

## Social influence and interpersonal power in organizations: Roles of performance and political skill in two studies

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### **Abstract:**

This two-study investigation framed performance as one potential form of influence that interacts with political skill to affect power assessments. It was hypothesized that favorable performance is more likely to be leveraged into higher levels of interpersonal power when individuals possess high levels of political skill but not for individuals low in political skill. Study 1 ( $N = 97$ ) demonstrated that individuals with positive performance were more likely to possess higher levels of interpersonal power if they were high in political skill. Furthermore, higher levels of performance were not related to power for individuals low in political skill. Thus, these results from Study 1 established support for the hypothesis. Study 2 ( $N = 384$ ), using a multisource design, constructively replicated these findings. Contributions to theory and research, strengths and limitations, directions for future research, and practical implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** impression management | power and politics | reputation

### **Article:**

Interpersonal power can be seen as the potential influence that one employee has over another (Emerson, 1962; Etzioni, 1969; Pfeffer, 1981b, 1992; Weber, 1954), and the acquisition of power represents one of the most motivating aspects of organizational life. Although considerable research has been conducted on power acquisition, much of the early work was sociological in nature, focusing on structural and position-related explanations (e.g., Emerson, 1962; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). However, there remains limited understanding of how individuals acquire interpersonal power at work, which is not formally designated or prescribed by position or hierarchical level (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993).

Toward understanding how employees acquire interpersonal power over others in the workplace, it is intuitively appealing to believe that those individuals who are able to outperform their counterparts will gain increased power. Scholars have argued that job performance has the potential to increase individuals' power within the workplace (Ferris, Blass, Douglas,

Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2003) and have suggested that past performance in organizations is a key resource that can be used to gain power over others (Pfeffer, 1992).

Despite the merits of these arguments, the performance–power relationship has been shown to be inconsistent, and many high performers are unable to translate past performance into increased power over others at work (e.g., Casciaro & Lobo, 2005). Indeed, “one of the biggest mistakes people make is thinking that good performance—job accomplishment—is sufficient to acquire power” (Pfeffer, 2010b: 21). Thus, the tenuous nature of performance–power relations suggests the presence of moderator variables, but to date, none have been theoretically articulated or empirically investigated. The present investigation suggests that these inconsistencies can be explained by considering the political skill of the individuals involved.

Pfeffer’s (2010a, 2010b) position on the dynamics of these important constructs was that power reflects the exercise of influence, performance is a resource that can be leveraged to contribute to one’s power, and political skill provides the savvy and skill set to effectively leverage resources like performance and transform them into power assessments from others. Furthermore, he argued that political skill is one of the best mechanisms to obtain power in organizations, through securing and leveraging information and resources, thus implying an interaction whereby political skill allows for the effective packaging and presentation of performance, which translates into increased power assessments from others. It is precisely these untested notions that serve as the focus of the present two-study investigation.

Building on earlier work by both Pfeffer (1981b) and Mintzberg (1983), Ferris and his colleagues characterized political skill as the ability to read and understand people and situations at work and to translate that knowledge into goal-directed influence over others (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007). They argued that politically skilled individuals were keen observers of others and attuned to diverse situations and were capable of adapting their behavior to different interpersonal contexts. Furthermore, politically skilled employees are adept at forming friendships and building strong coalitions.

With its focus on understanding and accentuating power differentials in organizations, political skill distinguishes itself from other social effectiveness constructs (i.e., self-monitoring, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and social skill; Ferris, Perrewé, & Douglas, 2002) as being particularly relevant to the development of interpersonal power. Furthermore, because perception often is more important than reality in relation to power (Matthews, 1988), the political skill of individuals in the workplace should play a critical role in effectively leveraging their performance in advantageous ways. Accordingly, we argue that politically skilled individuals are more aware of their performance, are able to present or transmit such performance in nonthreatening and influential ways, and thus are able to realize increased power assessments from their key constituents as a result of their favorable performance presentation.

Therefore, in the present two-study investigation, we examine the moderating role of political skill on the relationship between performance and interpersonal power. This research represents an opportunity to develop a more informed understanding of how the political skill of individuals may affect their ability to cultivate relationships, leverage influence, and manage meaning in organizations in ways that contribute to others’ assessments of their interpersonal power.

Furthermore, the present research seeks to empirically validate Pfeffer's (2010b) recent argument that through the effective leveraging of resources, political skill represents one of the most effective vehicles to power acquisition in organizations. Also, constructive replication of the results of Study 1 are sought in Study 2, which should substantially increase confidence in the validity of the obtained findings (e.g., Eden, 2002; Schmidt, 2009).

This investigation offers several contributions to our understanding of social and political influence in organizations. Specifically, these two studies utilize the Ferris et al. (2007) conceptualization of social/political influence in organizations and examine political skill as a theoretical lens that complements previously inconclusive discussions of performance and power. Consequently, the results of the analyses allow for a more comprehensive interpretation of the relationship between performance and power, relying upon social/political influence theory and research.

The present research also makes a theoretical contribution to the power and politics literature by extending the Ferris et al. (2007) framework to consider performance not only as an outcome of effective influence implementation but also as a resource from which employees can expand their personal objectives and power. Finally, it is notable that the social network methods used in this investigation represent initial analysis and insight into the roles of political skill in the performance and social network-building processes. Although these relationships have been alluded to in the development of the political skill construct (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007), they have not been empirically tested to date, despite appeals for such research (Ferris & Hochwarter, 2011).

## **Theoretical Foundations and Hypothesis Development**

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Theory and research on social influence has been developed and advanced largely through the contributions of scholars such as Jones, Tedeschi, and Leary (for reviews, see Ferris, Hochwarter, et al., 2002; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Jones, 1990). This body of work has articulated the precise nature of social influence mechanisms and their antecedents and consequences, and considerable empirical work has been generated in efforts to systematically examine these theoretical arguments. However, until recently, this body of theory and research did little to account for the style of delivery and execution of influence, which largely explained the success of influence efforts (Jones, 1990). This missing piece was provided by the political skill construct, which accurately diagnoses, situationally adapts, and selects proper methods and tactics and increases the effectiveness of social influence attempts through effective style and delivery (e.g., Ferris et al., 2007).

Ferris et al. (2007) presented a conceptualization of social/political influence, built on the assumption of human agency, which explains how political skill demonstrates its effects, where influence/politics in organizations is defined as the management of shared meaning (Ferris & Judge, 1991). Theories of human agency acknowledge that individuals are active creators of their environment, not simply passive reactors. Agency suggests that people act on their environment in ways that create, preserve, transform, and even destroy it, and thus do not just react to it as an

objective given (Bandura, 2006). Additionally, individuals act on themselves to adapt to environmental conditions.

Ferris et al. (2007) suggested that political skill is reflective of an interrelated set of social competencies (i.e., which manifest themselves cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally), and it serves at the very critical interface of social influence between entities at multiple levels of analysis. Therefore, we utilize the Ferris et al. (2007) conceptualization of political influence in and of organizations, which focuses on the operation of the political skill construct and how it influences both self and others. In light of Ferris and Judge's (1991) definition of influence/politics as the management of shared meaning, the Ferris et al. perspective explains just how political skill can manage shared meaning in organizations in productive and organizationally appropriate ways.

The political influence process involves individuals engaging in behaviors executed convincingly in order to perceive issues as the influencers intend, which allows for personal and organizational goal attainment. In order to be successful in this process, influencers need to possess personal resources, establish goals, strategically select appropriate behaviors for the situation, and execute the behaviors effectively. Politically skilled individuals not only formulate personal and organizational goals, and action plans to carry them out, but also select the most situationally appropriate behavior to be demonstrated and ensure that such behavior is executed in influential ways.

Indeed, politically skilled individuals "combine social astuteness with the capacity to adjust their behavior to different and changing situational demands in a manner that appears to be sincere, inspires support and trust, and effectively influences and controls the responses of others" (Ferris et al., 2007: 291). Thus, we suggest that this behavior and style allow politically skilled individuals to present, make salient, and signal their desirable performance information to others (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Spence, 1974).

Spence (1974) suggested that *signaling* refers to actions by individuals that convey information about their intentions and abilities to others, and he argued that individuals send signals in order to transmit information, reduce ambiguity, and/or influence observers' beliefs and evaluations. Also, individuals may engage in active efforts to manipulate to their advantage the signals transmitted (e.g., Ferris & Judge, 1991). Politically skilled individuals are effective at leveraging their performance because they transmit signals that render performance more salient by promoting attention focus (Fiske & Taylor, 1984), which serves to distinguish performance in the eyes of observers and establish favorable images. Ultimately, this process should affect observers' perceptions of politically skilled individuals in desired and intended ways, thus helping them to present and leverage performance at work in ways that translate into greater power in the eyes of their internal organizational constituents.

Power, Performance, and Political Skill in Organizations

*Power*

From Machiavelli's (1513/1952) treatise on the acquisition and maintenance of power, to French and Raven's (1959) delineation of power sources, to Mintzberg's (1983) discussion of political will and skill, few aspects of the organizational experience are more intriguing than the wielding of personal power. Weber suggested that power was "the possibility of imposing one's own will upon the behavior of other persons" (1954: 323). Congruently, power has been distinguished as potential influence or force (Emerson, 1962; Pfeffer, 1992), such that "the power of Actor A over Actor B is the amount of resistance on the part of B which can be potentially overcome by A" (Emerson, 1962: 32). Perhaps most simply, power can be seen as the potential to exercise influence over others (Etzioni, 1969).

Two elements of these definitions are relevant for the current research. First, power is not simply resident in the legitimate reporting relationships that dictate the control of pay raises and resources but also inhabits the informal relationships in which one's expertise, charisma, and goodwill reside. Thus, power is not constrained to the formal structures of an organization but permeates the perpetual interactions and imperfect knowledge that are woven into the social fabric of the work environment. Second, evident in all of these definitions is that the ability to influence others is based on the perception the target has of the actor's power. As such, we recognize interpersonal power as a perception and thus subject to manipulation and interpretation.

Many scholars have focused on the outcomes of power, but research examining how individuals acquire power has been less prevalent in the literature. Much of the early work on power acquisition was sociological in nature, focusing on structural explanations of power acquisition that involved resource possession and/or dependence or position attributes (e.g., Emerson, 1962; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). However, individual differences also have been argued to affect power acquisition in organizations, with particular personality and personal characteristics identified (e.g., House, 1988). Indeed, Mintzberg (1983) was one of the first scholars to depart from the sociological/structural power perspective when he suggested that individuals need political will and political skill in order to gain power in organizations.

Similarly social network researchers have begun to move away from assumptions that power comes simply from filling a structurally strategic position in a relationship network (e.g., Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Burt, 1992) to allowing for the influence of personal characteristics on power acquisition. Indeed, Krackhardt (1990) found that individuals with greater knowledge and astuteness about their social and relational contexts tend to be the ones with the most power and also that individuals high in power generally possess greater communication and relational skills and are more skilled at relationship building. Whereas this research has led to a better understanding of how both structural factors and individual differences can affect power acquisition, it has not directly addressed the inconsistencies identified in the performance–power relationship noted earlier.

### *Performance*

Although it has been argued that past performance is a necessary condition for the establishment of power (e.g., Ferris et al., 2003) and that performance can be a source of power (Pfeffer, 1992), some empirical research has failed to support such arguments (e.g., Brass, 1984). Indeed, despite

the merits of the arguments by former scholars in favor of a strong performance–power relationship, this linkage has been shown to be inconsistent, and many high-performing employees are unable to leverage past performance into increased power over others at work (e.g., Casciaro & Lobo, 2005). This state of affairs has led scholars to conclude that the performance–power relationship is more complex than initially believed and may involve moderators that have remained unidentified to date.

Pfeffer's (1992) reference to performance as an important source of power implies that performance can serve as a resource that provides individuals with an opportunity to achieve their work-related goals. However, how well that resource (i.e., performance) is managed will determine whether performance actually translates into subsequent power acquisition, further highlighting the aforementioned complex relationship between performance and power. In agreement with Pfeffer's position, Ferris et al. (2003) suggested that job performance has the "potential" to increase individuals' power within the workplace, but that potential presumably will not be realized by everyone.

Compounding, and perhaps creating, some of the inconsistencies in the performance–power relationship is the nature of jobs and work in organizations today and their resulting performance measurements. The reality is that, for most jobs, performance cannot be objectively determined but instead can only be subjectively assessed, thus permitting non-performance-related information to contaminate and influence performance evaluations (e.g., Ferris, Munyon, Basik, & Buckley, 2008; Levy & Williams, 2004). Indeed, this positions work performance as less of an objective reality and more of a socially constructed reality (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Ferris, Judge, Rowland, & Fitzgibbons, 1994; Pfeffer, 1981a), susceptible to a number of unintentional and intentional influences, and as a malleable resource that can be managed and manipulated.

Due to the nature of job performance and its assessment and susceptibility to contamination, those skilled at information presentation and manipulation should be better able to manage the perceptions, interpretations, and evaluations of their performance in favorable ways. Political skill represents the set of interrelated social competencies that equip individuals with the ability to manage their performance information presented to organizational constituents in ways that contribute to perceptions that they possess greater interpersonal power.

### *Political skill*

Individuals high in political skill attain their personal and organizational goals through their capacity to read and understand contexts (i.e., both people and situations). Also, they can accurately assess and comprehend the contextually specific behavioral expectations that will yield desired constituent responses, and they are capable of making behavioral adaptations and adjustments across situations as different constituents reflect changing expectations and demands. Furthermore, these politically skilled individuals can properly calibrate and execute their situationally appropriate behavior in effective and influential ways (Ferris et al., 2007).

Several studies have been conducted to validate both the conceptualization and measurement of political skill. Ferris and his colleagues (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005) argued for and found that

the political skill construct is significantly correlated with other social effectiveness constructs (i.e., emotional intelligence and self-monitoring) but only at modest levels. Subsequent research has supported political skill's distinction from self-monitoring (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005; Semadar, Robins, & Ferris, 2006) and has shown that political skill is unique from other personality constructs such as agreeableness, conscientiousness (Blickle et al., 2008), and assertiveness (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005).

Most recently, researchers have evaluated the potential overlap between Machiavellianism (Mach) and political skill, and evidence suggests that the "maintaining power" dimension of Mach demonstrates small to moderate correlations with each dimension of political skill and that the "management practices" dimension exhibits low correlations with all but the networking ability dimension of political skill (Kessler et al., 2010). These results indicate that while political skill and Mach are somewhat related, they are certainly conceptually and empirically distinct phenomena.

One of the most widely researched areas of political skill has been its impact on performance (e.g., Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Shaw, 2007; Kolodinsky, Treadway, & Ferris, 2007; Semadar et al., 2006; Treadway, Ferris, Duke, Adams, & Thatcher, 2007), but most of this work has been constructed on the assumption that elevated job performance is the ultimate objective of an employee and thus ignores that the demonstration of high levels of performance may simply be an exercise in resource acquisition for the employee. Employees may seek to elevate their performance to achieve favorable reputations, promotions, and/or power in the workplace.

Whereas the research discussed above considered the role of political skill in job performance, no research has evaluated the extent to which politically skilled employees leverage this performance into broader influence over their workplaces or careers. However, Pfeffer (2010b) conjectured that political savvy allowed employees to capitalize on resources (i.e., past performance) that they possessed in order to better achieve their personal objectives and advance their careers.

### Political Skill as Moderator of Performance–Power Relationship

Pfeffer (2010b) argued that the widespread acceptance of the "just world" effect leads a large segment of the working population to believe that employees gain power over others in the workplace as a consequence of their high performance. Despite the appeal of this belief, Pfeffer offered anecdotal and empirical evidence that this relationship does not necessarily exist. Indeed, top performers do not always gain power (Casciaro & Lobo, 2005), and the employment of poor performers is not always terminated (Pfeffer, 2010b). Pfeffer (1992, 2010b) positioned past performance as a resource upon which employees could draw to gain power in organizations but argued that employees' ability to gain power is the product of their skillful manipulation of the meaning of past accomplishments, which ultimately predicts their power acquisition. Whereas Pfeffer provided practical tips for advancing oneself in the organization, we utilize and enhance the work of Ferris et al. (2007) to fully develop a theoretical explanation for the skill that Pfeffer's (2010b) arguments attempt to model.

Politically skilled employees should be able to capitalize on their effective communication and relational skills to present their performance in influential ways (Ferris et al., 2007), which then is translated into greater perceptions of interpersonal power in the work environment (e.g., Lee & Tiedens, 2001). This translation is facilitated by two overarching characteristics of politically skilled employees: heightened social awareness and genuine and flexible behavioral implementation. Specifically, politically skilled employees are more capable of understanding the social context of the workplace (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007) and are able to “easily comprehend social cues, and accurately attribute the behavioral motivations of others” (Treadway et al., 2007: 850).

Within social exchanges, individuals send signals to other parties in order to provide information and influence their attitudes and behavior (Spence, 1974). Ferris et al. (2003) suggested that employees attempt to manipulate the meaning derived from such signals inherent in their past accomplishments. Because of their heightened social awareness, it is expected that politically skilled individuals will be highly aware of the potential leverage that resides in their favorable performance and will engage in carefully selected and executed image management behaviors that are consistent with this reputation (Ferris et al., 2003; Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewé, 2005).

Some support for our application and extension of the Ferris et al. (2007) framework to the performance–power relationship can be found in the work of Baron and Markman (2000). They argued that while the reputation developed from previous performance as an entrepreneur provided access to elite employment circles, it was entrepreneurs’ social skill that ultimately determined their entry into these prestigious positions. Congruent with our arguments, these authors indicated that the ability of an entrepreneur to demonstrate previous performance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for success. Furthermore, the abilities outlined by Baron and Markman (2000) directly point to the importance of political skill in leveraging past performance into personal power. They specifically identified the abilities to accurately perceive social context, select appropriate impression management behavior, and engage in these impression management behaviors in a convincing manner as being crucial to entrepreneur effectiveness.

Drawing from, and expanding upon, Ferris et al.’s (2007) social/political theory of influence in organizations and Pfeffer’s (2010b) recent arguments concerning performance, power, and political skill, the present two-study investigation argues that past performance is a personal resource from which individuals may generate power in the workplace. However, performance may not beget power for everyone. We suggest that performance provides individuals with both personal and organizational resources, which can be leveraged to further enhance their power in the workplace (Brass, 1984; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993) if they also possess the necessary social competencies to effectively translate past performance into interpersonal power. Political skill increases the likelihood that individuals will effectively transform their past performance into power in the workplace, such that performance is associated with power for individuals high in political skill, but not for those low in political skill. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis:* Political skill will moderate the relationship between performance and interpersonal power. Specifically, for individuals high in political skill, increased levels of



performance will be associated with increased levels of power. For individuals low in political skill, increases in performance will be unrelated to variation in power.

## **Plan of the Research**

Political skill was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between performance and interpersonal power, and this was tested using a two-study, multisource approach, which was designed to first establish the relationship and then constructively replicate the findings. The first study used performance and power measures provided by others. Study 2 was designed not only to replicate the findings from Study 1 but also to do so in a way that suggests causality. Therefore, data were collected at two points in time (i.e., performance appraisal data collected from company records about three months before survey data were collected), using archival, self-report, and other-rated measures. This constructive replication design offers the opportunity to contribute substantially to research knowledge by increasing confidence in the validity of hypothesized relationships being tested and, furthermore, to enrich and bolster theory (Eden, 2002; Schmidt, 2009).

## **Study 1**

### Method

#### *Participants and Procedures*

Data for this study were collected from participants at two restaurants that were part of the same Canadian franchise. Employees were approached by members of the research team and asked to complete a confidential questionnaire. An endorsement from the company accompanied each questionnaire, along with an assurance of confidentiality. We received 45 of a possible 54 responses (83.3%) from the first restaurant and 52 of 69 possible responses (75.3%) from the second restaurant. For this study, we combined the two samples before running the analyses. However, before combining them, a *t* test was conducted, and the results indicated that the two samples were not significantly different from one another on the interpersonal power ratings of respondents ( $t = 0.78, ns$ ). Thus, our total sample reflected a 78.9% response rate and included 97 employees. On average, respondents were 29.1 years old, were primarily female (64.7%), and had been working at the company for 1.9 years.

#### *Measures*

##### ***Performance***

Performance information was captured using the roster method (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Burkhardt & Brass, 1990). Using this approach, respondents were given a list of the names of all employees in their organization and asked to rate them according to how highly they perform. This was a single-item measure that asked respondents to rate each employee's "overall performance" during the past three months. Targets were rated on a 5-point Likert-type response format with 1 representing *lower performers* and 5 representing *higher performers*. Each respondent was asked to rate the other respondents on their performance using the 1-to-5 scale

previously explained, and those scores were then used to calculate the performance rating for all respondents.

For example, let's assume we have a work unit composed of three individuals: Respondent A, Respondent B, and Respondent C. Respondent A was asked to rate the performances of Respondents B and C, while Respondent B was asked to rate Respondents A and C, and so forth. To calculate the score for Respondent A, the information from Respondents B and C were aggregated. Respondent B's score was calculated based on the contributions from Respondent A and C, and so on. In the actual sample used in this study there were far more than three contributions per score; on average, 35 individual scores were aggregated to compute the score for any one respondent.

### ***Political skill***

The 18-item Political Skill Inventory, developed and validated by Ferris, Treadway, et al. (2005), was used to measure political skill. Respondents were asked to self-report their perceptions of their own political skill. The complete set of items is included in the appendix. As noted, the respondents indicated their agreement with each question, using a 7-point Likert-type response format anchored with 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 7 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency reliability estimate of the composite 18-item scale was  $\alpha = .92$ .

### ***Interpersonal power***

As a proxy for interpersonal power in this study, eigenvector centrality was used, which is a social network index designed to assess an individual's connectedness to other individuals who are highly central in the network (e.g., Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The data necessary to calculate this index were collected using the roster method. For each site, participants were given a list of all employees at their location. They were then asked to indicate the amount of influence each employee possessed over the everyday activities in the workplace. Eigenvector centrality was then calculated using the formula outlined by Bonacich (1972), thus computing a power score for each individual respondent in the study.

This equation does not compute centrality based simply on the number of connections an employee has but, rather, incorporates whether they have the "right" connections. Specifically, higher eigenvector centrality scores are a function of having direct ties to others who themselves have many direct ties. The direct ties of others are referred to as an actor's *indirect ties*. Therefore, eigenvector considers the greater pattern of the network by considering both an actor's direct and indirect connections (Bonacich, 1972). In the context of this study, eigenvector centrality is high to the degree that an actor has greater proximity to well-connected others.

### ***Control variables***

A number of factors were controlled in this study. Respondent age and organizational tenure were treated as continuous variables. Gender, position, and site were dummy coded. Specifically, gender was coded 0 for *female* and 1 for *male*, position was coded according to supervisory responsibility (0 = *nonsupervisor* and 1 = *supervisor*), and site was coded 0 and 1.

## Data Analysis

The hypothesis for this study was tested using hierarchical moderated multiple regression analysis, following the steps outlined by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003) and Baron and Kenny (1986). The control variables were entered in Block 1, the main effects (i.e., performance and political skill) in Block 2, and the interaction term (i.e., Performance  $\times$  Political Skill) in Block 3. A significant change in  $R^2$  in the final step provided evidence of an interaction effect (Cohen et al., 2003). Significant interaction effects were then graphed to determine if support exists for the hypothesis.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and reliability estimate for Study 1 variables are shown in Table 1, and the hierarchical regression results to test the hypothesis are presented in Table 2. As noted in Table 1, political skill, as a moderator variable, was not correlated with performance, as the predictor, nor with any of the other variables. Theoretically, political skill has been argued to not covary with gender or other demographics (e.g., Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007).

**Table 1.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Variables (Study 1)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	29.07	15.71	—							
2. Gender	—	—	-.06	—						
3. Organizational tenure	1.96	1.49	.10	-.03	—					
4. Position	—	—	.15*	-.09	.52**	—				
5. Site	—	—	-.07	.19	.16	.09	—			
6. Performance	2.99	0.74	.10	-.05	.50**	.49**	-.03	—		
7. Political skill	5.50	0.69	-.04	.02	-.01	.03	-.10	.00	(.92)	
8. Interpersonal power	0.19	0.18	-.11	-.24*	.42**	.30**	.07	.55**	.16	—

Note: The value in parentheses represents the alpha estimate. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

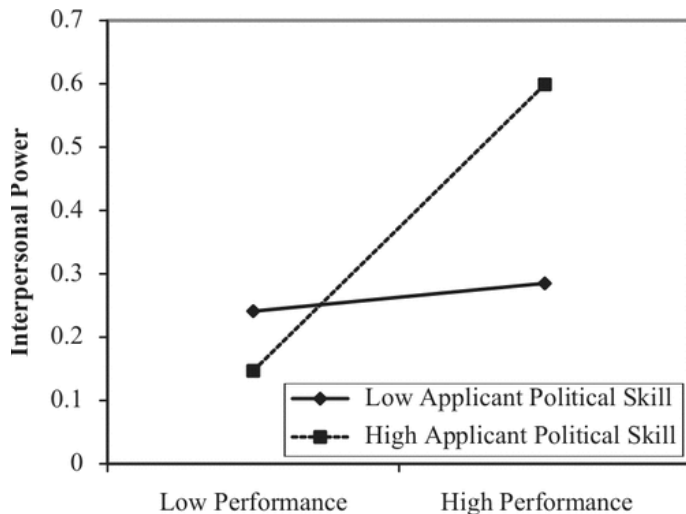
**Table 2.** Hierarchical Regression Results of Performance  $\times$  Political Skill on Interpersonal Power (Study 1)

Model and variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1				.28***
Age	-.01*	.01	-.20	
Gender	-.10**	.04	-.26	
Organizational tenure	.04***	.01	.34	
Position	.02	.02	.14	
Site	.03	.03	.08	
Model 2				.22***
Performance (A)	.12***	.02	.52	
Political skill (B)	.06**	.02	.21	
Model 3: A $\times$ B	.10***	.03	.29	.07***

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

As a whole, Block 1 variables significantly predicted interpersonal power ( $\Delta R^2 = .28, p < .001$ ). Specifically, age, gender, and organizational tenure were significant predictors ( $\beta = -.01, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = -.10, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .04, p < .001$ , respectively). The main effect variables of performance ( $\beta = .12, p < .001$ ) and political skill ( $\beta = .06, p < .01$ ) predicted interpersonal power. Together, Block 2 explained incremental variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .22, p < .001$ ). The interaction term entered in Block 3 also predicted interpersonal power ( $\beta = .10, p < .001$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .07, p < .001$ ). Due to the significant interaction term in Block 3, the relationship was graphed.

Figure 1 graphically presents the interaction between performance and political skill on interpersonal power. The interaction (Figure 1) was plotted across two levels of power i.e., 1 standard deviation below the mean and 1 standard deviation above the mean). Also, following the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991) and the computational tools of Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006), a simple slopes analysis was conducted to determine which lines were significantly different. This analysis indicated that the high political skill line was statistically significant ( $t = 3.97, p < .001$ ), but the low political skill line was not ( $t = 1.05, ns$ ). Consistent with prediction, the data indicate that those performers who have higher levels of political skill also have more interpersonal power, thus providing support for the hypothesis.



**Figure 1.** Performance × Political Skill Interaction on Interpersonal Power (Study 1)

## Study 2

### Method

#### *Procedure and Participants*

Study 2 sampled all members of a midsize retail company located in the Southeastern United States. Data for this study were collected over two time periods, using multiple methods. The data were obtained from the organization's human resources department, from self-report assessments, and from coworker reports. Approximately three months after the internal performance appraisals were completed, surveys were distributed to all 803 employees of the organization via their corporate e-mail addresses. This e-mail contained an approach letter from

the research team, an endorsement from the vice president of human resources, an assurance of confidentiality, and a link to an online survey. A total of 384 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 47.8%. On average, respondents were 34.6 years old, were primarily Caucasian (73.0%) and female (53.2%), and had been working for the company for 3.8 years. The vice president of human resources indicated that the demographic distribution of this sample was representative of the company as a whole.

### *Measures*

#### ***Performance***

Performance appraisal scores were obtained from the organization's human resources records and reflected each respondent's most recent evaluation. This evaluation period occurred approximately three months before the collection of survey data, so it is reflective of each person's past performance. Performance scores ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 representing *poor* and 5 representing *outstanding*. Because performance ratings were obtained for all employees, it was possible to test for response bias on this factor. A *t* test indicated that respondents' performance ratings were not significantly different from the ratings of nonrespondents ( $t = -1.14, ns$ ).

#### ***Political skill***

As in Study 1, respondent self-reports of political skill were assessed using the Political Skill Inventory developed by Ferris, Treadway, et al. (2005). This information was collected at Time 2, and the reliability of the measure in this study was  $\alpha = .91$ .

#### ***Interpersonal power***

Similar to the technique used to gather performance in Study 1, interpersonal power data were gathered using the roster method approach (Brass, 1985; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Burkhardt & Brass, 1990). At Time 2, respondents were given a list of all the names of employees in their organization and were asked to indicate the power of their coworkers according to the influence each person has in "the everyday activities of your work unit." The focal person responded using a 5-point, Likert-type response format with 1 being *no influence* and 5 being *very much influence*. These scores were then averaged to form a scale of power for each person. On average, 25.2 respondents contributed to each index.

#### ***Control variables***

A number of control variables were coded from organizational records. Age and organizational tenure were coded as continuous variables. Gender was coded as 0 for *female* and 1 for *male*. Race was originally coded into five categories (i.e., Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Other) but was collapsed into two categories due to lack of variance in all but the Caucasian category. Thus, those identified as *Caucasian* were coded as 0 and all others were coded as 1. Respondents were also coded as a *subordinate*, coded as 0, or *supervisor*, coded as 1.

## Data Analysis

The same hierarchical moderated multiple regression procedure used in Study 1 was employed here to examine the moderating role of political skill on the relationship between performance and interpersonal power (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cohen et al., 2003).

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and reliability estimate for Study 2 variables. To test the hypothesis, the same method and steps as employed in Study 1 were followed. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4. Overall, Block 1 predicted significant variance in interpersonal power ( $\Delta R^2 = .19, p < .001$ ). Individually, race and position significantly predicted power ( $\beta = -.23, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .63, p < .001$ , respectively). Block 2 also was significant as a whole ( $\Delta R^2 = .05, p < .001$ ), with both performance ( $\beta = .10, p < .001$ ) and political skill ( $\beta = .13, p < .05$ ) predicting power. The interaction term also was significant ( $\beta = .14, p < .01$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .02, p < .01$ ). As in Study 1, the proposed relationships were graphed due to the significance of the interaction term.

**Table 3.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Variables (Study 2)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	34.55	11.47	—							
2. Race	—	—	-.15**							
3. Gender	—	—	.05	-.13*						
4. Organizational tenure	3.82	3.94	.49**	-.14*	.11*					
5. Position	—	—	.23**	-.21**	.24**	.34**				
6. Performance	2.86	0.85	.09	-.18**	.10	.24**	.21**			
7. Political skill	5.70	0.71	-.28**	.09	-.06	-.16**	.06	.03	(.91)	
8. Power	2.90	0.76	.10	-.17**	.15**	.22**	.46**	.27**	.14*	—

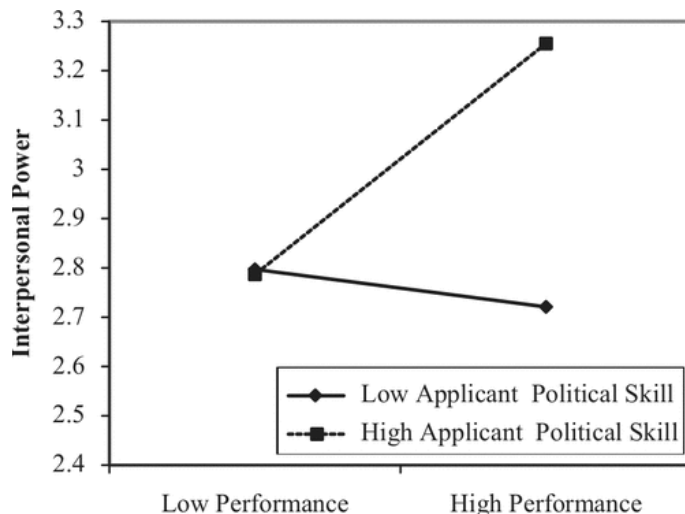
Note: The value in parentheses represents the alpha estimate. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Table 4.** Hierarchical Regression Results of Performance  $\times$  Political Skill on Interpersonal Power (Study 2)

Model and variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1				.19***
Age	-.01	.01	-.09	
Gender	.10	.10	.07	
Race	-.23*	.14	-.10	
Organizational tenure	.01	.01	.07	
Position	.63***	.11	.38	
Model 2				.05***
Performance (A)	.10***	.04	.18	
Political skill (B)	.13*	.07	.13	
Model 3: A $\times$ B	.14**	.06	.15	.02**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

As in Study 1, the interaction between performance and political skill was graphed (Figure 2), and the simple slopes were tested (Aiken & West, 1991; Preacher et al., 2006). The analysis indicated that although high political skill ( $t = 4.59, p < .001$ ) was statistically significant, low political skill ( $t = -.03, ns$ ) was not. This mirrors the results of Study 1 and suggests that higher performers garner more influence in the workplace when their political skill is also high, thus providing support for the hypothesis and constructive replication (e.g., Eden, 2002; Schmidt, 2009) of the Study 1 results.



**Figure 2.** Performance  $\times$  Political Skill Interaction on Interpersonal Power (Study 2)

## General Discussion

Power acquisition in organizations has long interested academics and practitioners alike, perhaps in particular because an informed understanding of how individuals acquire informal interpersonal power at work has remained elusive (e.g., Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; House, 1988; Lee & Tiedens, 2001). The results of the present two-study investigation provide support for performance as a precursor to the acquisition of interpersonal power in the workplace, but only under certain conditions. High performers were found to demonstrate more power when they also possessed higher levels of political skill. Interestingly, individuals with higher performance did not experience greater levels of power when they possessed lower levels of political skill. Furthermore, the multisource, constructive replication in Study 2 contributes to considerable confidence in the validity of the obtained findings (e.g., Eden, 2002; Schmidt, 2009). The results of this two-study investigation have important implications for theory, research, and practice.

## Contributions to Theory and Research

The present investigation built upon Ferris et al.'s (2007) social/political conceptualization of influence in organizations to take a decidedly different approach than previous research on the role of performance and interpersonal power. It was argued that, when effectively leveraged, past performance can lead to greater influence over one's constituents and work environment. This positioning provides a theoretical mechanism through which performance and the development of power can be viewed as both skillful and perceptual processes. As the missing piece in social

influence theory, political skill has demonstrated that not just everyone can initiate influence attempts and see them result in effective outcomes (e.g., Ferris et al., 2007). Instead, it depends on situational diagnosis to select the proper type of influence tactic or strategy, as well as the interpersonal style and savvy to deliver the influence attempt in properly calibrated ways so that the execution results in the desired outcomes (e.g., Ferris, Hochwarter, et al., 2002; Higgins et al., 2003).

Jones (1990) called for research in this area two decades ago, arguing that although we know a lot about the forms and mechanisms of influence, we know almost nothing about the style and savvy that result in such influence mechanisms achieving effectiveness. Therefore, political skill and the results of the present investigation respond to Jones's appeals to develop a more informed understanding of social influence theory. That is, influence dynamics and outcomes are clarified by identifying the astuteness, style, and execution of influence in order to make sense of the inconsistent effects of influence attempts on outcomes in prior research (e.g., Higgins et al., 2003).

This investigation drew upon Ferris et al.'s (2007) conceptualization of social/political influence in organizations to explain the processes by which power establishment in the workplace occurs. Thus, the results make important contributions to theory by demonstrating that politically skilled individuals, because of their astuteness at reading contexts (i.e., people and situations) and effective execution of performance information, earn higher power assessments from their constituents. This was not the case for individuals low in political skill. Thus, politically skilled individuals possess the ability to present their performance in an influential manner to a broad network of contacts, which serves to build their interpersonal power base. As such, it validates the role political skill can play (according to Ferris et al., 2007) in making certain resources operate more effectively.

Politically skilled individuals transmit, or signal, and manage the presentation and salience of their job performance much like individuals use influence tactics to manipulate others' impressions. In particular, the effective presentation of performance is a useful way to influence others' perceptions of one's power, but only for those high in political skill. These results are consistent with previous research demonstrating that politically skilled individuals' influence tactics operate more effectively. Ferris et al. (2007) argued that political skill plays such a role in demonstrating an influence-facilitating effect, and some prior research has demonstrated evidence in support of this role when combined with particular influence tactics (Harris et al., 2007; Treadway et al., 2007).

In agreement with Pfeffer (1992, 2010a, 2010b), who suggested that performance in organizations is a key resource that can be used to gain power, the present results extend beyond conventional influence tactics' effectiveness due to political skill and demonstrate that political skill also can strategically posture, present, and leverage performance information in effective ways that lead to interpersonal power acquisition. This is clearly a contribution to political skill and social influence theory, and it suggests that research consider the investigation of political skill's facilitating effects on other personal resources individuals might possess in their influence portfolios and use to their advantage in organizational contexts. Furthermore, this provides some



validation of Pfeffer's (2010b) statement that political skill is perhaps the most effective road to power acquisition, through securing and leveraging information and resources.

These results also contribute to theory and research on performance and power in organizations in ways that help to shed light on previously inconsistent results. Some scholars have argued that past performance is a necessary condition for the development of interpersonal power, but empirical research results have been inconsistent. This suggests that the relationship between performance and power is more complex than initially believed and that there might be moderators of this relationship that need to be explored. Political skill has been suggested, and found, to be such a moderator of this important relationship and sheds light on the realization that it takes political skill to present and leverage performance information in influential and effective ways in order for others to translate their perceptual assessments into interpersonal power ascriptions.

Finally, the results of this two-study investigation contribute to our understanding of the consequences of political skill. Although it was not hypothesized, political skill significantly predicted interpersonal power in both studies. Because power generally is defined as the exercise of influence over others, and political skill denotes effective influence behavior toward others (Ferris et al., 2007), it makes sense that political skill would positively predict power.

#### Strengths and Limitations

As with any investigation, there are strengths and limitations that influence the conclusions drawn from the results. One of the strengths of the present investigation is the use of a two-study package, whereby the cross-sectional results obtained in Study 1 were constructively replicated over time in Study 2. This constructive replication included ratings of performance by coworkers (Study 1) and archival supervisor performance ratings (Study 2). Although these findings cannot be viewed as conclusive, the use of constructive replication provides more compelling evidence of the validity of the obtained results (e.g., Eden, 2002; Schmidt, 2009).

This constructive replication also is evident in our ability to capture effects over time in Study 2 (i.e., performance data were collected about three months prior to survey data). Although the simultaneous nature of the social network methodology used in Study 1 does not allow for the inference of causal relationships, the time lag of the performance versus survey data collection in Study 2 provides additional evidence of the causality of the performance–power relationship. This design is particularly important for Study 2, as it adopts the view that one's status, credibility, or reputation is earned through past accomplishments rather than solely by the attributes of the individual or company.

The present package of studies also benefits from the use of multiple methods and sources for data collection. The use of self-report, archival records, and social network data reduces the study's vulnerability to common method bias. This bias has the potential to create problems for research in the organizational sciences (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), but this is less of a serious issue in the present investigation because multiple data sources were used. In Study 1, performance and power were measured by surveying those individuals who worked directly with the focal employees. In Study 2, performance was measured through ratings

provided by supervisors, whereas individual power was rated by others within the work unit. By utilizing multiple data sources, we believe that our results more accurately depict the true relationships between the variables of interest, and constructive replication also strongly increases confidence in the validity of the obtained results by demonstrating the robustness of results across samples, settings, and measures of constructs (e.g., Eden, 2002; Schmidt, 2009).

The conclusions that can be drawn from our results must be qualified by the limitations of the study. We were unable to capture the degree to which initial levels of interpersonal power contribute to performance. Therefore, it is possible that once power is achieved, employees may be much more capable of improving their performance. Thus, the performance–power relationship can be viewed as reciprocally reinforcing, and it presents researchers with the classic chicken-and-egg argument. Daily and Johnson (1997) acknowledged this causal confusion in their investigation of chief executive officer power and firm performance, and they highlighted separate theories that positioned power as both an antecedent and an outcome of performance. They found that, indeed, performance was both an outcome and an antecedent of power.

Similarly, Brass (1985) found that other-rated performance did not significantly predict the power of the individual for the whole sample. However, subgroup analysis revealed that supervisors were more likely to rate women as powerful when they had higher levels of previous performance. The design of our study did not allow us to advance the chicken-and-egg argument beyond that of the work of these scholars. However, this limitation does not affect the theoretical conclusions of the current investigation. Future research should more closely identify this reciprocity in developing future models of this relationship.

Another limitation of our research is the use of a single-item measure to assess performance in Study 2. While such global measures do not allow for investigations into the more specific ways in which performance impacts interpersonal power or other outcomes, often they are the only assessments made available by participating organizations. In spite of this hurdle, we encourage researchers to attempt to understand the specific aspects of performance that both impact outcomes and are impacted by them.

Although we controlled for formal authority in our analyses, there exists the potential for a more complex relationship between organizational position and interpersonal power. Specifically, individuals who have no supervisory responsibility could accrue interpersonal power based on their position within the organization, even when they are not a supervisor. A host or hostess might be more influential than a cook, who might have more influence than a bus person (i.e., as one reviewer of this article commented). It stands to reason that individuals who work in low-status positions also may exhibit increased influence when they are highly politically skilled. We encourage researchers to investigate such premises in future scholarship.

The potential for nonindependence exists due to our research design in which the same supervisor rated multiple subordinates. It could be the case that higher (or lower) performance ratings were a function of specific supervisors rather than the actual performance of subordinates. Fortunately, techniques, such as hierarchical linear modeling, exist to address these issues. Unfortunately, the necessary data were not available in either of our studies to assess for nonindependence, but we encourage future work to overcome this limitation.

A final concern regarding the present investigation is the definition of power we adopted. Although we accept a definition consistent with the interpretations of Pfeffer (1992) and Ferris et al. (2007), we acknowledge that other scholars have more strictly distinguished power from the exercise of influence (e.g., Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). While it is suggested in the present study that the characteristics of the politically skilled make it more likely they will engage in the process of influence, such processes were not directly measured. Previous research has demonstrated that political skill operates with other influence mechanisms and makes the use of influence more likely (e.g., Harris et al., 2007; Kolodinsky et al., 2007; Treadway et al., 2007). However, the political skill construct would benefit from further investigation into both the enactment mechanisms of politically skilled individuals, and the perception process of the targets of their influence.

### Directions for Future Research

Despite much conjecture as to the importance of political skill in the acquisition and development of social networks (Ferris & Hochwarter, 2011; Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007), no research has empirically investigated political skill in these networks. Thus, Study 1 represents an initial empirical investigation into the dynamics of political skill and social networks. Most obviously, the obtained findings provide insights into the acquisition of interpersonal influence. Certainly, the work of Brass and his colleagues on the importance of structural position for gaining influence and power (e.g., Brass, 1984, 1985; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993) offers important insights into these dynamics. However, the present results point to a need for better articulation of models that include consideration of the characteristics and competencies of the individuals operating within social networks. Mehra et al. (2001) examined self-monitoring of individuals as a means by which network positioning was attained, reporting that people can influence networks, not just that social structure influences people.

Although this investigation advances our understanding regarding the behavioral determinants of power, it does little to expand on structural considerations. Brass and Burkhardt (1993) found that both structural and behavioral factors independently predicted power and that these factors exhibited moderating and mediating relationships with one another. Indeed, Brass and Burkhardt suggested that unless future research focuses on both structure and behavior, it should be regarded as incomplete. This suggests that future studies should take into consideration how performance, political skill, and other workplace behaviors impact the structural characteristics and social networks in the workplace in order to form a more complete picture of such phenomena.

It was argued in this research that the signals inherent in favorable structural positioning need to be effectively leveraged if employees are to gain influence in their work environments. Thus, obtaining a high-level position or occupying a structural hole is useless without the awareness of that reputational capital and the ability to effectively implement it. As such, we believe that political skill probably is more relevant in situations in which formal authority has not yet been obtained or established.

If one adopts the viewpoint that political skill is a critical aspect of obtaining power, then the results of the present investigation also extend understanding of political skill in organizations. Although empirical work is still developing, initial findings have demonstrated that political skill is a dominant predictor of job performance in organizations (Ferris et al., 2007). When taken together with the results of the present investigation, and the results of a recent meta-analysis on predictors of career success (i.e., Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005), it appears that political skill has far-reaching effects on employee career success. Indeed, the combined results demonstrate that politically skilled individuals are more likely to effectively convert their performance into power, influence, and effectiveness in the workplace over time.

Future research also should consider the examination of other situational or contextual variables that might affect the roles of performance and political skill in power enhancement. Johns (2006) argued for the inclusion of context in research, given its status as the source of both constraints and opportunities that influence our interpretation of organizational behavior. Others have issued appeals for increased sensitivity of contextual effects in organizational research, largely because of its in situ impact on role perceptions and interpretations of workplace dynamics. Historically, the assumption has been that political skill prediction transcends situations or contexts. However, only limited research has considered the social context when assessing the predictive ability of political skill on job performance (Andrews, Kacmar, & Harris, 2009).

To address this gap, a recent study by Kapoutsis, Papalexandris, Nikolopoulos, Hochwarter, and Ferris (2011) examined the perception of organizational politics as a potentially threatening feature of the social context (Ferris & Hochwarter, 2011) on political skill–job performance relationships. Social influence, cognition, and threat adaptation theories were used, in two cross-national studies, to develop the hypothesis that job performance levels for politically skilled individuals would increase in contexts viewed as less political and remain largely unchanged in environments perceived as high in politics.

The results supported the hypotheses, and confirmed research by Andrews et al. (2009), who studied justice as a contextual effect, that the relationships among political skill and performance are situation specific. Future research should examine the potential boundaries on politically skilled individuals' ability to position, present, and effectively manage resources (e.g., performance) and thus the impressions of others' assessments of the individuals' power and effectiveness. Such research contributes additional support to the growing recognition and importance of context in organizational research, as well as to theory development and refinement.

The complex effect that political skill demonstrates on performance relations is supported by previous research. Kolodinsky et al. (2007) found that political skill not only affects the choice of influence tactics selected by employees in organizations but also favorably impacts the quality of the delivery or execution of such tactics. When coupled with the present findings, the collective research appears to indicate that political skill operates in subtle and interactive ways to impact individuals' organizational experiences. As such, future research may benefit from considering models that include the role of political skill in the perception and enactment of social influence processes in organizations.

## Practical Implications

The findings of this investigation provide important practical implications for managers and employees. First, because the relationship between an employee's performance and interpersonal power is influenced by political skill, it is reasonable to argue that some high performers may not be recognized for their efforts. This lack of recognition may result in perceived inequity or injustice, which may lead to lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001).

Organizationally, fostering the development of political skill in managers may result in positive outcomes. Rahim and Afza (1993) found that expert and referent power were positively correlated with organizational commitment and attitudinal compliance. Additionally, referent power positively correlated with work satisfaction. Because politically skilled managers can better enact expert and referent power, it is likely that their influence can lead to more satisfied and more committed employees. Although their qualitative investigation did not examine power, Smith, Plowman, Duchon, and Quinn (2009) reported that politically skilled managers realized greater performance and effectiveness through the specific behaviors they utilized in managing their employees, including trustworthiness, humility, affability, accountability, and empowerment. As such, organizations that help managers develop stronger political skill may receive a positive return on investment.

## Conclusion

Power and influence in organizations are needed to get things done and to accomplish personal and organizational objectives. However, in contemporary organizational environments, the pathways to power have become more convoluted and complex and appear to require more than simply an impressive record of previous performance. In the present two-study investigation, political skill was found to be a difference maker between performance and interpersonal power acquisition. That is, interpersonal power increased as a result of increased performance, but only for individuals with higher political skill. Hopefully, the results of this investigation will generate increased scholarly interest in the social influence dynamics of behavior in organizations.

## **Appendix.** Political Skill Inventory Items

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*Instructions:* Using the following 7-point scale, please place the number on the blank before each item that best describes how much you agree with each statement about yourself.

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Neutral; 5 = Slightly Agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly Agree

1. I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others. (NA)
  2. I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me. (II)
  3. I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others. (II)
  4. It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people. (II)
  5. I understand people very well. (SA)
  6. I am good at building relationships with influential people at work. (NA)
-

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7. I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others. (SA)
  8. When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do. (AS)
  9. I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done. (NA)
  10. At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected. (NA)
  11. I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others. (NA)
  12. I am good at getting people to like me. (II)
  13. It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do. (AS)
  14. I try to show a genuine interest in other people. (AS)
  15. I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work. (NA)
  16. I have good intuition or “savvy” about how to present myself to others. (SA)
  17. I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others. (SA)
  18. I pay close attention to peoples’ facial expressions. (SA)
- 

*Note:* The 18 items are distributed by which items make up each dimension of political skill by the letter following each item, referring to a particular dimension: (SA) = Social Astuteness; (II) = Interpersonal Influence; (NA) = Networking Ability; (AS) = Apparent Sincerity.

*Source:* Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., Kolodinsky, R. W., Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C. J., Douglas, C., & Frink, D. D. 2005. Development and validation of the political skill inventory. *Journal of Management*, 31: 126-152.

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