high support is associated with lower levels of expected disengagement. One explanation for this finding is that participants would not expect a supportive workplace to request that they participate in a frustrating, unsolvable task. Aligning with the met expectations hypothesis – when employees' expectations about work do not align with their experience, they are more likely than those who had their expectations met to withdraw from work (Porter & Steers; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992) – if participants read about the supportive workplace and felt that it was a place where they would be happy to work only to then be presented with an unsavory task, it is understandable that they might react poorly to the task. To protect their preferred selves from the difference between what they expected and what they received from the environment, participants would have to disengage from the frustrating task. This explanation suggests that when there is high support in the environment, employees expect that they will not be asked to work on something that appears unsolvable.

Previous work on organizational politics and appraisals categorized politics as a hindrance stressor, without empirical evidence that it was actually appraised like any other stressor. In this study, empirical evidence was obtained suggesting that politics is appraised as a hindrance stressor. The significant ordinal interaction (Figure 7) demonstrates that a decrease in politics will be associated with a decrease in a hindrance appraisal, especially when support is high. This demonstrates the positive effect support can have on decreasing hindrance appraisals, but it is most effective when politics are lower. There is a similar interaction on psychological safety (Figure 5). Decreased politics are associated with increased psychological safety and this is especially true with support is high. Taken together, this empirically demonstrates the positive

effect support can have on how employees perceive and appraise their environment. However, these positive effects are really only demonstrated when politics are sufficiently low.

In further support of politics as a hindrance stressor, participants expected disengagement in highly political environments with low support was fully mediated through hindrance appraisals. Instead of categorizing politics as hindrance stressors beforehand, this study demonstrated that employees expect to disengage from highly political environments because politics stand as a barrier to achieve personal goals and work outcomes (i.e., is a hindrance stressor). Additionally, in support of engagement theory, psychological safety mediated the relationship between highly political, highly supportive environments and employee engagement as well as the relationship between highly political, low support environments and employee disengagement. Because highly political environments decrease psychological safety (even when support is high), employees expect that they will be less likely to invest their preferred selves in their work and may even be pushed into disengagement.

It was anticipated that in highly political and highly supportive environments, employees could feel empowered to take on the challenges brought to them by politics because they knew they would be supported by the organization. However, in this study, engagement and disengagement scores for the task were quite low, and participants voiced their distaste via the survey with such a difficult task. Although some were relieved to find that 50% the task was unsolvable, many had a hard time staying focused and "on task." I was initially concerned that participants would not be sufficiently frustrated by the task, however, it appears the task was too frustrating for most. Thus, I was not able to accurately evaluate the hypothesis that in highly political and highly supportive environments employees would appraise the politics as challenging and rise to the occasion.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study provides some support to researchers' claims that perceived organizational politics create an environment with powerful, negative effects on employees and their work. Although both politics and support had effects on the study outcomes, in the presence of significant interactions, organizational support only appeared to have an effect on hindrance appraisals and perceptions of psychological safety when organizational politics were low. The paradox of employees experiencing engagement when politics is so pervasive has not been solved. There may be conditions where organizational politics are perceived as challenge stressors. However, it will take more than the presence of organizational support to flip employees' appraisal of organizational politics from a hindrance to a challenge stressor. Despite the unanswered paradox, the findings of this study have implications for organizational politics and engagement theories as well as the challenge/hindrance framework.

The study experimentally tested the effect that organizational politics and support have on engagement, disengagement, appraisals, and psychological safety. With the evidence that highly political environments are more likely to be perceived as a hindrance stressor that employees perceive as standing between them and their personal and professional goals, researchers can explore the negative effects of politics within the challenge/hindrance framework. Using the challenge/hindrance framework as a guide, researchers may understand what conditions – in addition to or in place of organizational support – can influence employees' appraisals of politics. Along with support, if employees find their work meaningful or place a high value on their career (or work in general) they might see organizational politics as a tool to secure resources for their work or further their career. Alternatively, employees with high meaning or work centrality might be prone to ignore politics at work and thus be less likely to

appraise them as a hindrance. Rather than looking exclusively at workplace conditions, researchers could also explore what individual differences lead to increased hindrance appraisals or challenge appraisals of organizational politics. For instance, individuals who feel like they have traditionally belonged or current belong to the "in-crowd" at work may be less likely to see politics as a hindrance. Exploring the different ways that employees actually appraise politics could provide a more nuanced understanding of how politics are experienced and how that impacts outcomes such as engagement. With this study, we understand that the presence of organizational support is not enough. There are perhaps stronger influences on employees' appraisals or a different combination of conditions that lead to changes in how employees experience politics.

Along with demonstrating the effects that organizational politics and support have on engagement and disengagement, the study demonstrated how different environments impact psychological safety. Additionally, in support of engagement theory, psychological safety was found to be a mediator between highly political environments and engagement and disengagement. Although effects on task engagement and disengagement were generally not found, participants expected that they would be less engaged and more disengaged when working in highly political environments and this expectation was explained by their perceptions of psychological safety. Additional experimental studies could be conducted to provide additional evidence for the other psychological conditions (psychological availability and psychological meaning; Kahn, 1990) to continue to build support and empirical evidence for engagement theory. Further, the unexpected positive main effect of support on disengagement provides an interesting path of study for engagement researchers. Because disengagement is not merely low engagement or the opposite of engagement, it is theorized that employees must

experience something consistently negative and/or pervasive (i.e., high organizational politics) to be pushed into disengagement. However, inconsistent but acute instances may be enough to push employees into disengagement for at least a short period. Following from the explanation for why support might lead to disengagement, if the message that the organization sends to employees does not align with their actual experiences, it may be enough to push them to disengage. This could be extended to realistic job previews, managing expectations, and the importance of proper change management. Researchers could explore how a mismatch between expectations and actual experiences impacts disengagement. Further, it would be interesting to explore whether the disengagement is long lasting or is narrower like the task disengagement found in this study.

Study Strengths and Limitations

This study empirically tested the effects of organizational politics and support on important outcomes. Although not all of the hypotheses were supported, it adds to organizational researchers' and practitioners' understanding of how organizational politics and support are experienced and how they interact. According to the study's findings, it is unlikely that employees' experience of organizational politics can be meaningfully influenced by organizational support, especially when organizational politics are high. Further, researchers using the challenge/hindrance framework to understand stressors have categorized politics as a hindrance stressor without testing appraisals of politics. This study is one of the first to explore the actual appraisal of organizational politics as a hindrance stressor and perhaps the first to experimentally test the appraisal.

Rather than conducting an experiment with employees in an actual workplace, this study relied on a student sample reading vignettes about different workplace scenarios. Although the

vignettes have been successfully used in previous organizational studies and in this case, successfully manipulated participants' perceptions of organizational politics and support, participants did not experience or witness actual political behavior. Additionally, the politics that were described (as impactful and detailed as they were) had no impact on participants' actual work experience or daily life, making it difficult to generalize the findings to employees experiencing high levels of politics in their workplace.

There are additional limitations with this study and the variables that were available for analysis. First, although proactive personality and negative and positive affectively could be used as covariates in the analyses, conscientiousness would have provided an additional, worthwhile covariate to explore. Because conscientiousness may have had a meaningful effect on participants' persistence in the unsolvable task, it would have been beneficial to explore in the analyses. Conscientiousness was measured; however, due to time limits, a short 3-item measure of conscientiousness was used that did not meet reliability criteria required to be useful. Thus, the effect of conscientiousness cannot be accounted for in this study. Similarly, and perhaps consequently, there were not significant effects of the independent variables on task engagement and disengagement. Thus, measures of participants expected or hypothetical level of engagement while working in the workplace described in the vignettes was used for the mediation analyses and interpretation. Levels of engagement and disengagement were as expected (i.e., low engagement and high disengagement in political organizations). However, this did not allow me to explore employees actual – and perhaps unexpected – levels of engagement and disengagement while working on the anagram task.

CONCLUSION

Organizational politics are a part of virtually every employee's experience at work and researchers have demonstrated that outcomes of perceived organizational politics are generally negative. This study examined these claims experimentally by randomly assigning participants to read vignettes about workplaces with varying combinations of high and low politics and support. Aligning with previous research, organizational politics was found to have negative outcomes on engagement and disengagement regardless of levels of organizational support. Participants' appraisals of the environment were analyzed and demonstrated that highly political organizations are appraised as hindrance stressors that pose as a barrier between employees and their personal and professional goals and increase disengagement. Organizational support influenced the effect of politics on hindrance appraisals and perceptions of psychological safety, but only when politics were low. The findings of this study support the notion that politics are negative and that increased organizational support is not enough to change employees appraisals of politics as hindrance stressors. Researchers are encouraged to explore politics within the challenge/hindrance framework to better understand how employees' appraisals of politics can be influenced or changed and how that can improve outcomes for employees and organizations.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability of Scores, and Correlations for Study 1

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gender	1.57	0.54	-					
2. Age	38.11	12.41	.18	-				
3. Work Experience	17.77	13.19	.21	.93*	-			
4. Education	3.51	2.18	.24	-.00	-.04	-		
5. POPS	3.01	1.18	.08	.01	.01	-.10	*.95*	
6. POS	3.15	1.31	.05	.04	.04	.20	-.50*	*.96*

Note. n = 47. Sex is coded 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other. POPS = Perceived Organizational Politics Scale. POS = Perceived Organizational Support. Cronbach's alpha appears along the diagonal in italics.

* *p* < .01

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability of Scores, and Correlations for Study 2

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	0.35	0.56	-							
2. Age	19.69	1.57	-.01	-						
3. Work Experience	3.84	1.74	.03	.13	-					
4. Education	1.62	1.19	-.19	.39*	.11	-				
5. HpHs Condition	0.23	0.43	.15	.11	.12	-.45*	-			
6. HpLs Condition	0.35	0.49	-.16	.09	.02	.44*	-.40*	-		
7. LpHs Condition	0.12	0.33	-.23	-.08	.11	.30	-.20	-.26	-	
8. LpLs Condition	0.31	0.47	.19	-.14	-.20	-.25	-.37	-.49*	-.24	-
9. Challenge Appraisal	2.91	1.22	.07	-.06	.12	-.05	.10	-.40*	.48*	.00
10. Hindrance Appraisal	3.66	1.07	-.18	-.12	-.27	-.11	-.02	.39	-.49*	-.04
11. Task Engagement	3.08	0.78	-.17	-.25	-.09	-.06	-.16	.00	.00	.14
12. Task Disengagement	2.86	0.81	.37	.03	-.02	.16	.00	.30	.03	-.32
13. Org Politics	3.17	0.88	-.19	.23	.10	.13	.18	.56**	-.54**	-.36
14. Org Support	2.63	1.09	.20	-.05	.14	-.03	.22	-.55**	.66**	-.09

Table 2 *Continued*

	9	10	11	12	13	14
9. Challenge Appraisal	*.94*					
10. Hindrance Appraisal	-.51*	*.94*				
11. Task Engagement	.14	.08	*.95*			
12. Task Disengagement	-.06	.20	-.53**	*.86*		
13. Org Politics	-.59**	.64**	-.18	.37	*.93*	
14. Org Support	.74**	-.79**	-.02	-.06	-.70**	*.93*

Note. n = 28. Sex is coded 1 = Male, 0 = Female, 2 = Other. Conditions are dummy coded. HpHs = High Politics, High Support; HpLs = High Politics, Low Support; LpHs = Low Politics, High Support; LpLs = Low Politics, Low Support. Cronbach's alpha appears along the diagonal in italics.

 * *p* < .05

** *p* < .01

Table 3

Correlations and Reliability of Scores for Study 3

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender											
2. Age	.18**										
3. Work Experience	.12	.18**									
4. Education	.05	.45**	.07								
5. HpHs Condition	.07	.03	-.02	.09							
6. HpLs Condition	-.14*	-.06	.13*	-.04	-.30**						
7. LpHs Condition	.05	.09	-.05	.00	-.35**	-.30**					
8. LpLs Condition	.01	-.06	-.05	-.05	-.37**	-.31**	-.37**				
9. Challenge Appraisal	.10	.08	-.07	.01	.08	-.46**	.58**	-.24**	.92		
10. Hindrance Appraisal	-.13*	-.12	.03	.07	.15*	.40**	-.65**	.12	-.68**	.94	
11. Psychological Safety	.09	.08	-.11	-.03	-.32**	-.53**	.65**	.16*	.61**	-.72**	.90
12. Task Engagement	.00	-.04	.00	-.06	.07	.01	-.12	.05	-.09	.08	-.06
13. Task Disengagement	-.08	-.13*	.05	.01	.02	-.06	.13*	-.09	.07	-.08	.04
14. Employee Engagement	.08	.08	.01	-.02	.12	-.50**	.47**	-.13*	.60**	-.52**	.51**
15. Employee Disengagement	-.19**	-.15*	.07	-.01	.05	.42**	-.42**	-.01	-.50**	.50**	-.57**
16. Perceived Org Politics	-.16**	-.17**	.11	.01	.39**	.42**	-.52**	-.26**	-.40**	.51**	-.74**

Table 3 *Continued*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
17. Perceived Org Support	.09	.09	-.10	.02	.09	-.58**	.67**	-.23**	.75**	-.69**	.71**
18. Negative Affect	-.14*	-.04	-.05	-.02	-.02	.10	.00	-.06	-.11	.02	-.07
19. Positive Affect	-.01	-.03	-.05	-.05	.02	-.05	.01	.02	.10	.01	.04
20. Proactive Personality	-.04	.01	-.04	.02	.02	-.04	.03	-.02	.07	.03	.04
21. Emotional Stability	-.29**	-.07	.00	-.09	-.06	.09	.02	-.04	-.09	.06	-.08
22. Extraversion	-.12	-.02	-.11	.00	-.05	.00	.06	-.01	.07	-.04	.08
23. Openness	-.03	-.01	.02	.05	-.04	.06	-.01	.00	-.02	.04	-.01
24. Agreeableness	-.11	-.09	-.08	-.03	.01	.12	-.12*	.00	-.01	.13*	-.10
25. Conscientiousness	-.01	.03	-.01	.01	.04	-.02	.01	-.03	-.03	.03	.00
26. Persistence	.19**	.05	-.03	.11	-.02	-.13*	.03	.11	.11	-.13*	.13*

Table 3 *Continued*

Variable	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
12. Task Engagement	*.95*										
13. Task Disengagement	-.56**	*.86*									
14. Employee Engagement	.11	-.06	*.98*								
15. Employee Disengagement	.00	.28**	-.73**	*.94*							
16. Perceived Org Politics	.04	.07	-.36**	.53**	*.93*						
17. Perceived Org Support	-.09	.09	.69**	-.62**	-.56**	*.94*					
18. Negative Affect	-.08	.29**	-.18**	.32**	.14*	-.11	*.88*				
19. Positive Affect	.32**	-.22**	.10	-.09	-.03	.03	.07	*.92*			
20. Proactive Personality	.28**	-.14*	.27**	-.18**	-.10	.07	-.08	.31**	*.91*		
21. Emotional Stability	-.15*	.27**	-.11	.22**	.14*	-.11	.33**	-.24**	-.32**	*.73*	
22. Extraversion	.16*	-.17**	.17**	-.17**	-.11	.12	-.10	.18**	.38**	-.20**	*.76*
23. Openness	.31**	-.13*	.07	-.04	-.02	.01	.01	.13*	.47**	-.15*	.28**
24. Agreeableness	.29**	-.22**	.05	-.06	.07	-.06	-.13*	.21**	.36**	-.14*	.19**
25. Conscientiousness	.31**	-.23**	.14*	-.13*	-.04	-.03	-.14*	.22**	.54**	-.16*	.18**
26. Persistence	-.01	-.01	.05	-.07	-.13*	.13*	-.18**	-.14*	-.01	-.23**	.08

Table 3 *Continued*

Variables	23	24	25
23. Openness	*.74*		
24. Agreeableness	.28**	*.64*	
25. Conscientiousness	.19**	.28**	*.60*
26. Persistence	.07	.00	-.04

Note. n = 258. Gender is coded 1 = Male, 0 = Female. Conditions are dummy coded. HpHs = High Politics High Support; HpLs = High Politics Low Support; LpHs = Low Politics High Support; LpLs = Low Politics Low Support. Persistence is the average time (in seconds) spent working on the 10 unsolvable anagrams. Cronbach's alpha appears along the diagonal in italics.

  * *p* < .05

** *p* < .01

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Study 3

Variable	Mean	SD
1. Gender	0.38	0.49
2. Age	19.74	2.38
3. Work Experience	3.54	5.34
4. Education	1.22	1.41
5. High Politics, High Support Condition	0.26	0.44
6. High Politics, Low Support Condition	0.21	0.41
7. Low Politics, High Support Condition	0.26	0.44
8. Low Politics, Low Support Condition	0.28	0.45
9. Challenge Appraisal	3.28	1.18
10. Hindrance Appraisal	3.17	1.27
11. Psychological Safety	2.91	1.10
12. Task Engagement	3.19	0.84
13. Task Disengagement	2.53	0.91
14. Employee Engagement	3.53	1.00
15. Employee Disengagement	2.72	0.96
16. Perceived Organizational Politics	3.06	0.97
17. Perceived Organizational Support	2.88	1.19
18. Negative Affect	1.64	0.70
19. Positive Affect	2.37	0.92
20. Proactive Personality	3.75	0.60
21. Emotional Stability	3.08	1.01
22. Extraversion	3.40	0.99
23. Openness	3.79	0.86
24. Agreeableness	3.94	0.78
25. Conscientiousness	3.73	0.74
26. Persistence	48.61	43.92

Note. n = 258 Gender is coded 1 = Male, 0 = Female. Conditions are dummy coded. Persistence

is the average time (in seconds) spent working on the 10 unsolvable anagrams.

Table 5

Measurement Models for Study 3

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	95% RMSEA CI	CFI	TLI
1-Factor Challenge Appraisal	5.20	2	.079	[.00, .17]	.996	.988
1-Factor Hindrance Appraisal	7.10*	2	.099	[.03, .18]	.995	.984
1-Factor Psychological Safety	35.87**	13	.083	[.05, .12]	.976	.962
1-Factor Task Engagement	412.27**	128	.093	[.08, .10]	.922	.907
1-Factor Task Disengagement	47.54**	16	.087	[.06, .12]	.963	.935
1-Factor Employee Engagement	487.70**	127	.105	[.10, .12]	.936	.923
1-Factor Employee Disengagement	186.62**	50	.103	[.09, .12]	.936	.915
1-Factor Positive Affect	108.44**	32	.096	[.08, .12]	.951	.932
1-Factor Negative Affect	86.08**	32	.08	[.06, .10]	.956	.938
1-Factor Proactive Personality	247.46**	116	.07	[.06, .08]	.924	.911
10-Factor Full Model including all DVs & CVs	589.63**	360	.05	[.04, .06]	.971	.965

Note. n = 258. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; DV = Dependent variable; CV = Covariate. CI is the 95% confidence interval.

 *$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

Table 6

Study 3 Structural Equation Model Results

Predictor	Outcome	β	SE	*p*
Organizational Politics	Challenge Appraisal	-.32	0.06	< .001
	Hindrance Appraisal	.50	0.06	< .001
	Psychological Safety	-.75	0.05	< .001
	Task Engagement	.09	0.05	.128
	Task Disengagement	-.07	0.05	.257
	Employee Engagement	-.33	0.05	< .001
	Employee Disengagement	.40	0.05	< .001
	Task Persistence	-.13	2.65	.037
Organizational Support	Challenge Appraisal	.62	0.06	< .001
	Hindrance Appraisal	-.47	0.06	< .001
	Psychological Safety	.35	0.04	< .001
	Task Engagement	-.07	0.05	.239
	Task Disengagement	.16	0.05	.008
	Employee Engagement	.53	0.05	< .001
	Employee Disengagement	-.36	0.05	< .001
	Task Persistence	.02	2.65	.737
Politics x Support Interaction	Challenge Appraisal	-.09	0.06	.059
	Hindrance Appraisal	.20	0.06	< .001
	Psychological Safety	-.09	0.04	.023
	Task Engagement	.08	0.05	.154
	Task Disengagement	-.02	0.05	.732
	Employee Engagement	.03	0.05	.535
	Employee Disengagement	.01	0.05	.826
	Task Persistence	.08	2.66	.176

Note. n = 258

Table 7

Study 3 Dependent Variable and Manipulation Check Means and Standard Deviations by Condition

Variable	HpHs		HpLs		LpHs		LpLs	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Challenge Appraisal	3.44	0.88	2.22	0.96	4.44	0.68	2.81	0.95
Hindrance Appraisal	3.49	1.02	4.17	0.82	1.79	0.90	3.42	0.94
Psychological Safety	2.31	0.67	1.76	0.64	4.11	0.70	3.19	0.67
Task Engagement	3.28	0.88	3.20	0.79	3.02	0.85	3.26	0.83
Task Disengagement	2.56	0.99	2.42	0.92	2.73	0.81	2.39	0.90
Employee Engagement	3.73	0.83	2.56	0.97	4.31	0.65	3.32	0.72
Employee Disengagement	2.79	0.88	3.51	0.88	2.04	0.79	2.70	0.75
Organizational Politics	3.70	0.62	3.87	0.75	2.20	0.74	2.65	0.65
Perceived Organizational Support	3.06	0.88	1.54	0.61	4.22	0.73	2.44	0.62
Solvable Anagrams	18.38	12.52	17.47	8.15	20.81	12.07	22.13	12.24
Persistence	47.04	46.96	37.28	24.12	50.81	43.38	56.48	51.29

Note. HpHs = High Politics High Support; HpLs = High Politics Low Support; LpHs = Low Politics High Support; LpLs = Low Politics Low Support. Persistence is the average time (in seconds) spent working on the 10 unsolvable anagrams.

Table 8

Study 3 Dependent Variable and Manipulation Check Means and Standard Deviations by Factor

	High Politics		Low Politics		High Support		Low Support	
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Challenge Appraisal	2.90	1.10	3.61	1.16	3.94	0.93	2.56	0.99
Hindrance Appraisal	3.79	1.00	2.63	1.23	2.64	1.29	3.74	0.97
Psychological Safety	2.07	0.71	3.64	0.82	3.21	1.13	2.58	0.97
Task Engagement	3.25	0.84	3.14	0.85	3.15	0.88	3.23	0.81
Task Disengagement	2.50	0.95	2.55	0.87	2.65	0.90	2.40	0.90
Employee Engagement	3.22	1.07	3.81	0.85	4.02	0.80	3.00	0.91
Employee Disengagement	3.11	0.94	2.38	0.83	2.42	0.91	3.05	0.90
Organizational Politics	3.78	0.69	2.43	0.73	2.95	1.02	3.17	0.92
Perceived Organizational Support	2.38	1.08	3.31	1.12	3.64	0.99	2.05	0.76
Solvable Anagrams	17.98	10.78	21.49	12.13	19.60	12.31	20.14	10.89
Persistence	42.73	38.74	53.73	47.53	48.93	45.07	48.27	42.83

Note. Persistence is the average time (in seconds) spent working on the 10 unsolvable anagrams.
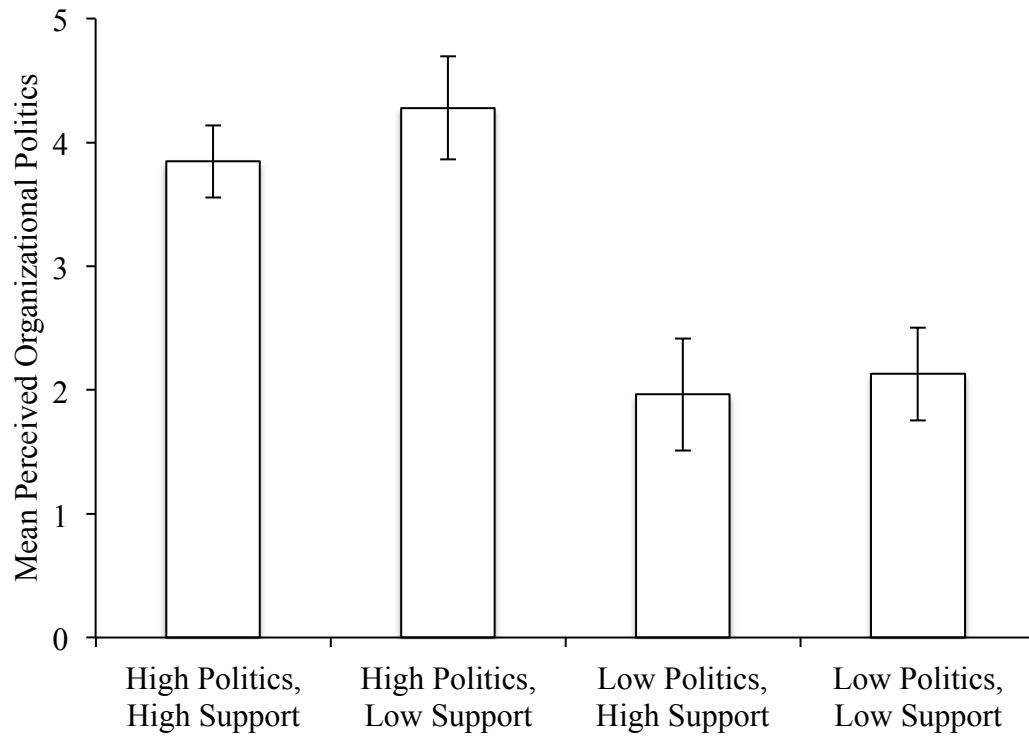
Figure 1. Perceived organizational politics means by condition for Study 1. 95% confidence intervals are represented in the figure by the error bars attached to each column.
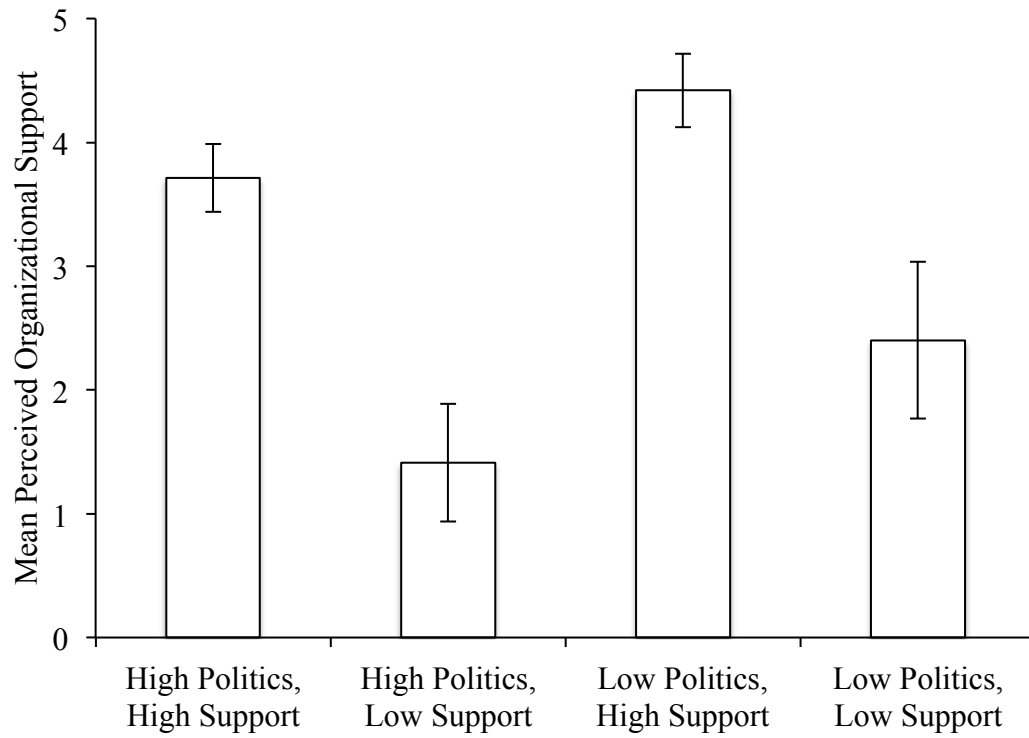
Figure 2. Perceived organizational support means by condition for Study 1. 95% confidence

intervals are represented in the figure by the error bars attached to each column.
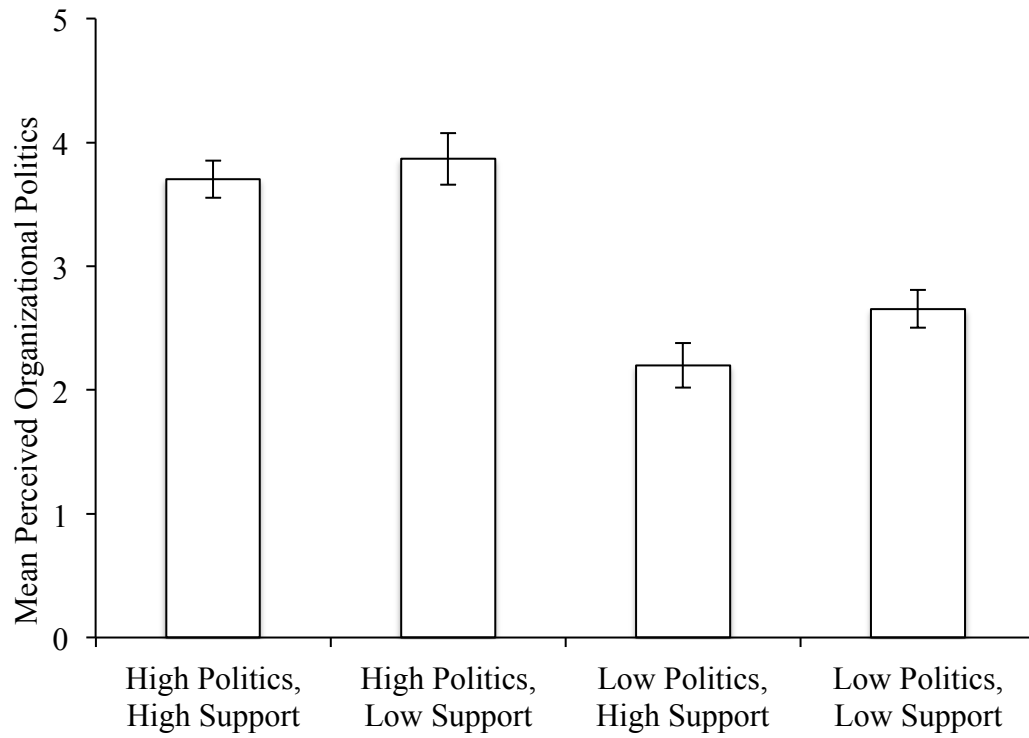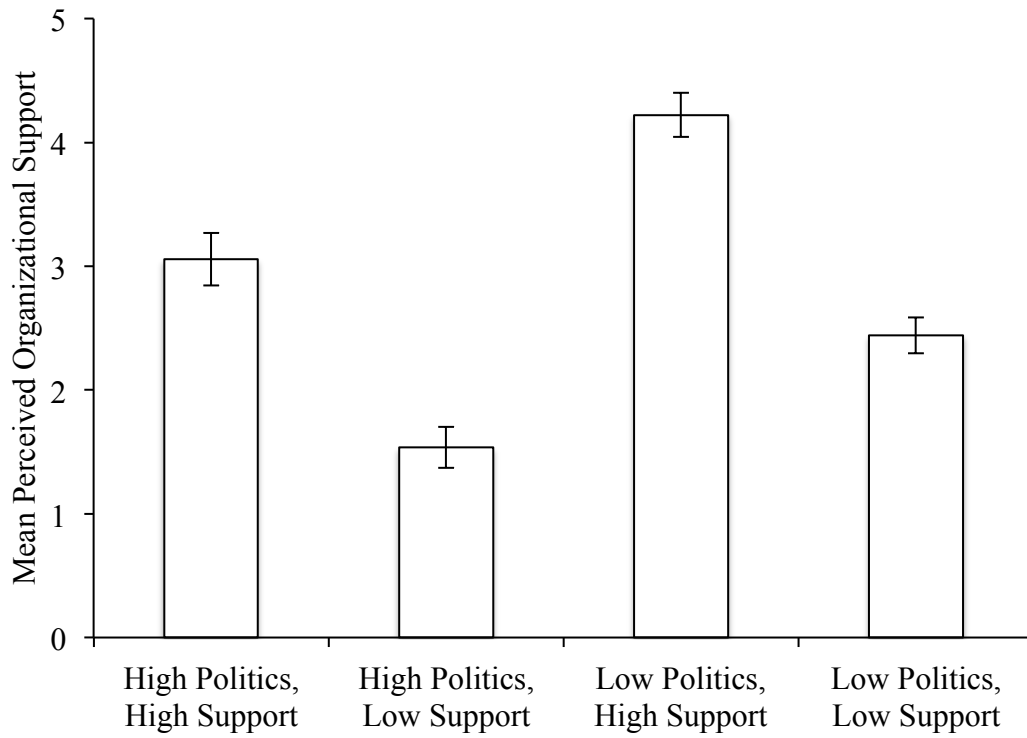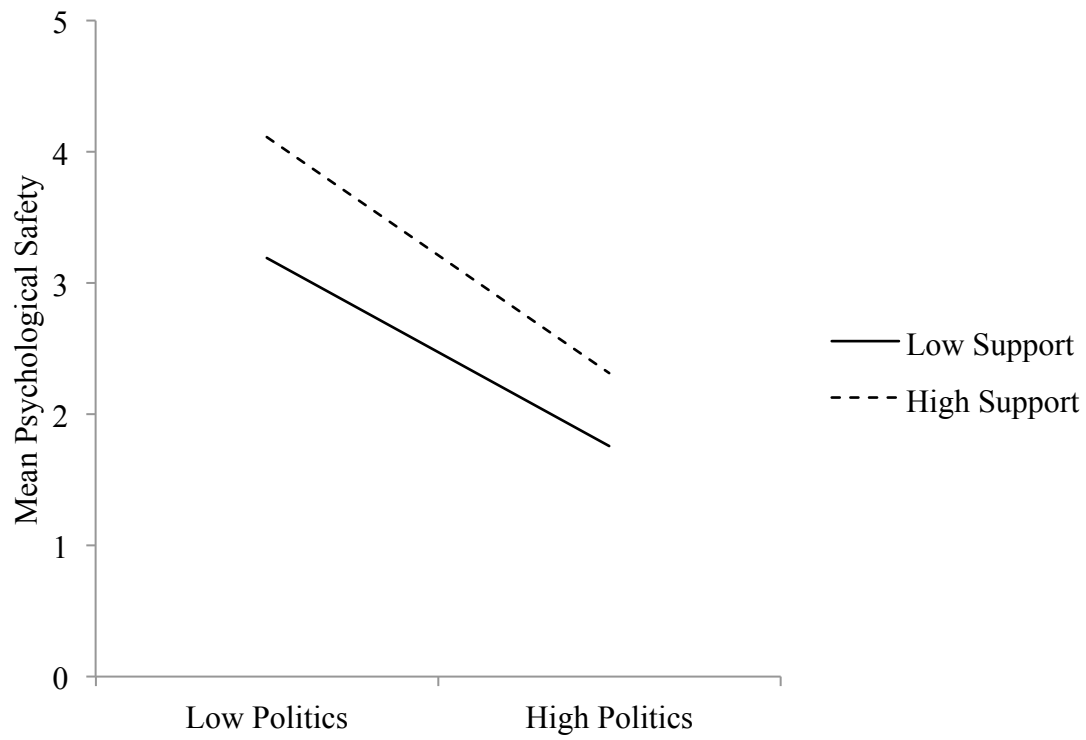
Figure 3. Perceived organizational politics means by condition for Study 3. 95% confidence

intervals are represented in the figure by the error bars attached to each column.

Figure 4. Perceived organizational support means by condition for Study 3. 95% confidence

intervals are represented in the figure by the error bars attached to each column.

Figure 5. Psychological safety by condition for Study 3.
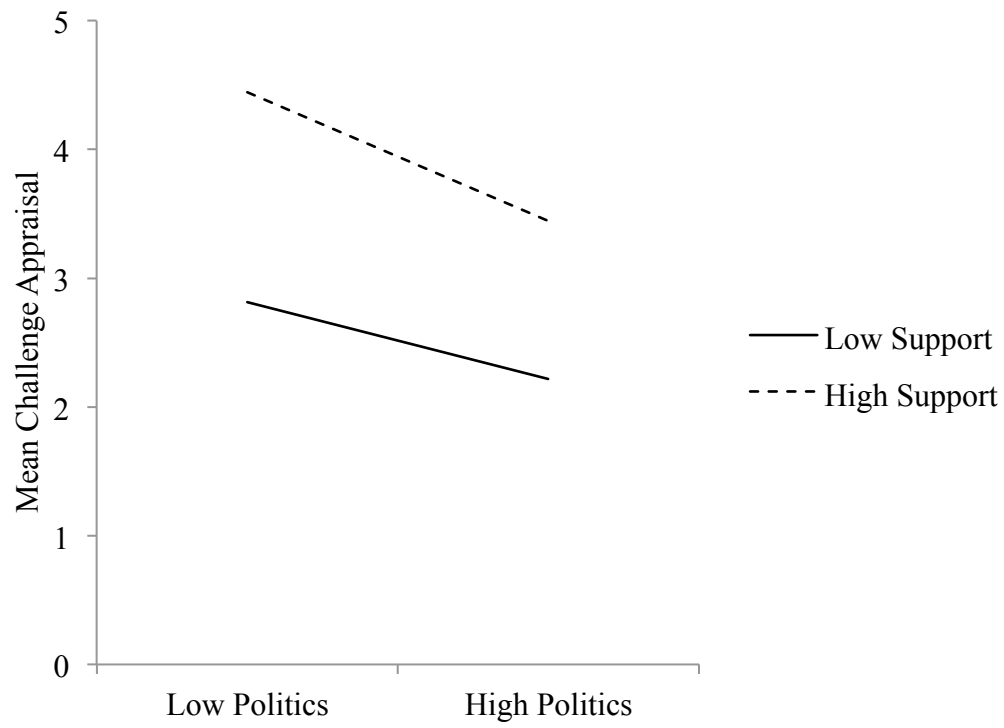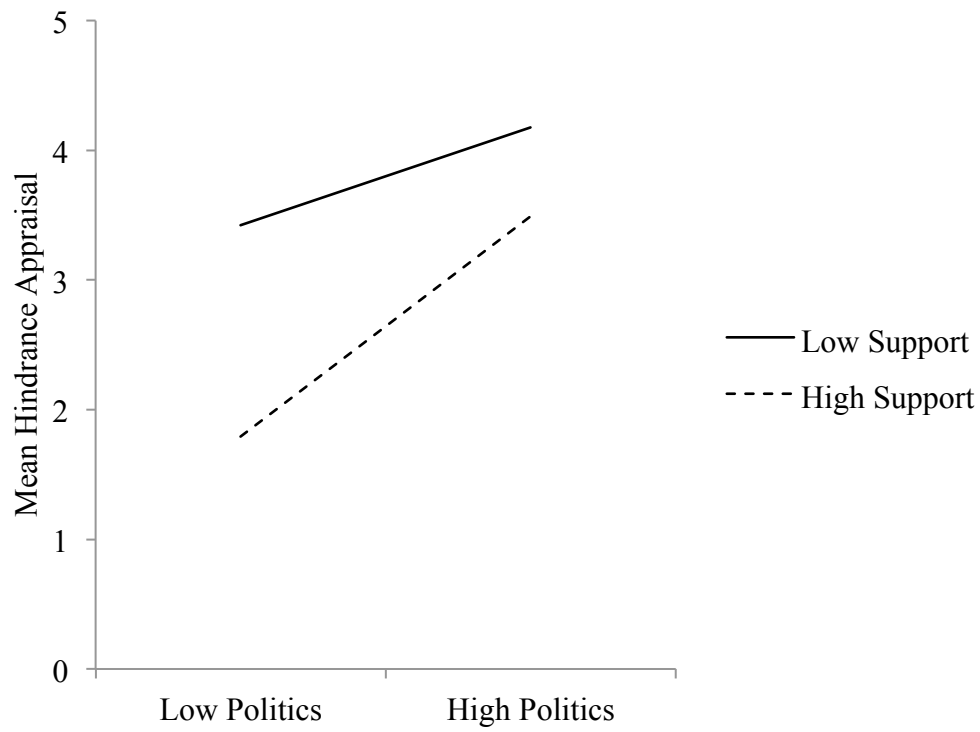
Figure 6. Challenge appraisal by condition for Study 3.
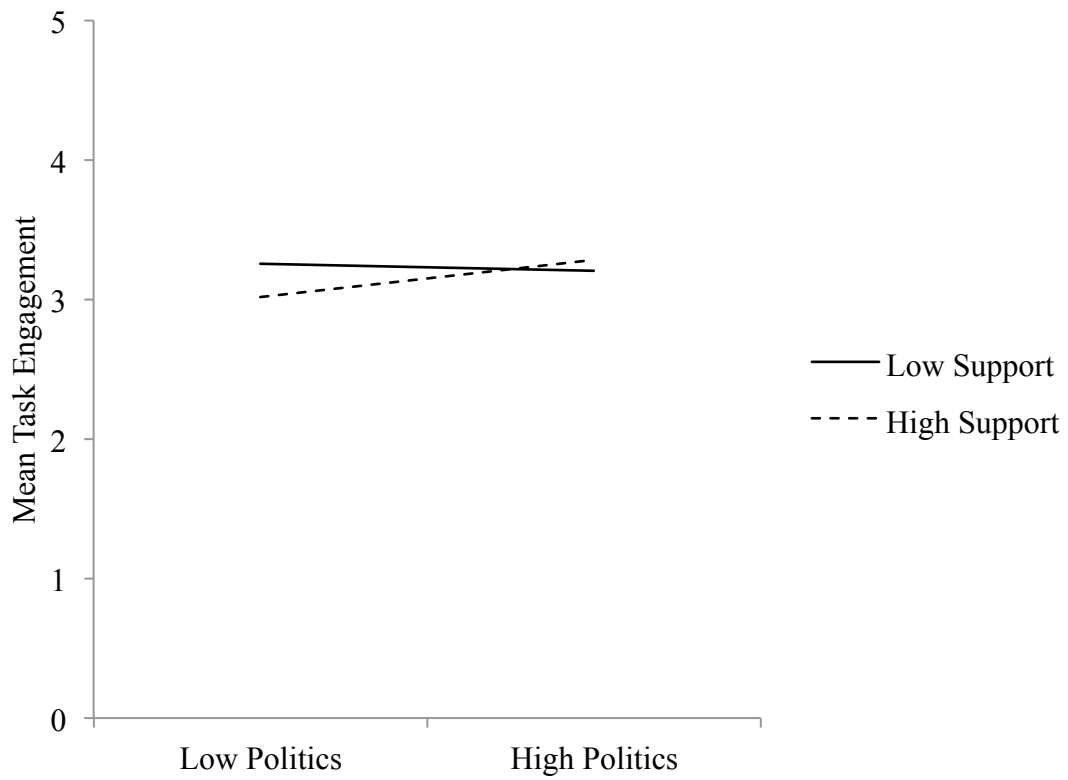
Figure 7. Hindrance appraisal by condition for Study 3.
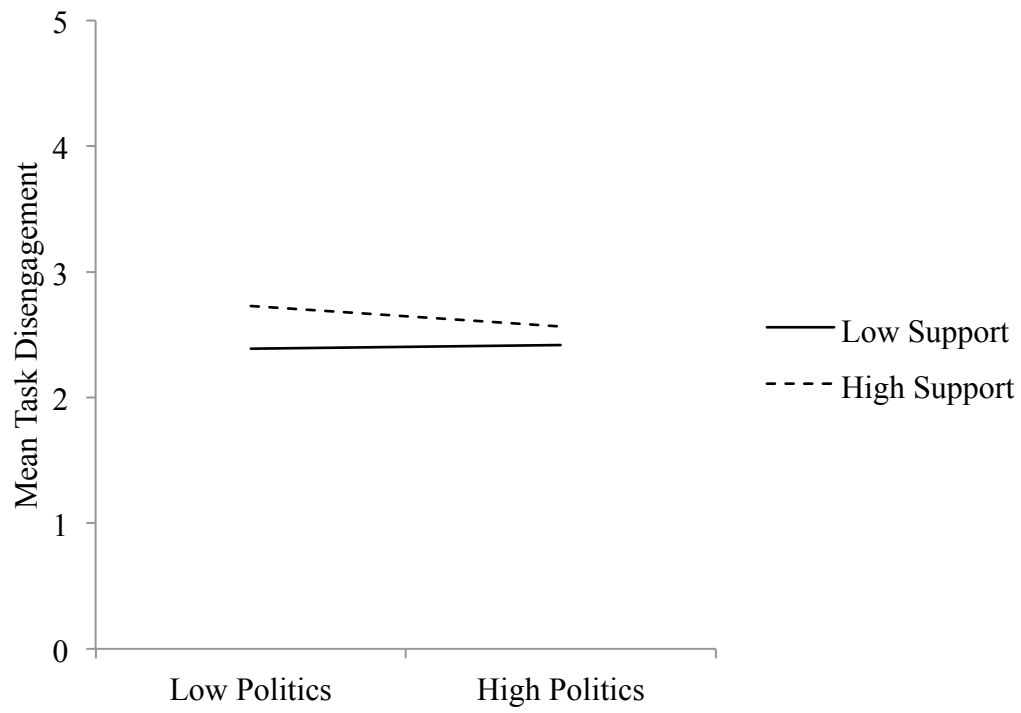
Figure 8. Task engagement by condition for Study 3.
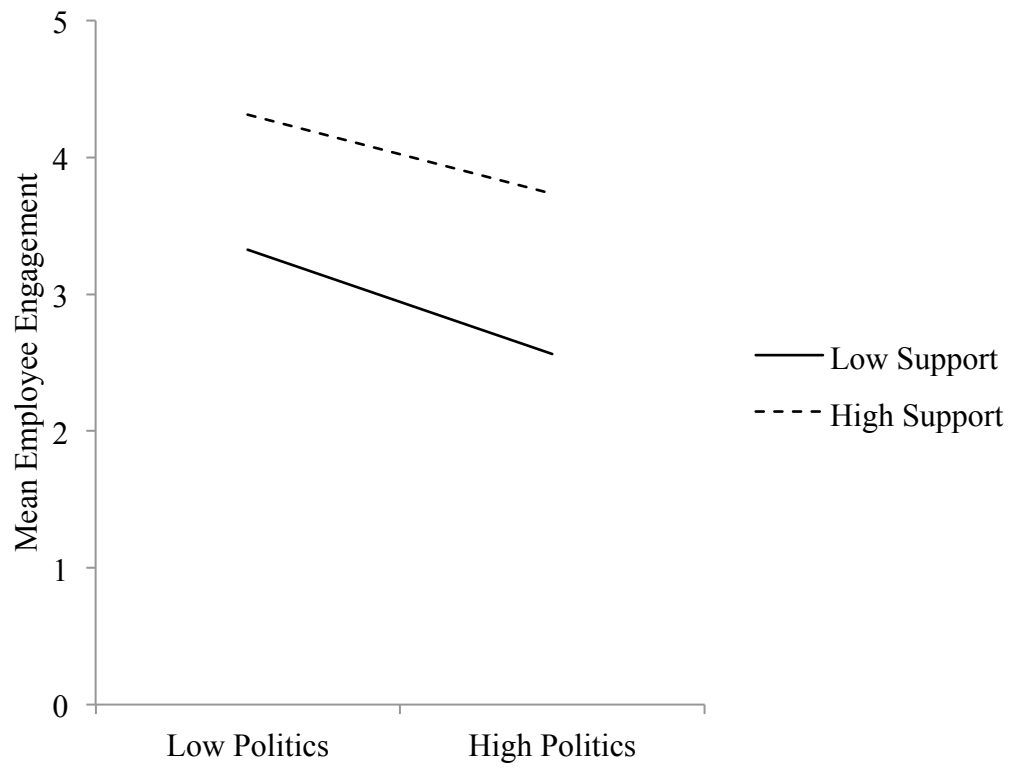
Figure 9. Task disengagement by condition for Study 3.

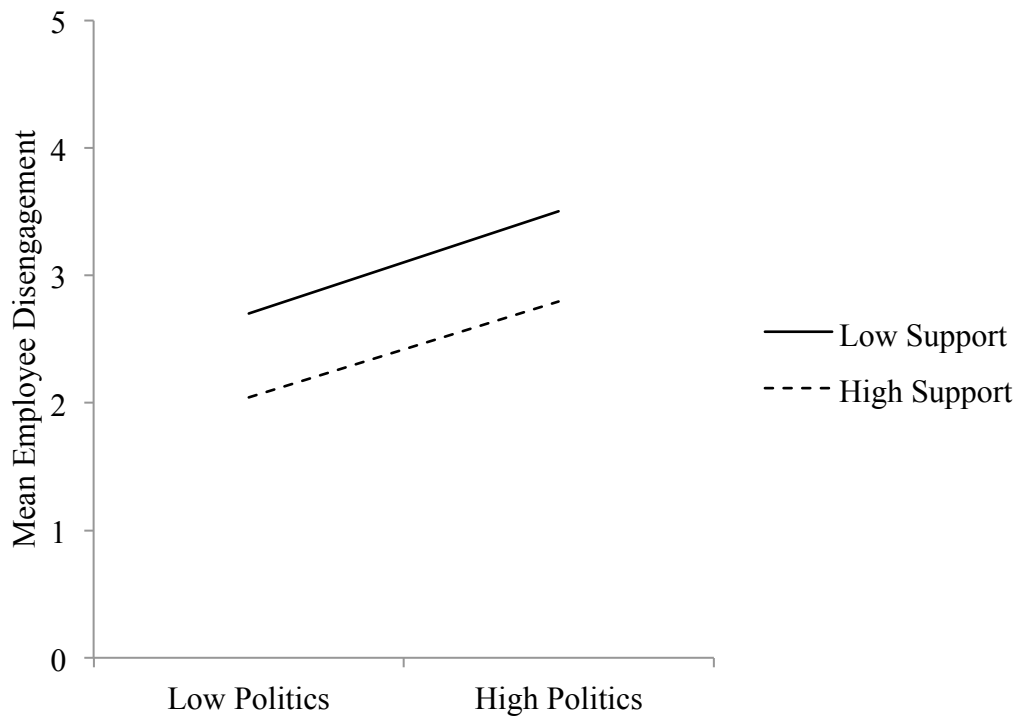*Figure 10.* Employee engagement by condition for Study 3.

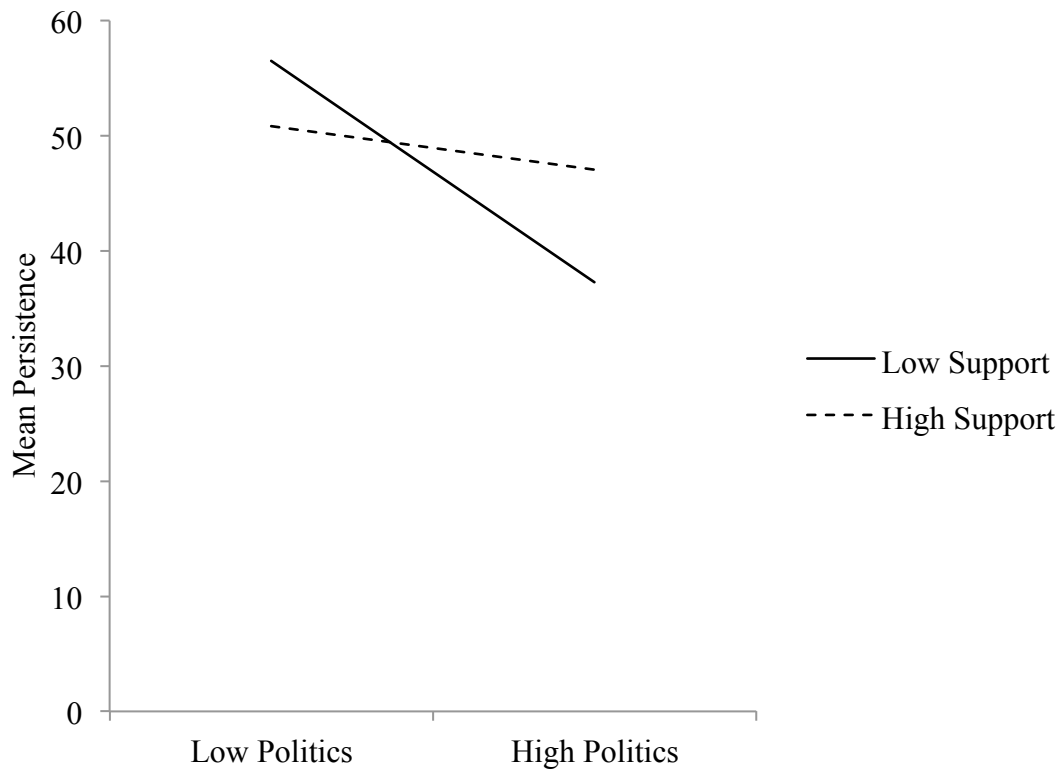*Figure 11.* Employee disengagement by condition for Study 3.

Figure 12. Persistence by condition for Study 3. Persistence is the average time (in seconds) spent working on the 10 unsolvable anagrams.
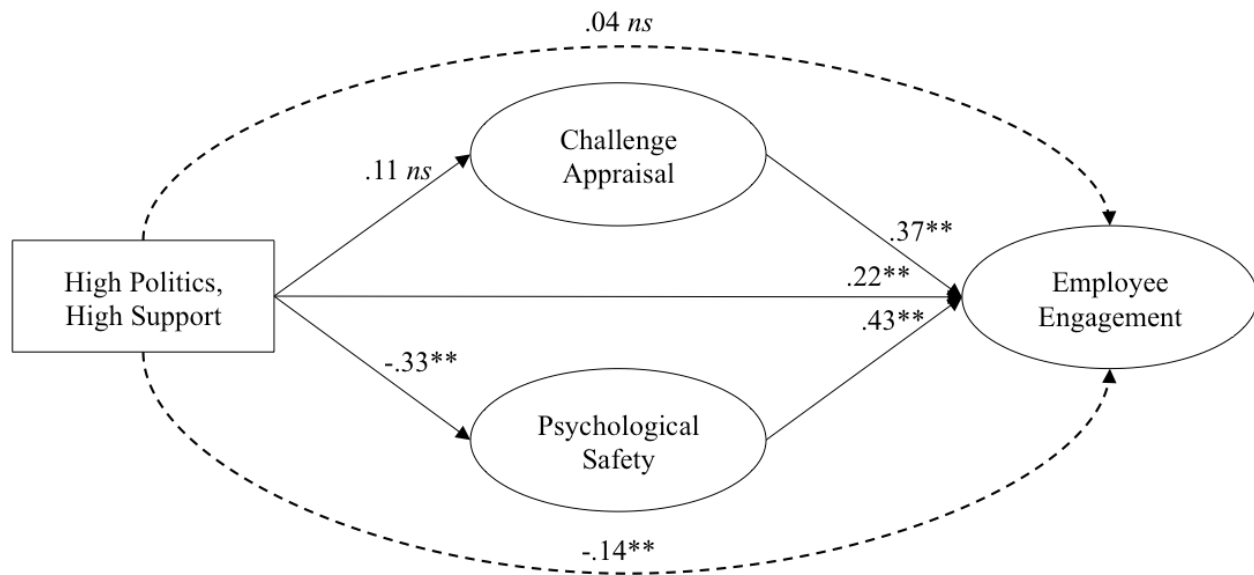
Figure 13. Structural equation model to test Hypothesis 6. Standardized path coefficients are

displayed. Indirect effects are represented with dashed lines.
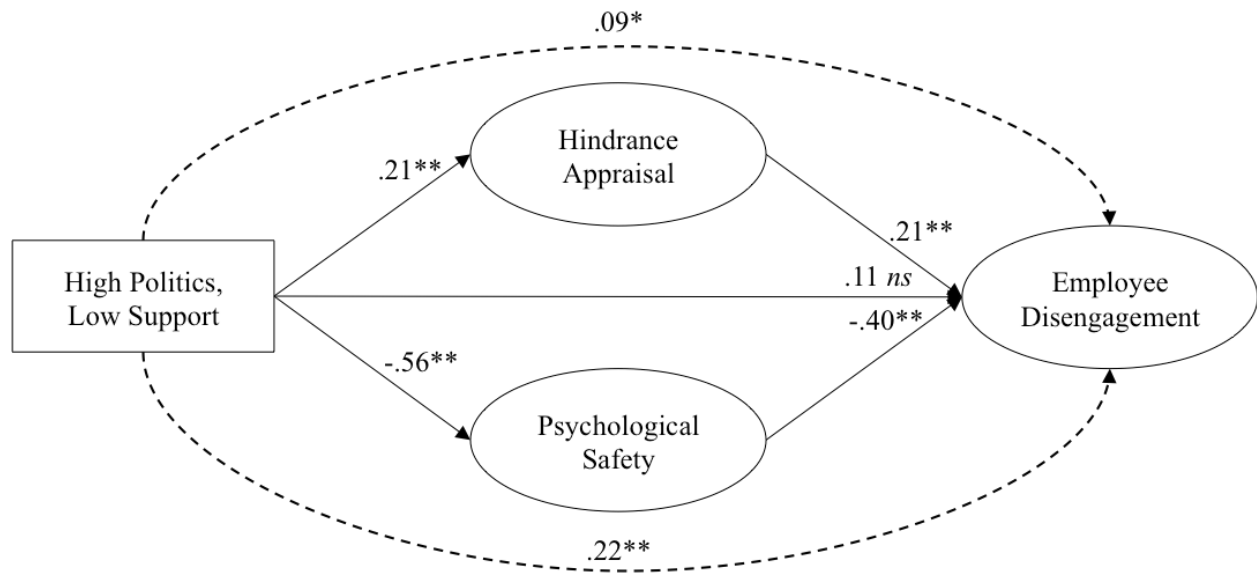
  * *p* < .05

** *p* < .01

Figure 14. Structural equation model to test Hypothesis 7. Standardized path coefficients are

displayed. Indirect effects are represented with dashed lines.

  * *p* < .05

** *p* < .01

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Differences in vignette conditions are underlined. Perceived organizational support sections of vignettes were adapted from Hunter (2012)

High Politics, High Support condition

Two years after graduating with a Bachelor's degree, you continue to work for the same large organization that hired you right out of college. Your position is a good match for your undergraduate major and education, and you are very satisfied with the actual content of your job, and the work you do on a day-to-day basis.

Over the past two years, you've come to believe that the organization treats you very well and really cares about you as a person and an individual. The company has a really good benefits package, and is helpful and accommodating when employees are ill, have problems, or need a favor. The organization conducts regular employee satisfaction surveys to find out what employees think, and follows up on employee suggestions, concerns, and complaints. The organization has helped you succeed in your current position by ensuring that you have the resources, tools, and time that you need to complete your work. And the organization is also helping advance your career - it's been highly supportive of your development. You've received a great deal of training and continuing education at the organization's expense, and it's even willing to pay for you to complete additional professional credentials. You know without a doubt that the organization is happy to have you, and would fight to keep you if you said you were leaving.

You have also noticed that many of your coworkers have great ideas to improve the organization, but when given instructions from supervisors they will rarely ask questions and are quick to go along with whatever the bosses want to do. Your coworkers have told you that when dealing with managers and supervisors, it is safer to tell them what they want to hear rather than speaking your mind. You have also found that promotions and pay raises tend to go to employees who are especially friendly with the bosses or who suck up the most. Managers will even blame employees for their mistakes to avoid punishment and win favor with senior management. And it's not just managers who have power in the organization. Recently, a team leader named Taylor noticed that a group of employees was misusing organizational resources and brought it to management's attention. The employees that were wasting resources were part of the manager's inner circle. After the incident, Taylor's team was informed that they would no longer receive the resources they were promised to complete an important and time-sensitive project. As a result, everyone understands the employees in the inner circle are a powerful group and few employees dare to question them.

Low Politics, High Support condition

Two years after graduating with a Bachelor's degree, you continue to work for the same large organization that hired you right out of college. Your position is a good match for your undergraduate major and education, and you are very satisfied with the actual content of your job, and the work you do on a day-to-day basis.

Over the past two years, you've come to believe that the organization treats you very well and really cares about you as a person and an individual. The company has a really good benefits package, and is helpful and accommodating when employees are ill, have problems, or need a favor. The organization conducts regular employee satisfaction surveys to find out what

employees think, and follows up on employee suggestions, concerns, and complaints. The organization has helped you succeed in your current position by ensuring that you have the resources, tools, and time that you need to complete your work. And the organization is also helping advance your career - it's been highly supportive of your development. You've received a great deal of training and continuing education at the organization's expense, and it's even willing to pay for you to complete additional professional credentials. You know without a doubt that the organization is happy to have you, and would fight to keep you if you said you were leaving.

You have also noticed that many of your coworkers have great ideas to improve the organization, and when given instructions from supervisors they will ask questions and make sure the best plan is being followed even if it's not the boss' original plan. Your coworkers have told you that when dealing with managers and supervisors, it is better to speak your mind rather than just telling them what they want to hear. You have also found that promotions and pay raises tend to go to employees who work hard, demonstrate their competence, and have innovative ideas. Managers will often take responsibility when their own ideas don't work out instead of blaming employees to avoid punishment. And it's not just managers who work collaboratively in the organization. Recently, a team leader named Taylor noticed that a group of employees was misusing organizational resources and brought it to management's attention. The employees that were wasting resources were part of your manager's inner circle. After the incident, the group of employees worked closely with Taylor's team to ensure they used organizational resources efficiently, and suggested that together they could train the rest of the organization to be more efficient. As a result, everyone understands they can work together to help their coworkers and the organization succeed.

High Politics, Low Support condition

Two years after graduating with a Bachelor's degree, you continue to work for the same large organization that hired you right out of college. Your position is a good match for your undergraduate major and education, and you are very satisfied with the actual content of your job, and the work you do on a day-to-day basis.

Over the past two years, you've come to believe that the organization treats you very poorly and doesn't really care about you as a person or an individual. The company has a disappointing benefits package, and isn't at all helpful or accommodating when employees are ill, have problems, or need a favor. The organization doesn't conduct employee satisfaction surveys to find out what people think or follow up on employee suggestions, concerns, or complaints. The organization has not helped you succeed in your current position because you don't always have the resources, tools, or time you need to complete your work. And the organization is not doing much to help you advance your career - it isn't supportive of your development. The organization has no funding to support training or continuing education at the organization's expense, and it won't pay for you to complete additional professional credentials. You suspect that the organization wouldn't try to stop you if you said you were leaving.

You have also noticed that many of your coworkers have great ideas to improve the organization, but when given instructions from supervisors they will rarely ask questions and are quick to go along with whatever the bosses want to do. Your coworkers have told you that when dealing with managers and supervisors, it is safer to tell them what they want to hear rather than speaking your mind. You have also found that promotions and pay raises tend to go to employees who are especially friendly with the bosses or who suck up the most. Managers will even blame employees for their mistakes to avoid punishment and win favor with senior

management. And it's not just managers who <u>have power</u> in the organization. Recently, a team leader named Taylor noticed that a group of employees was misusing organizational resources and brought it to management's attention. The employees that were wasting resources were part of the manager's inner circle. After the incident, <u>Taylor's team was informed that they would no longer receive the resources they were promised to complete an important and time-sensitive project.</u> As a result, everyone understands the employees in the inner circle <u>are a powerful group and few employees dare to question them.</u>

Low Politics, Low Support condition

Two years after graduating with a Bachelor's degree, you continue to work for the same large organization that hired you right out of college. Your position is a good match for your undergraduate major and education, and you are very satisfied with the actual content of your job, and the work you do on a day-to-day basis.

Over the past two years, you've come to believe that the organization treats you <u>very poorly and doesn't really care</u> about you as a person or an individual. The company has a <u>disappointing</u> benefits package, and <u>isn't at all helpful or accommodating</u> when employees are ill, have problems, or need a favor. The organization <u>doesn't conduct</u> employee satisfaction surveys to find out what people think or follow up on employee suggestions, concerns, or complaints. The organization <u>has not helped</u> you succeed in your current position <u>because you don't always have</u> the resources, tools, or time you need to complete your work. And the organization is <u>not doing much to help you</u> advance your career - <u>it isn't supportive</u> of your development. <u>The organization has no funding to support</u> training or continuing education at the organization's expense, <u>and it won't</u> pay for you to complete additional professional credentials. <u>You suspect that the organization wouldn't try to stop you</u> if you said you were leaving.

You have also noticed that many of your coworkers have great ideas to improve the organization, and when given instructions from supervisors they will <u>ask questions and make sure the best plan is being followed even if it's not the boss' original plan</u>. Your coworkers have told you that when dealing with managers and supervisors, it is <u>better to speak your mind rather than just telling them what they want to hear</u>. You have also found that promotions and pay raises tend to go to employees who <u>work hard, demonstrate their competence, and have innovative ideas</u>. Managers will <u>often take responsibility when their own ideas don't work out instead of blaming employees to avoid punishment</u>. And it's not just managers who <u>work collaboratively</u> in the organization. Recently, a team leader named Taylor noticed that a group of employees was misusing organizational resources and brought it to management's attention. The employees that were wasting resources were part of your manager's inner circle. After the incident, <u>the group of employees worked closely with Taylor's team to ensure they used organizational resources efficiently, and suggested that together they could train the rest of the organization to be more efficient</u>. As a result, everyone understands they <u>can work together to help their coworkers and the organization succeed.</u>

Demographics

1. What is your age as of your last birthday?
2. What is your gender?
   1 = Male
   2 = Female
   3 = Other, Please specify
3. Please indicate your race
   1 = Hispanic/Latino
   2 = White/Caucasian
   3 = Black/African American
   4 = Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander
   5 = Asian
   6 = Native American/Alaska Native
   7 = Multi-racial
   8 = Other, Please specify
4. Which of the following best describes your employment status?
   1 = Unemployed
   2 = Self-employed
   3 = Employed part-time (fewer than 40 hrs/week)
   4 = Employed full-time (at least 40 hrs/week)
5. Which of the following best describes your current status as a student?
   1 = Not a student
   2 = Part-time student
   3 = Full-time student
6. What language do you know best?
   1 = English
   2 = A language other than English
   3 = English and another language about the same
7. How many years of work experience (part-time or full-time) do you have?
8. How many years of post-secondary (college) education have you completed?

Perceived Organizational Politics (5-Point Likert)

1. People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down.
2. There has always been an influential group in this organization that no one ever crosses.
3. Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas. (R)
4. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors. (R)
5. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.
6. It is best not to rock the boat in this organization.
7. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.

8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.
10. I will never see the pay and promotion policies applied politically in this organization. (R)
11. None of the raises I will receive will be consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.
12. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.
13. When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.
14. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.

Perceived Organizational Support (5-Point Likert)

1. This organization really cares about my well-being.
2. This organization strongly considers my goals and values.
3. This organization shows little concern for me. (R)
4. This organization cares about my opinions.
5. This organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.
6. Help is available from this organization when I have a problem.
7. This organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.
8. If given the opportunity, this organization would take advantage of me. (R)

Challenge Stressor Appraisal (5-Point Likert)

1. It will help me to learn a lot
2. It will make the experience educational
3. It will show me I can do something new
4. It will keep me focused on doing well

Hindrance Stressor Appraisal (5-Point Likert)

1. It will hinder any achievements I might have
2. It will restrict my capabilities
3. It will limit how well I can do
4. It will prevent me from mastering difficult aspects of the work

Psychological Safety (5-point Likert)

1. If you make a mistake in this organization, it is often held against you. (R)
2. Members of this organization are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
3. People in this organization sometimes reject others for being different. (R)
4. It is safe to take a risk in this organization.
5. It is difficult to ask other members in this organization for help. (R)
6. No one in this organization would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with members of this organization, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

Engagement in task (5-Point Likert)

1. I worked with intensity on the task
2. I exerted my full effort to the task
3. I devoted a lot of energy to the task
4. I tried my hardest to perform well on the task
5. I strived as hard as I could to complete the task
6. I exerted a lot of energy on the task
7. I was enthusiastic in the task
8. I felt energetic during the task
9. I was interested in the task
10. I was proud of my work
11. I felt positive about the task
12. I was excited about the task
13. At work, my mind was focused on the task
14. I paid a lot of attention to the task
15. I focused a great deal of attention on the task
16. I was absorbed by the task
17. I concentrated on the task
18. I devoted a lot of attention to the task

Disengagement in task (5-Point Likert)

1. I have been disappointed too many times to be excited about the task.
2. I need to protect myself from how much the task took out of me.
3. I felt detached from the task.
4. I felt numb during the task
5. I often daydreamed during the task.
6. I often looked for activities to distract me from the task I should have be doing.
7. I often thought about non-work things during the task.
8. I often concentrated on other areas of my life rather than on the task.

Company Email

From:	Jordan Riley [jordan.riley@thecompany.org]
Sent:	Tuesday, April 10, 2018 10:31am
To:	you@thecompany.org
Subject:	Complete a task to help the organization
Attachments:	None

Hello,

The organization has developed a new product and we need employees to test different parts of the product to make sure that it is appropriate for our customers. We have divided the work equally between all employees and would like you to complete your portion as quickly as possible. Your performance on this task may make you eligible for a promotion within the company.

Best regards,

–Jordan Riley

Unsolvable

1. oneci
2. amoos
3. acelo
4. rtean
5. filru
6. pecit
7. lelmo
8. afnac
9. haacl
10. danze

Solvable

1. trypa (party)
2. ijnot (joint)
3. tlanp (plant)
4. cijue (juice)
5. torms (storm)
6. innou (union)
7. ryors (sorry)
8. mahes (shame)
9. divvi (vivid)
10. sveot (stove)

Example Anagrams to Prepare Participants

1. aordi (radio)
2. refma (frame)
3. etryn (entry)
4. aeelg (eagle)