Extending the Meta-Theoretical Framework of Social/Political Influence to Leadership:
Political Skill Effects on Situational Appraisals, Responses, and Evaluations by Others

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Abstract

Building off and extending the meta-theoretical framework of political skill, we examined the cognitive and behavioral mechanisms through which the intrapsychic effects of political skill inform its interpersonal effects, and how these interpersonal effects ultimately are transmitted into desirable outcomes. Specifically, we argue that politically skilled leaders demonstrate better situational appraisals (i.e., understanding), and thus, more appropriate situational responses (e.g., consideration and initiating structure behaviors); the demonstration of appropriate situational responses is argued to positively affect subordinates' evaluations of their leaders (i.e., instrumentality) and subordinates' concomitant attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction) and behaviors (e.g., performance). Results provided mixed support for the hypothesized relationships. Specifically, leader understanding mediated the relationship between political skill and consideration, but not the relationship between political skill and structuring behaviors. Moreover, consideration was positively related to subordinates' group-level instrumentality perceptions, whereas initiating structure was not. Finally, subordinates' individual (within-level) perceptions of leader instrumentality were positively related to job satisfaction and performance. The implications of these findings as they relate to theory and practice are discussed along with this investigation's strengths, limitations, and directions for future research.

Keywords: Leader political skill, understanding, consideration, initiating structure, satisfaction, performance

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Political skill is formally defined as “the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives” (Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé, Brouer, Douglas, & Lux, 2007, p. 331). Collectively, this combination of competencies allows politically skilled individuals to read, comprehend, and fully understand the motivations and desires of others (social astuteness), adapt their behavior to coincide with what is situationally appropriate (interpersonal influence), appear sincere, well-intentioned, and trustworthy (apparent sincerity), and capable of forging beneficial alliances with critical others (networking ability; Ferris, Treadway, Brouer, & Munyon, 2012; Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, & Frink, 2005).

It has been argued that the essence of political skill is that its effects operate not only on oneself, but also on peripheral others (Ferris et al., 2007). This is to say that political skill presumably influences one’s own self-evaluation and self-concept, as well as the impressions, evaluations, and reactions of target others (Ferris et al., 2007; Ferris, Kane, Summers, & Munyon, 2011). Recently, researchers have begun to examine these claims empirically. For example, research examining the effects of political skill on oneself suggests that perceived control and self-efficacy transmit the strain-attenuating effects of political skill (Zellars, Perrewé, Rossi, Tepper, & Ferris, 2008).

Despite research establishing political skill as a critical social effectiveness competency (e.g., Semadar, Robins, & Ferris, 2006), little research has examined the mechanisms through which political skill operates on others. Moreover, attempts to integrate how the effects of political skill on oneself influence others are sparse. Furthermore, there have been no specific

tests of the original social/political influence theory proposed by Ferris et al. (2007). More recently, Munyon, Summers, Thompson, and Ferris (2015) reviewed the extant political skill literature and proposed an integrative meta-theoretical framework extending Ferris et al.'s (2007) theory. Although they were able to derive meta-analytic estimates of political skill's relationship with a number of commonly studied correlates (e.g., job satisfaction, performance), there were insufficient data available to test the sequential mediating linkages proposed in their framework. Accordingly, it remains to be seen whether the effects of political skill are transmitted into effectiveness as a result of the more appropriate situational appraisals, concomitant situational responses, and favorable evaluations of others that Munyon et al. (2015) proposed.

Moreover, whereas much of the argumentation underlying the "*je ne sais quoi*" of political skill is grounded in the notion that politically skilled individuals have a keen understanding of themselves, others, and the environments in which they operate, this core tenet remains untested despite its theorized importance (Ferris et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2012; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989). Nonetheless, scholars have spoken strongly about the importance of understanding to political skill, indicating that "a central assumption of political skill theory is the ability to understand others (Ferris et al., 2005, 2007, 2012)" (Munyon et al., 2015, p.170). Unfortunately, this central theoretical mechanism has yet to be empirically evaluated (Munyon et al., 2015). Accordingly, without knowledge of this intermediate linkage, we are left with an incomplete picture as to why politically skilled individuals might be both personally advantaged in the workplace (e.g., Gentry, Gilmore, Shuffler, & Leslie, 2012; Todd, Harris, Harris, & Wheeler, 2009), as well as why they might be more effective at leading others (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004; Ewen et al., 2013).

Therefore, the purpose of this investigation is to examine the mechanisms through which political skill affects oneself, and subsequently how these effects are then transmitted onto others and ultimately into auspicious workplace attitudes and behaviors. More specifically, it is hypothesized that politically skilled leaders will demonstrate heightened understanding (i.e., situational appraisal), which is believed to affect the extent to which they provide relationship-oriented (i.e., consideration behavior) and task-oriented (i.e., initiating structure behavior) behaviors to their subordinates (i.e., situational response). Subordinates perceiving heightened relationship-oriented and task-oriented behaviors should perceive leaders as more instrumental to their organizational success (i.e., evaluations by others), and as a result, report more satisfaction with their jobs and demonstrate greater performance.

Accordingly, our study contributes to the literature in numerous ways. First, we extend research on political skill by explicitly testing a fundamental mechanism (i.e., understanding) through which political skill is believed to operate. Second, this manuscript provides the first test of the sequential mediating linkages theorized in the meta-theoretical framework of social/political influence (Munyon et al., 2015). Although Munyon and colleagues (2015) employed meta-regression to examine the indirect effects of self-efficacy (i.e., self-evaluation) and reputation (i.e., evaluations by others) on the political skill - task performance relationships, they did not explicitly test the intermediate situational appraisal or situational response linkages purported to transmit the effects of political skill onto performance. Thus, this manuscript provides a more comprehensive test of Munyon and colleagues' (2015) conceptual framework.

Third, this investigation also *extends* the meta-theoretical framework of political skill (Munyon et al., 2015), as we examine an entirely unique (non-redundant) set of constructs reflecting individuals' situational appraisals, responses, and evaluations by others from those

proposed in the initial conceptualization, and apply the framework to the leadership context.

Fourth, although some research has begun to examine the mechanisms through which political skill operates, the focus has been either on the mechanisms through which politically skilled individuals reap advantage for themselves *or* the mechanisms through which political skill affects others. Nonetheless, this study integrates both of these areas of scholarship to examine how the effects of political skill on oneself (i.e., intrapsychic effects) are transmitted to others (i.e., via situational responses) and result in favorable evaluations, attitudes, and behaviors.

Fifth, whereas recent research has linked leader political skill to leader behavior and effectiveness (e.g., Ewen et al., 2013), these studies have not examined why certain leader behaviors may result in greater leader effectiveness (e.g., subordinate performance and satisfaction). The present study examines the indirect effects of leader behaviors on effectiveness through subordinate instrumentality perceptions. Therefore, this research has the potential to further explain how/why politically skilled leaders are able to reap advantage for not just themselves, but also for others (e.g., subordinates). Finally, this study extends research on initiating structure and consideration behaviors to address one possible mechanism (i.e., instrumentality) through which these behaviors affect subordinate outcomes.

Theoretical Foundations and Hypothesis Development

Political Skill, Social/Political Influence Theory, and Munyon et al.'s Theory Extension

Political skill represents a comprehensive pattern of social competencies with affective, behavioral, and cognitive manifestations, which are captured by political skill's four dimensions (i.e., social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity; Ferris et al., 2007). Collectively, research suggests that political skill allows individuals to better manage organizational demands, influence the attitudes, behaviors, and opinions of others, and

behave effectively in order to bring about desired organizational and/or personal outcomes. Moreover, political skill is not only of personal benefit to those possessing it, but also it boasts benefits to peripheral others as well (e.g., Ahearn et al., 2004; Douglas & Ammeter, 2004). Along these lines, leader political skill has been linked to leader effectiveness outcomes (e.g., subordinate satisfaction) through leader-member exchange (Brouer, Douglas, Treadway, & Ferris, 2013), transformational and transactional leadership behaviors (Ewen et al., 2013), as well as structuring behaviors (Ewen, Wihler, Frieder, Blickle, Hogan, & Ferris, 2014).

However, these studies stop short of examining *why* politically skilled leaders engage in these behaviors, and/or do not fully address the effects of these behaviors on subordinates' evaluations and subsequent attitudes and behavior. Thus, there is still relatively little research examining the mechanisms through which political skill operates on others. This is surprising, because political skill is predicated on the notion that the successful pursuit of individuals' personal and/or organizational objectives requires both the knowledge of social dynamics (i.e., opportunity recognition) and the use of influence (i.e., opportunity capitalization; McAllister, Ellen, & Ferris, 2018).

Moreover, as Pfeffer (1992, p. 173) pointed out, "somewhat ironically, it is this capacity to identify with others that is actually critical in obtaining things for oneself." Nonetheless, most studies to date examining the mechanisms through which political skill operate only examine intrapsychic (i.e., effects on self) or interpersonal (i.e., effects on others) processes, but rarely, if ever, consider both together. For example, studies that have linked leader political skill to leader effectiveness outcomes through leader behavior (e.g., Ewen et al., 2013; 2014) have failed to examine why political skill affects the choice of certain leadership behaviors. We argue that it is politically skilled leaders' heightened understanding that enables them to select the behaviors

that subordinates need/desire most. Further, why do these politically skilled leader behaviors affect subordinate outcomes (e.g., subordinate satisfaction)? We argue that leaders' situationally appropriate behaviors increase subordinate' perceptions of leader instrumentality, which ultimately should increase their job satisfaction and performance.

More formally, building and extending the Munyon et al. (2015) meta-theoretical framework, we suggest that political skill has an intrapsychic effect on one's self-evaluation and subsequent situational appraisal, which in turn informs individuals' situational responses, and ultimately, the evaluations by others. More specifically, within the context of the leader-subordinate relationship, we examine how leaders' political skill affects their understanding (i.e., a situational appraisal) and concomitant displays of relational-oriented (i.e., consideration) and/or task-oriented (i.e., initiating structure) leadership behaviors (i.e., situational response), subordinates' perceptions of their leaders in response to these leadership behaviors, and ultimately, subordinates' job satisfaction and job performance (i.e., evaluations by others; interpersonal processes). The hypothesized research model is presented in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Political Skill and Understanding

A key assumption of politically skilled individuals is that they have a deep-seated understanding of themselves as well as others, such that they are keenly adept at comprehending social dynamics, and can accurately decipher why others behave the way they do (Ferris et al., 2005; 2007; 2012). Accordingly, politically skilled individuals "understand social situations well, and can accurately interpret their behavior and the behavior of others" (Ferris et al., 2007,

p. 292). Moreover, as the very definition of political skill suggests, it is this ability to read and understand others that enables its possessors to accomplish personal as well as organizational objectives (Ferris et al., 2005, 2007). For example, it is argued that politically skilled individuals demonstrate heightened task and contextual performance, because “they understand what is important to the organization and to organizational members” (Jawahar, Meurs, Ferris, & Hochwarter, 2008, p. 146), and they demonstrate appropriate leadership behaviors because they “understand the needs of followers” (Ewen et al., 2013, p. 519).

Nonetheless, this foundational theoretical assumption (i.e., of social/political influence theory; Ferris et al., 2007), that the ability to understand others enables politically skilled individuals to reap personal and/or organizational advantages, has remained empirically untested (Munyon et al., 2015). Understanding reflects the extent to which an individual knows how and why events occur (Tetrick & LaRocco, 1987), or “the extent to which one comprehends why and how things happen the way they do” (Ferris et al., 1989, p. 162). Perhaps not surprisingly, research has empirically linked individuals’ understanding to reductions in adverse outcomes (e.g., strain; Ferris et al., 1989; Tetrick & LaRocco, 1987).

Consistent with this notion, “understanding” represents one such situational appraisal of individuals’ general work and social environment. Situational appraisals (along with self-evaluations) capture the within-person or “intrapsychic” effects of political skill (Munyon et al., 2015). Accordingly, individuals’ attitudes and concomitant behavioral reactions form as a result of how they appraise their social and work environments (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). Politically skilled individuals are thought to be naturally skilled at interpreting and understanding individuals’ motivations and behaviors, as well as the subtleties and complexities of their social environments (Ferris et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2012).

It is important to note that understanding is not conceptually or empirically redundant with political skill, but rather it is an untested mechanism through which the positive effects of political skill are realized (Ferris et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2012). Moreover, because politically skilled individuals are argued to be better able to “accurately gauge their work environment *and* the motives of others” (Munyon et al., 2015, p. 150; italics added for emphasis), we examine the broader “understanding” construct as opposed to the more specific “appraisal of others” constructs (i.e., knowledge of others, perspective taking) posited within the meta-theoretical framework. Nonetheless, “knowledge of others” is likely encompassed within, or is a component of, the more general understanding construct; further, understanding another individual’s personal and situational circumstances is considered a prerequisite for perspective-taking (Rupp, Silke McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008). Accordingly, this more general understanding that we draw on is both more consistent with the foundational assertions made by Ferris and colleagues’ (2007) social/political influence theory, and more proximal to political skill. Therefore, based on the theory of social/political influence (Ferris et al., 2007), we hypothesize that politically skilled leaders will demonstrate heightened understanding.

Hypothesis 1: Leader political skill is positively related to understanding.

Leader Understanding and Leader Behavior

Armed with heightened levels of understanding, politically skilled leaders should be better equipped to select and demonstrate appropriate leadership behaviors. In other words, political skill affects individuals’ situational appraisals (e.g., understanding), which in turn shape their behavioral, situation-specific responses (Ferris et al., 2012; Munyon et al., 2015). In support, according to social cognitive theory, individuals draw on information and cues from their environment to determine socially-appropriate behavior (Bandura, 1991). Because

politically skilled individuals can acutely perceive, diagnose, and deeply understand people and situations, they should be able to adapt their behavior to what is situationally most appropriate. Accordingly, informed by this heightened understanding, politically skilled leaders should be able to provide a situational response that elicits the desired behaviors and reactions from others (Ferris et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2012).

In support, leaders who are able to select and demonstrate situationally appropriate behaviors from their repertoire are more effective (Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991). Therefore, we suggest that those individuals with heightened understanding of the organizational environment, and those within it, will be more likely to demonstrate appropriate situational responses. We suggest that politically skilled leaders will demonstrate (among other behaviors) consideration (i.e., relational-oriented behaviors) and initiating structure (i.e., task-oriented behaviors). Consideration reflects a set of relational-oriented behaviors aimed at showing interest in, and providing support for, the welfare of subordinates (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). Considerate leaders are those who concern themselves with the needs and well-being of their subordinates, and demonstrate support, respect, concern, and appreciation for them (Bass, 1990).

Initiating structure reflects a set of task-oriented behaviors aimed at setting expectations and specifying performance requirements for individuals (Yukl et al., 2002). Leaders who initiate structure direct their subordinates towards goal attainment by structuring tasks, clearly defining employees' roles and responsibilities, communicating their expectations of each employee, setting standards of performance, and maintaining clear channels of communication (Fleishman, 1953; 1957; 1973). Perhaps not surprisingly, meta-analytic research has found consideration and initiating structure to be positively related to subordinate outcomes, including

subordinate motivation and satisfaction, as well as leader job performance and effectiveness (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004).

Leaders who understand the needs, motivations, and desires of others (as well as the dynamics of the organizational context) should demonstrate a situational response that demonstrates care and concern for their subordinates (i.e., consideration), as well as one that firmly orients their subordinates towards successful goal accomplishment (i.e., structure). In this manner, politically skilled leaders will understand the needs, desires, and motivations of their subordinates, as well as the demands of the surrounding context, and therefore, provide the appropriate responses to the particular situational contexts. More formally:

Hypothesis 2: Leader understanding is positively related to consideration behavior (relational-oriented behavior).

Hypothesis 3: Leader understanding is positively related to initiating structure behavior (task-oriented behavior).

Leader Behavior and Instrumentality Perceptions

Up to this point, we have argued for the intrapsychic effects of political skill. That is, we suggest that politically skilled leaders will have more accurate situational appraisals (i.e., understanding), and respond accordingly with appropriate situational responses (i.e., consideration and initiating structure behaviors). In what follows, we argue that being informed by their heightened understanding, these appropriate situational appraisals of politically skilled leaders engender favorable interpersonal effects as well. Specifically, we hypothesize that leaders' demonstration of situationally appropriate behavior will result in subordinates' heightened perceptions of leader instrumentality (or leader facilitation of subordinate goal accomplishment).

In the context of workplace relationships, instrumentality refers to the perceived relative value individuals attribute to a relationship (Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995), or the potential of a relationship (e.g., to satisfy organizational needs; Ferris, Liden, Munyon, Summers, Basik, & Buckley, 2009). For example, recent research found that significant others play an instrumental role in one's active goal pursuits (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008), such that individuals who are deemed instrumental to one's goal pursuits are evaluated more favorably, kept in closer proximity, and approached more often than those individuals who are not instrumental to one's goal pursuits. Moreover, individuals maintain positive emotions towards objects or individuals who are deemed instrumental to goal attainment, whereas objects or individuals considered to hinder goal attainment are regarded with negative emotions (Lazarus, 2002).

According to self-determination theory (SDT), individuals possess three universal needs: to love and be loved (i.e., relatedness), to exert influence on the environment and achieve valued outcomes (i.e., competence), and to experience free will and choice (i.e., autonomy) (Deci & Ryan, 1987; 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals will be motivated to the extent that the social context (e.g., leader) allows them to satisfy such needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, leaders who demonstrate consideration and initiating structure behaviors should be perceived as more instrumental by subordinates, because such behaviors help individuals satisfy their universal needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Subordinates should perceive leaders who provide consideration behaviors as more instrumental to their organizational successes because such behaviors fulfill subordinates' need to be cared for (i.e., relatedness). In support, research has found that consideration is positively associated with subordinates' favorable attitudes about their leaders (e.g., Judge et al., 2004; Lambert, Tepper, Carr, Holt, & Barelka, 2012).

Hypothesis 4: Consideration is positively related to subordinates' instrumentality perceptions.

Similarly, consistent with the amalgamation of evidence (e.g., Judge et al., 2004), leaders who engage in structuring behaviors should be perceived as more instrumental by their subordinates. That is to say that leaders who define, structure, and direct subordinates' requirements and responsibilities should be perceived as more instrumental to subordinates' goal pursuits. However, we do not expect this relationship to be perfectly linear. Rather, we suggest that leaders who provide very low or very high levels of structure will not be perceived as instrumental by subordinates. When leaders fail to provide subordinates with clearly defined roles, objectives, and standards of performance, subordinates should have difficulty going about doing their job and achieving valued outcomes; therefore, leaders should not be perceived as instrumental to subordinates' successes.

Alternatively, excessive amounts of structure might actually stifle subordinates' self-determination such that subordinates may feel like they have no discretion (autonomy) and no room to exert their own influence regarding goal attainment (competence) (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Lambert et al., 2012). Thus, subordinates are unlikely to perceive their leaders as instrumental to goal attainment as the excessive amount of structure actually inhibits subordinates' universal need fulfillment and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In keeping with this line of reasoning, research has found that excessive levels of initiating structure were associated with job dissatisfaction, low levels of trust, and decreased organizational commitment (Lambert et al., 2012). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 5: Initiating structure is nonlinearly related to subordinates' instrumentality perceptions. Specifically, subordinates' instrumentality perceptions are highest at

moderate levels of initiating structure and lowest at low and high levels of initiating structure (i.e., inverted U-shaped relationship).

Instrumentality Perceptions and Subordinate Outcomes

Finally, we suggest that subordinates' perceptions of leader instrumentality will be positively associated with subordinates' job performance (i.e., those job activities that are outlined in employees' formal job descriptions; Borman & Motowidlo, 1997) and job satisfaction (i.e., the extent to which individuals are happy with their jobs; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Instrumentality reflects a subjective perception concerning the likelihood that an outcome can be achieved based on what one does (Vroom, 1964). Thus, when instrumentality perceptions are high, individuals are more likely to perform behaviors that will enable them to attain their desired outcomes (Hui, Lam, Law, 2000). For example, employees were more likely to perform organizational citizenship behaviors when doing so was instrumental in receiving promotions (Hui et al., 2000).

Accordingly, instrumentality represents a source of motivation for performing certain behaviors (Vroom, 1964). In this manner, judgments of instrumentality play an important role in helping individuals to determine where, and in what sources, they should invest their efforts. This notion has been referred to as the "instrumentality heuristic," which reflects an assessment of a target object's instrumentality in realizing a desired goal (Labroo & Kim, 2009). In support, evidence suggests that goal-pursuant individuals seek out and subsequently invest in activities that are instrumental to goal attainment (Labroo & Kim, 2009).

Within the context of leadership, subordinates form perceptions regarding the extent to which they perceive their leaders as instrumental to their personal and/or organizational goal accomplishment. In fact, Berscheid and Ammazalorso (2001) maintain that goal facilitation is

the primary reason for entering into, and maintaining, relationships. Because instrumental leaders assist subordinates in understanding where they should invest their goal-directed efforts, they should be able to guide subordinates towards higher job performance because job performance is a desired outcome in itself, and/or a prerequisite for subordinates' personal and organizational goal accomplishment.

Moreover, individuals' thoughts, feelings, and attitudes concerning a specific relationship will be dependent on the extent to which they judge the relationship to be instrumental to their goal pursuits (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008). In support, research suggests individuals' feelings and attitudes concerning a specific relationship are dependent on the extent to which they judge the relationship to be instrumental to their goal pursuits (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008). Further, research suggests that individuals maintain positive emotions towards objects or individuals who are deemed instrumental to goal attainment. Alternatively, objects or individuals considered to hinder goal attainment are regarded with negative emotions (Lazarus, 2002). As such, it is suggested that subordinates will be more satisfied with their jobs when their leaders are instrumental in goal facilitation. Moreover, consistent with SDT, elements of the social context that cultivate individuals' basic needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence are positively associated with intrinsic motivation, performance, and well-being/satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 6. Subordinates' instrumentality perceptions are positively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 7. Subordinates' instrumentality perceptions are positively related to job satisfaction.

Method

Procedure and Participants

Public sector employees were solicited to participate in this study with the help of internal Human Resources (HR) representatives. HR representatives provided the primary researcher with leaders' and subordinates' names and email addresses, as well as subordinates' archival annual performance ratings. This information was used to create an anonymous code that linked leaders with each of their subordinates. The list was carefully cleaned to ensure that no one individual received both a leader and subordinate survey. The final distribution list consisted of 1,143 leaders and 4,453 subordinates.

Potential respondents were informed of the voluntary study via email by HR. The next day, the primary researcher sent separate follow-up emails to the leader and subordinate distribution lists, which provided further details about the study, requirements for participation, and the corresponding survey link. In total, 1,925 subordinates and 408 unique leaders responded to some degree¹ to their respective surveys. However, 268 subordinates failed a quality check item (i.e., if you're paying attention, please select the answer corresponding to the number four) and were removed from further data analyses given that careless respondents introduce unwelcomed noise (Meyvis & Van Osselaer, 2017).

Therefore, matched (although not necessarily complete) data were available for 283 unique leaders and 565 of their subordinates². On average, leaders were 55.5% ($N = 157$) male, predominantly Caucasian ($N = 224$; 79.2%) or African American ($N = 23$; 8.1%), 48.72 years of age ($SD = 9.22$), and employed by the agency for approximately 16.33 years ($SD = 10.31$).

¹ Any leader or subordinate who clicked the survey link and consented to take part in the survey is included among these totals.

² Performance ratings were available for 513 of the 565 subordinates who responded. There were 131 cases in which only 1 subordinate responded per leader, 79 cases in which 2 subordinates responded per leader, 38 cases in which 3 subordinates responded per leader, 21 cases in which 4 subordinates responded per leader, 9 cases in which 5 subordinates responded per leader, 2 cases in which 6 subordinates responded per leader, and 3 cases in which 7 subordinates responded per leader.

Subordinates were 37.3% ($N = 211$) male, predominantly Caucasian ($N = 387$; 68.5%) or African American ($N = 52$; 9.2%), averaged 47.08 years of age ($SD = 11.46$), 12.17 years of organizational tenure ($SD = 9.69$), and reported to their current leader for 2.83 years ($SD = 3.40$).

Measures

Unless indicated, all items were scaled on 7-point Likert-type scales, where 1 indicated “strongly disagree” and 7 indicated “strongly agree.”

Political skill. Leaders rated their own political skill using the 18-item *Political Skill Inventory (PSI)* developed and validated by Ferris and colleagues (2005). “It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do” (apparent sincerity), “I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others” (social astuteness), “I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me” (interpersonal influence), and “I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others” (networking ability) represent sample items. The composite scale demonstrated good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .90$).

Leader understanding. Leader understanding was measured using the three-item “understanding of events” scale developed by Tetrick and LaRocco (1987). The scale was developed by Tetrick and LaRocco (1987) based on theoretical notions proposed by Sutton and Kahn (1986) regarding antidotes to stress. Leaders were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of three statements using a 7-point agreement scale ranging from 1 (to no extent) to 7 (to a great extent). Items included “To what extent do you know why others at work act as they do?” “To what extent do you understand the reason organizational changes occur?” and “To what extent do you understand the reasons why job-related decisions were made?” The internal consistency reliability estimate for the three-item scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .74$).

Consideration. Consideration was measured with the original 10-item scale from the *Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, Form XII (LBDQ-XII)* (Stogdill, 1963). Leaders reported the extent to which they demonstrated consideration on a five-point Likert-style scale (1 = never, 5 = always). Nonetheless, 3 of the original scale items loaded very poorly on the intended factor. Further inspection of the poorly loading items revealed that these were all reverse-scored items. As previous research has shown, reverse-scoring can cause psychometric problems (e.g., Herche & Engelland, 1996; Magazine, Williams, & Williams, 1996) and often results in a methodological “artifactor” (Marsh, 1996).

Therefore, we probed more carefully into this possibility by conducting a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of the 10 consideration items. These analyses revealed that a two-factor model (i.e., with one factor comprising the positively worded items and the second factor comprising the negatively worded items) resulted in significantly better model fit ($\chi^2 = 72.04$, $df = 34$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .91; TLI = .87; SRMR = .05) than a one-factor model with all 10 consideration items loading on one factor ($\chi^2 = 97.71$, $df = 35$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .84; TLI = .80; SRMR = .06; $\Delta\chi^2 = 25.67$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$). Taken together, these initial results provide empirical evidence that the negatively worded items seemed to represent a method factor.

From a content validity standpoint, the 7 non-reverse-worded items seemed to capture the entire content domain of consideration behaviors (i.e., a set of relational-oriented behaviors aimed at showing interest in, and providing support for, the welfare of subordinates; Yukl et al., 2002). In order to place more confidence in the adequacy of the 7-item scale’s validity, we collected additional data via *Mechanical Turk (MTurk)* ($N = 278$) to show that the shortened CON measure correlated highly with the overall 10-item measure ($r = .95$, $p < .01$), and also

demonstrated comparable convergent validity with other established measures of leadership (e.g., transformational leadership). Furthermore, a CFA on the *MTurk* data provided comparable results as before (i.e., a two-factor model fit the data significantly better than the one-factor model; $\Delta\chi^2 = 138.11$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$). Thus, we concluded that our shortened, 7-item measure of consideration tapped into the same content domain as the original 10-item scale.³ The reliability estimate for the 7-item scale was adequate ($\alpha = .71$). (A table detailing the dropped and retained consideration items can be found in the Appendix.)

Initiating structure. Initiating structure also was measured with the original 10-item scale from the *Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, Form XII (LBDQ-XII)*; Stogdill, 1963). Leaders reported the extent to which they initiated structure for their subordinates on a five-point Likert-style scale (1 = never, 5 = always). Similar to the CON scale, the overall CFA analyses indicated that the 10-item (unidimensional) initiating structure scale did not behave well; specifically, four structure items loaded poorly on their respective factor. Upon further inspection, all four poorly loading items seemed to reflect a set of more autocratic leadership behaviors in which decision-making and control is completely leader-centered (e.g., “I decide what shall be done and how it shall be done”). In contrast, the remaining six (strongly loading) scale items seemed to reflect leader behaviors that provide subordinates with direction and structure (e.g., “I let group members know what is expected of them.”). (A list of scale items can be found in the Appendix.)

A review of the relevant literature revealed evidence that initiating structure likely is comprised of these two different factors (directive and autocratic structuring behaviors; Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas, & Halpin, 2006; Pearce et al., 2003; Schriesheim, House, & Kerr,

³ Additional information of the results for the validation study can be obtained from the first author.

1976). Specifically, more autocratic structuring behaviors involve taking control by acting without consulting others (Schriesheim et al., 1976), whereas more directive structuring behaviors involve specifying and coordinating how work should be done.

We probed more carefully into this possibility by conducting a series of separate CFA analyses of the 10 initiating structure items. A series of CFA analyses revealed that a two-factor model ($\chi^2 = 95.75$, $df = 34$; RMSEA = .08; CFI = .89; TLI = .85; SRMR = .06) fit the data significantly better than a model with all 10 initiating structure items loading on one factor ($\chi^2 = 120.73$, $df = 35$; RMSEA = .09; CFI = .85; TLI = .80; SRMR = .07; $\Delta\chi^2 = 24.98$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$). Again, in order to gain more confidence that these findings were not data-set-specific, we sought to replicate the results of our CFAs with the *MTurk* validation study mentioned previously. Specifically, the CFA of the *MTurk* data revealed that the same 6 items loaded on a factor we refer to as “Initiating Structure – Directive” (IS-D), whereas the same 4 items that loaded poorly on the overall (10-item) initiating structure scale actually loaded strongly and significantly on a second-factor; we refer to this factor as “initiating structure – autocratic” (IS-A) leadership behavior.

Once again, the two-factor model fit the *MTurk* data significantly better than the one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 23.90$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the *MTurk* data indicated that both the IS-D ($r = .95$, $p < .01$) and IS-A ($r = .89$, $p < .01$) measures correlated highly with the full 10-item initiating structure measure, and both exhibited comparable correlations with other established measures of leadership behaviors (e.g., transformational leadership)⁴. Taken together, the empirical evidence from two independent samples seems to confirm prior researchers’ (e.g., Burke et al., 2006; Pearce et al., 2003) beliefs regarding the existence of two unique facets or

⁴ Additional information of the results for the validation study can be obtained from the first author.

dimensions of initiating structure; namely, autocratic and directive structuring behaviors. Therefore, these two dimensions of structuring behaviors were examined separately when conducting tests of the hypothesized research model. The reliability estimate for the IS-D (6-item) scale ($\alpha = .76$) was adequate, whereas the IS-A (4-item) scale reliability was less than desirable ($\alpha = .59$).

Instrumentality perceptions. The degree to which subordinates perceived their leader as instrumental to goal accomplishment was measured using Cardador, Dane, and Pratt's (2011) four-item organizational instrumentality scale. The original items were adapted to reflect leader, as opposed to organizational, instrumentality perceptions. The four items include: "Working with my supervisor helps me to achieve my personal goals," "Working with my supervisor helps me to achieve my professional goals," "I feel that my supervisor plays a critical role in my organizational successes and failures" and "My immediate supervisor reflects my work values." The reliability estimate of the four-item scale was good ($\alpha = .94$).

Job satisfaction. Subordinates' job satisfaction was measured using the three-item scale developed by Cammann and colleagues (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983). "All in all, I am satisfied with my job" represents a sample item. The reliability estimate for the job satisfaction scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .89$).

Job performance. Subordinates' overall annual archival performance evaluation scores were provided by the primary HR representative involved in the approval, coordination, and distribution of the research questionnaire to organizational members. Subordinates' performance was scored on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicated "unacceptable" performance, 3 indicated performance that "meets expectations," and 5 indicated performance that was "exceptional."

Control variables. To conduct a more rigorous test of the hypothesized relationships and to rule out potential confounding factors, several variables were included in the data analyses as controls. Given the research linking tenure to numerous career-related outcomes (e.g., Harris, Kacmar, & Carlson, 2006), we controlled for both leaders' organization tenure and subordinates' tenure with their leader. Anecdotally, the longer an individual works for an organization, the more he/she should understand its goings on, and the longer subordinates work for leaders, the more instrumental they might perceive them to be. Thus, we felt it was prudent to control for both types of tenure.

In addition, both leaders' and subordinates' negative (NA) and positive (PA) affectivity were included as control variables in efforts to statistically estimate, and subsequently control for (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012), the biasing effects commonly associated with affective disposition (e.g., Perrewé & Spector, 2002). Moreover, these affective variables have been found in previous research to relate to organizational politics and job satisfaction (e.g., Kane-Frieder, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2014). We measured affective disposition using the 8-item abbreviated form of the trait *Positive and Negative Affectivity Scale (PANAS)*, which was adapted from the original scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) and employed by Zellars, Duffy, and Tepper (2002). Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they generally felt inspired, excited, strong, and active (i.e., PA), as well as the extent to which they generally felt distressed, upset, afraid, and jittery (i.e., NA). Possible responses ranged from 1 (never feel this way) to 5 (always feel this way). The reliability estimates for the leader positive ($\alpha = .81$) and negative ($\alpha = .83$) affectivity scales, as well as the subordinate positive ($\alpha = .86$) and negative ($\alpha = .85$) affectivity scales, were adequate.

Data Analytic Approach

Prior to the examination of the measurement model, the data were cleaned and carefully inspected. The data were not independent. Specifically, although data were available from 131 *unique* leader-subordinate dyads, the remainder of cases ($N = 152$) reflected non-unique leader-subordinate “groups” in which 2 or more subordinates shared the same leader; in fact, the average cluster size was 1.99. Moreover, the $ICC(1)$ values for subordinates’ instrumentality perceptions ($ICC = .129$), job satisfaction ($ICC = .089$), and performance ratings ($ICC = .501$) indicated that there was a non-trivial amount of variance between leaders.

Therefore, we utilized multi-level confirmatory factor analyses (MCFA) to evaluate the adequacy of the final measurement model. After confirming the adequacy of the multi-level measurement model, we evaluated our study hypotheses using the 2-2-2-1-1 multi-level mediation framework outlined by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010). We used the routines implemented in *Mplus* (Muthén & Muthén, 2015) to impute missing values, which allowed us to retain as much data (and statistical power) as possible. We employed maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR) for our analyses (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). MLR provides Satorra-Bentler-scaled χ^2 values; the Satorra-Bentler-scaled χ^2 values take into account the potential for non-normality by dividing the usual normal-theory chi-square statistic by a “correction factor.” Accordingly, in efforts to provide a more conservative test of study hypotheses, we report the Satorra-Bentler-scaled χ^2 values and corresponding correction factor for each analysis.

Results

Multi-level confirmatory factor analyses (MCFA) were conducted to assess the psychometric properties of our measures. We modeled leaders’ trait PA and NA, political skill (as a higher-order factor comprised of its four dimensions), understanding, consideration,

initiating structure-directive, and initiating structure-autocratic at the between-level whereas subordinates' trait PA and NA, instrumentality perceptions, and job satisfaction were modeled at both the within- and between-levels. Results from the overall MCFA indicated conflicting conclusions regarding model fit ($X^2 = 2623.03$, $df = 1371$, correction factor = .99; $p < .01$; RMSEA = .04; CFI = .88; TLI = .87; SRMR_{within} = .05; SRMR_{between} = .15). On one hand, the RMSEA and SRMR_{within} values were consistent with Hu and Bentler's (1999) rules of thumb, whereas the CFI, TLI, and SRMR_{between} values were slightly lower than desired. Nonetheless, it is inadvisable to rely strictly on these rules of thumb, as they were not developed for MCFA models (Dyer, Hanges, & Hall, 2005).

Accordingly, we also examined a number of alternative MCFA models to assess the appropriateness of the measurement model. A summary of the alternative models examined can be found in Table 2. We conducted Satorra-Bentler chi-square difference tests, which revealed that none of the alternative models fit the data significantly better than the original measurement model. Thus, we are confident that the measurement model is properly specified. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among study variables, as well as fit statistics for the multi-level confirmatory factor analyses, can be found in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

 Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Following confirmation of the measurement model, the hypothesized relationships were estimated in *Mplus* Version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015), using the 2-2-2-1-1 multilevel mediation framework advanced by Preacher and colleagues (2010). Between-level variables

were grand-mean centered prior to analysis, while latent group mean centering was used for all variables with within-level variance components.

Hypothesis 1 posited that leader political skill would be positively related to leader understanding; results without ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) and with ($\beta = .22, p < .01$) study control variables provided support for this hypothesis⁵. Next, we hypothesized that leader understanding would be positively related to both leader consideration (*Hypothesis 2*) and leader structuring behaviors (*Hypothesis 3*). Results suggest that understanding is positively related to consideration behaviors ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .15, p < .01$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .11, p < .10$). On the other hand, leader understanding was not significantly related to directive structuring behaviors (IS-D; $\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .07, p = .22$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .03, p = .61$), whereas mixed support was found for the positive relationship between leader understanding and autocratic structuring behaviors (IS-A; $\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .11, p = .09$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .10, p = .12$). Accordingly, full support was found for *Hypothesis 2* (i.e., the positive association between leader understanding and consideration behaviors), and equivocal support was found for *Hypothesis 3* (i.e., the positive association between leader understanding and structuring behaviors).

Next, we hypothesized that consideration behaviors would be positively related to instrumentality perceptions (*Hypothesis 4*). Results showed that the effect was significant regardless of the exclusion ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .43, p < .05$) or inclusion of control variables ($\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .41, p < .05$). Thus, support was found for *Hypothesis 4*.

Insert Tables 3 - 5 about here

⁵ All analyses were examined both with and without control variables. Nonetheless, the inclusion of control variables resulted in a reduction in sample size ($N_{\text{subordinates}} = 539$ with controls vs. $N_{\text{subordinates}} = 565$ without controls), since some cases had too many missing values on the control variables to allow for imputation.

Further, we hypothesized a statistically significant quadratic effect of initiating structure on instrumentality perceptions (*Hypothesis 5*). *Hypothesis 5* did not receive support as neither the quadratic effect of IS-directive ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = -.04, p = .76$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = -.08, p = .65$) or the quadratic effect of IS-autocratic ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = -.27, p = .07$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = -.01, p = .96$) significantly predicted instrumentality perceptions at the leader level, regardless of the inclusion or exclusion of control variables. Lastly, we hypothesized that subordinates' instrumentality perceptions would be positively related to both subordinates' performance (*Hypothesis 6*) and job satisfaction (*Hypothesis 7*). These hypotheses were evaluated at the *within-level* of analysis. Results indicated that subordinates' (within-level) perceptions of instrumentality were positively associated with job performance ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .23, p < .01$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .20, p < .05$). Thus, support was found for *Hypothesis 6*. Finally, support also was found for the positive effect of subordinates' (within-level) perceptions of instrumentality on job satisfaction (i.e., *Hypothesis 7*; $\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .50, p < .01$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .26, p < .01$). Table 4 provides a summary regarding the extent to which support was found for our hypotheses.

Interestingly, we hypothesized that subordinates' *individual* perceptions of leader instrumentality would predict subordinate outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, job performance), as opposed to the aggregate, or average of subordinates' perceptions of leader instrumentality at the between-level. Nonetheless, the use of a multilevel mediation framework (Preacher et al., 2010) allows for the partitioning of variance into between and within components. Thus, we were able to empirically examine whether our suspicions regarding the relative importance of within-level instrumentality perceptions over between-level (aggregated) instrumentality perceptions were justified. As expected, the direct effects of instrumentality on satisfaction ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = .29, p =$

.53; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = .17, p = .73$) and performance ($\beta_{\text{without controls}} = -.01, p = .96$; $\beta_{\text{with controls}} = -.21, p = .71$) were not significant at the between-level. These findings are discussed in more detail below.

In addition, although the indirect effects were not explicitly hypothesized, they are implied by the multi-mediation research model. Therefore, the magnitude and significance of the (simple) indirect effects (i.e., $a \times b$) were estimated in *Mplus*; Monte Carlo bootstrapping (Selig & Preacher, 2008) with 20,000 repetitions was used to estimate the 90% confidence intervals for the indirect effects. Nonetheless, MLR estimation techniques are not equipped to estimate the more complex sequential between-level indirect effects. Thus, besides reporting the simple mediation effects ($a \times b$), we also estimated the sequential indirect effects ($a \times b \times c \times d \times e$) using Bayes estimation in *Mplus*. The complete results from all indirect effect analyses (simple and sequential) with and without control variables are detailed in Table 5. Nonetheless, none of the sequential between-level indirect effects were significant, likely because instrumentality was not related to satisfaction or performance on the between-level. Therefore, for the sake of parsimony, we only discuss the simple indirect effects pertaining to the model with control variables, but highlight differences in significance of the indirect effects depending on the inclusion or exclusion of controls where necessary.

Notably, the effect of leader political skill on consideration ($a \times b = .0143, CI_{90\%} = [.0016, .0316]$) was mediated by understanding, whereas the effect of political skill on initiating structure-autocratic was mediated in the model without control variables ($a \times b = .0251, CI_{90\%} = [.0011, .0527]$), but not when control variables were considered ($a \times b = .0161, CI_{90\%} = [-.0004, .0371]$). In contrast, the effect of leader political skill on initiating structure-directive was not mediated by understanding ($a \times b = .0044, CI_{90\%} = [-.0087, .0213]$). Further, both consideration

($a \times b = .1008$, $CI_{90\%} = [.0292, .1868]$) and initiating structure-autocratic ($a \times b = -.0423$, $CI_{90\%} = [-.0922, -.0038]$) appeared to significantly mediate the relationship between leader understanding and subordinates' group-level perceptions of leader instrumentality, whereas initiating structure-directive did not ($a \times b = -.0440$, $CI_{90\%} = [-.1188, .0206]$). However, the total effect of political skill on instrumentality through all three forms of leadership behaviors was not significant ($a \times b = .0274$, $CI_{90\%} = [-.1760, .2331]$), which most likely was the result of the opposing signs of the consideration and initiating structure-autocratic parameters offsetting one another.

Finally, leader consideration ($a \times b = .0229$, $CI_{90\%} = [.0010, .0540]$) mediated the relationship between leader understanding and aggregated subordinate instrumentality perceptions, whereas initiating structure-autocratic ($a \times b = -.0125$, $CI_{90\%} = [-.0339, .0012]$) only did so in the models without control variables ($a \times b = -.0190$, $CI_{90\%} = [-.0443, -.0002]$). Initiating structure-directive did not mediate this relationship ($a \times b = -.0030$, $CI_{90\%} = [-.0172, .0092]$).

Post-Hoc Data Analyses Examining Political Skill Dimensions

Our overall model and specific hypotheses in this study were framed at the composite leader political skill construct level, and those results are presented in the foregoing sections. However, recent appeals have been made to examine political skill at the dimensional level (i.e., each of the four dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity), despite there being a lack of theory regarding the differential operation of these dimensions (e.g., Ferris et al., 2012). Indeed, until sound theory in this area can be developed, empirical research might contribute to increased understanding in this area by conducting exploratory or post-hoc data analyses replacing the omnibus political skill construct with its four specific dimensions.

Accordingly, we replaced the overall political skill construct with the four individual dimensions and re-ran our model. Again, all predictors with within-level variance components were latent group mean centered for their inclusion in the analysis, and a 2-2-2-1-1 path model (Preacher et al., 2010) was specified in order to estimate the strength, direction, and significance of the substantive paths of interest⁶. Interestingly, both apparent sincerity ($\beta = .16, p < .05$ ⁷) and social astuteness ($\beta = .16, p < .01$) dimensions of leader political skill were positively and significantly related to leader understanding, whereas interpersonal influence ($\beta = -.12, p = .08$) was somewhat (negatively) related to understanding, while networking ability ($\beta = .11, p = .15$) was not⁸. In turn, leader understanding was related to consideration ($\beta = .11, p = .07$), but not autocratic structuring behavior (IS-A; $\beta = .10, p = .14$) and directive structuring behavior (IS-D; $\beta = .05, p = .46$). Moreover, the indirect effects of apparent sincerity ($a \times b = .0101, CI_{90\%} = [.0002, .00241]$) and social astuteness ($a \times b = .0084, CI_{90\%} = [.0002, .0209]$) on consideration through leader understanding were both significant. Taken together, this reinforces the need to develop and test theory regarding the seemingly different *modus operandi* through which the political skill dimensions operate.

Discussion

Overview and Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of the present study was to empirically assess the critically important role of understanding in the phenomenology of political skill, while extending the Munyon et al. (2015) meta-theoretical framework of social/political influence and political skill to the leadership domain, and providing an empirical test, the first of its kind to our knowledge, of the proposed

⁶ Complete results from the post-hoc analyses with and without control variables are available from the first author.

⁷ Due to the post-hoc nature of the analyses and the absence of a priori directional hypotheses, two-tailed p-values are reported for all ancillary analyses.

⁸ The post-hoc results discussed pertain to the model that includes control variables.

meta-theoretical framework *in sequence*. Therefore, this study examined empirically how the intrapsychic effects of political skill (i.e., effects on oneself) are transmitted into favorable interpersonal effects (i.e., effects on others).

We hypothesized that politically skilled leaders would select situationally appropriate responses (e.g., consideration and initiating structure), in large part because of their heightened understanding (i.e., situational appraisal). In turn, we hypothesized that subordinates would perceive the consideration (i.e., relationship-oriented) and structuring (i.e., task-oriented) behaviors of their politically skilled leaders as instrumental to their personal and/or organizational goal accomplishments, and respond with heightened job performance and satisfaction. The results of our study, while correlational in nature, provided mixed support for the aforementioned relationships.

Specifically, leader political skill was significantly related to leader understanding, and understanding was significantly related to consideration behaviors, but not autocratic or directive structuring behaviors⁹. At the between-level, leaders' consideration behaviors explained significant variance in instrumentality perceptions. This suggests that relationship-oriented leader behaviors do affect subordinates' group-level (i.e., average) perceptions of the extent to which leaders are instrumental to goal accomplishment. Contrary to our expectations that structuring behaviors would be nonlinearly related to instrumentality perceptions (i.e., a hypothesized inverted U-shaped relationship), neither form of structuring behavior (IS-D nor IS-A) was significantly related to (between-level) instrumentality perceptions. However, at the within-level, subordinates who perceived their leaders as more instrumental demonstrated heightened job performance and job satisfaction. This supports the notion that subordinates' attitudes concerning

⁹ Please note that the discussion of the results is based on analyses conducted with control variables (*cf.* Table 3, Models 2a-2f) as these results arguably reflect a more conservative test of the hypothesized relationships.

a specific relationship (and concomitant behaviors) depend upon the extent to which they judge the relationship to be instrumental to their goal pursuits (Fitzsimons & Shah, 2008).

Our findings regarding the differential indirect effects of political skill on consideration, autocratic structure (IS-A), and directive structure (IS-D) through understanding are noteworthy. Specifically, political skill demonstrated a significant positive direct effect on consideration, and this effect was mediated by leader understanding. Similarly, political skill also demonstrated a significant positive direct effect on autocratic structuring behaviors, and the effect of positive political skill on IS-A was mediated by leader understanding (when modeled without control variables). On the other hand, political skill demonstrated a significant positive direct effect on directive structuring behaviors, but the effect of political skill on IS-D was not mediated by leader understanding.

Thus, it appears that politically skilled leaders seem to understand that the way to subordinates' hearts (and minds) is not through setting expectations and specifying performance requirements (i.e., directive structuring; Yukl et al., 2002), but instead it is through demonstrations of concern, respect, and appreciation (i.e., consideration), as well as by assertively taking action to accomplish objectives (i.e., autocratic structuring). Thus, although directive structuring behaviors likely capture an important set of requisite day-to-day (perhaps trite) leader behaviors, politically skilled leaders seem to translate their heightened levels of understanding into more relational-oriented (i.e., consideration) and take-charge (i.e., autocratic structuring) behaviors.

We were surprised that politically skilled leaders would engage in these more autocratic, command-and-control, forms of structuring. Nonetheless, perhaps it is *how* politically skilled individuals engage in these more autocratic structuring behaviors that is the difference maker. In

other words, recall that leaders rated their leadership behaviors. Thus, politically skilled leaders might report that they behave in ways that allow them to centralize control and decision making. However, based on the phenomenology of the political skill construct, they should be equipped to skillfully deploy these behaviors in less apparently autocratic ways. That is, equipped with the understanding of why and how things happen at work, politically skilled individuals might recognize that autocratic structuring behaviors are necessary, but might transmit these behaviors in subtle (i.e., less abrasive) ways, so that their subordinates react more favorably.

As an additional and perhaps complementary interpretation of these findings, politically skilled leaders who seem to control and centralize decision making (autocratic structuring), might simply be better equipped to understand how the world works, and therefore, avoid getting hung up in the time-consuming process of involving subordinates haphazardly in routine decision-making processes. By taking action without consulting subordinates, politically skilled individuals may be more effective in terms of their own capabilities to effectively accomplish work objectives. However, at least at the leader level, autocratic structuring behaviors seem to reduce the extent to which leaders are perceived as instrumental to subordinates' job performance and satisfaction.

Specifically, results indicated that autocratic structuring behaviors were significantly negatively related to between-level instrumentality perceptions, and mediated the negative effect of understanding on instrumentality perceptions (when modeled without controls). Alternatively, consideration behaviors were significantly positively related to between-level instrumentality perceptions, and mediated the positive relationship between leader understanding and (between-level) instrumentality perceptions. Once again, directive structuring behaviors did not mediate the relationship between leader understanding and instrumentality perceptions. Thus, what makes

politically skilled leaders personally effective may at times run counter to what elevates subordinates' continued growth and development. Future research should continue to examine this possibility as we are optimistic that self-benefitting and other-benefitting outcomes are not mutually exclusive for truly politically skilled leaders and their subordinates.

Results also revealed that the none of the sequential between-level indirect effects (using Bayes estimation) on the leader (i.e., between) level were significant. This is perhaps not surprising since instrumentality was not significantly related to satisfaction or performance on the between-level. We believe the reason for this is that subordinates are likely to vary in their perceptions of leader instrumentality, and therefore, instrumentality perceptions are likely to demonstrate entirely unique effects on subordinates' job performance and satisfaction. Nonetheless, the level 2 effect reflects the *average* or *aggregated* effect across all people in a group. The Bayes estimates of the indirect effects of leader behaviors on subordinate outcomes, through instrumentality at the between-level of analysis suggest that average group-level instrumentality perceptions do not mediate the effects of leader behavior on subordinates' group-level (average) satisfaction and performance.

One very plausible explanation for this finding is that for some subordinates, leader instrumentality perceptions may exhibit a positive effect, and for others, a negative effect, on outcomes of interest. However, these differences are likely to be "lost" when examining the group average indirect effects. Thus, instead of *shared* perceptions, these results seem to reinforce our belief that subordinates' *individual assessments* of leader instrumentality are related to auspicious subordinate outcomes (i.e., performance, satisfaction).

Contributions to Theory and Research

Based on empirical findings, the present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the political skill literature, as well as to the leader behavior and leader effectiveness literatures. First and foremost, this study empirically examines ‘understanding’ as one of the mechanisms through which political skill operates to achieve desirable outcomes for oneself and others. Therefore, we contribute to the political skill literature by explicitly testing one of the foundational assumptions of the social/political influence theory proposed by Ferris et al. (2007). Although scholars have conceptualized understanding as a theoretical mechanism through which political skill operates, empirical evaluations of this mechanism were absent from the literature (Munyon et al., 2015). Our results confirm that politically skilled leaders do report heightened levels of understanding, which in turn affects their situational responses.

Relatedly, this study contributes to the political skill literature in that we empirically *test* the sequential mediating mechanisms proposed within the meta-theoretical framework (Munyon et al., 2015), *and extends* the framework’s reach to the leadership domain by examining the mechanisms through which the intrapsychic effects of political skill are transmitted. We found support for the core tenets of the meta-theoretical framework; namely, that political skill is a beneficial social effectiveness construct, because individuals in its possession demonstrate more appropriate situational appraisals and situational responses, and as a result, are evaluated more favorably by peripheral others.

Along these lines, we also contribute to the initiating structure literature. Research on initiating structure has been marked by equivocality. Although meta-analytic research (Judge et al., 2004) resurrected interest in structuring behaviors (and consideration), its measurement has always been a source of contention. Our results across two independent samples of data provided evidence of two sub-facets of initiating structure, with one set reflecting behaviors aimed at

planning, organizing, and structuring the work to be done (IS – directive), and a second set reflecting behaviors that control and centralize decision making (IS – autocratic). This is especially interesting when considered in combination with the lack of support we found for the hypothesized quadratic effect of structure on instrumentality perceptions.

Recall that we hypothesized that too little or too much structure would threaten individuals' needs for autonomy, and therefore, subordinates would perceive overly lax or overly structured leaders to be less instrumental. Thus, therein lies a possibility that the IS-D and IS-A facets might exist on a continuum. Alternatively, it is plausible that previous researchers (e.g., Lambert et al., 2012) spuriously detected a quadratic initiating structure effect and concluded evidence of “too much of a good thing,” when instead, they might have been capturing two independent sets of structuring behaviors. Unfortunately, empirical constraints precluded our ability to test the possibility as to whether initiating structure is best modeled as a higher-order factor comprised of IS-D and IS-A factors (*cf.* Credé, 2018). Nonetheless, given the relatively modest bivariate correlation between IS-D and IS-A ($r = .40$), from an empirical standpoint, we are not convinced that a higher-order factor structure would be appropriate. Although this investigation provides some insight into the seemingly complex initiating structure construct domain, undoubtedly, more research is needed to probe these possibilities.

Moreover, this study contributes to our knowledge of what politically skilled leaders actually *do* that enables them to be perceived as more effective by others (e.g., subordinates), and ultimately more capable of garnering auspicious outcomes from their subordinates. Therefore, we contribute to the leader effectiveness literature both by expanding upon the findings of previous studies examining the effects of political skill on effectiveness outcomes (e.g., Ewen et al., 2013; 2014; Treadway et al., 2014), and by elaborating on the mechanisms through which

leaders' traits affect leaders' behavior and ultimately leader effectiveness outcomes (De Rue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011).

Strengths and Limitations

The results of this study should be considered in light of its strengths and weaknesses. The use of multi-source data represents a notable strength of this manuscript. Specifically, data for the main study were collected from leaders, subordinates, and from archival organization records. Moreover, the inclusion of a second sample to corroborate the psychometric properties of the initiating structure and consideration scales represents a notable strength. The consideration and initiating structure *LBDQ-VII* scales, although established and widely used, do have known limitations. Specifically, it has been pointed out that these scales confound leader behaviors with desirable leadership outcomes (Schriesheim & Kerr, 1977). Nonetheless, from a design perspective, we felt it was prudent to utilize established scales of structure and consideration in efforts to draw parallels across different bodies of research.

Therefore, the collection of an additional data set allowed us to further investigate the poor psychometric properties of the *LBDQ-VII* (initiating structure and consideration scales). The additional data provided evidence of two (substantive) sub-facets of the initiating structure scale and one substantive (and one methodological) facet of the consideration scale. Moreover, we have additional confidence that the consideration and structure measures are indeed reflective of their intended construct domains as the additional data collected also provided information on the convergent validity of our measures with similar existing leadership behaviors. Finally, a noted strength is that care was taken to separate the predictor and criterion variable scales in the survey instruments in attempts to minimize common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, there also exist several limitations that warrant mentioning. First, although the sequential mediational model advanced in this manuscript implies causality, the cross-sectional nature of our data is not suitable for establishing claims of causality. Therefore, we had to rely on theory to support the specification and ordering of the hypothesized structural relations. In addition, whereas the two-factor structure of the initiating structure scale was identified in both the main study and the secondary data collected for validation purposes, the initiating structure – autocratic (IS-A; $\alpha = .59$) scale still failed to demonstrate reliability at conventionally accepted levels (i.e., $\alpha = .70$; Nunnally, 1970). Therefore, the results pertaining to the effects of IS-A should be interpreted with caution.

Relatedly, the correlations of CON, IS-A, and IS-D exceeded commonly reported meta-analytic estimates (i.e., Judge et al., 2004). While some might consider this a limitation of our study, meta-analytic research has found the *LBDQ-VII* CON and IS scales to be more strongly correlated than other scales used to operationalize the constructs (Judge et al., 2004). Moreover, previous meta-analytic estimates have not differentiated between autocratic and directive structuring behaviors; nonetheless, consideration and directive structuring behaviors in particular were strongly correlated ($r = .67, p < .01$) whereas consideration and autocratic structuring behaviors were only moderately correlated ($r = .37, p < .01$). This might explain some of the correlational differences identified here within (i.e., as compared to Judge et al., 2004) and may shed light on why IS-D was found to be largely insignificant in our model.

There are also limitations regarding sample characteristics. Specifically, the study design (i.e., simultaneously soliciting leader and subordinate participation) resulted in a large number of dropouts. Although we were limited by the employing organization, it would have been preferred if we could have first sampled subordinates and then solicited leader participation based on only

those subordinates who participated. Nonetheless, while matched data were only available for 283 (25%) unique leaders and their 565 (13%) subordinates, about 36% of the leader population and 43% of the subordinate population survey participated (to some degree) in the study.

Moreover, archival performance rating data provided by HR representatives was used to determine if differences existed between subordinates who responded to the survey versus those who did not. An independent sample *t*-test revealed that there were significant differences in archival annual performance evaluation scores ($M_{\text{included}} - M_{\text{excluded}} = .12$, $t[3882] = 4.98$, $p < .01$) for subordinates who were included ($N = 513$; $M = 3.82$, $SD = .53$) versus those who did not respond or were excluded from the final analysis ($N = 3371^{10}$; $M = 3.70$, $SD = .53$). Moreover, the distribution of the archival performance variable revealed values ranging from 2.28 to 5. Thus, our dataset did not include very poor performers. Very honestly and practically speaking, poor performers (e.g., rating ≤ 1) are likely to either self-select out of the organization or be terminated. Moreover, the archival data suffer from typical leniency biases that are common among most performance rating data sets (e.g., Harris, Smith, & Champagne, 1995). Therefore, results should be interpreted with caution as they may not generalize to lower performing subordinates.

Directions for Future Research

Given the findings of this study, as well as the limitations detailed above, there are several suggested directions for future research. First, this study is the first to our knowledge to empirically examine the mediating mechanism of understanding in the political skill – effectiveness relationship, despite its strong theoretical position in political skill research to date. Nonetheless, continued research is needed in this area. This study is important because it sought

¹⁰ Archival performance data were not available for all subordinates included in the original distribution list.

to test a core tenet of social/political influence theory (Ferris et al., 2007) regarding whether understanding is fundamental to political skill. Although our focus was on leaders' more *general* understanding, that is, "the extent to which one comprehends why and how things happen the way they do" (Ferris et al., 1989, p. 162), other more specific forms of understanding, such as knowledge of others and perspective taking, have been theorized as capable of transmitting the positive effects of political skill (Munyon et al., 2015).

Thus, now that empirical evidence exists regarding the underlying importance of understanding to political skill, researchers are encouraged to explore more specific and nuanced forms of understanding capable of transmitting political skill's positive effects. For example, leaders are thought to serve as "sense-givers," and creators of shared meaning (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Thus, it is likely that politically skilled leaders are able to artfully craft the work experience for others (e.g., infuse meaning, understanding) such that followers perceive their work to be more meaningful or more autonomous (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). This would suggest another area in which leaders in possession of political skill might affect others' situational appraisals and responses¹¹. Furthermore, this study empirically examined understanding as a mechanism linking leader political skill to subordinate-focused situational responses (i.e., leader behaviors). Research is still needed to establish whether understanding transmits the effects of political skill into possessor-specific situational responses (e.g., strain-reduction), as opposed to the more subordinate-directed situational responses studied herein.

Moreover, the present study examined only the relationships of aggregate political skill with individuals' situational appraisals, situational responses, and others' evaluations. However, once the mechanisms through which political skill operate are firmly established, researchers

¹¹ We'd like to thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

should turn their attention to how the different dimensions of political skill might operate. For example, social astuteness, interpersonal influence, and networking ability should positively influence individuals' understanding, whereas apparent sincerity may be less influential in this regard. Nonetheless, apparent sincerity is likely to affect subordinates' perceptions of leaders' behaviors and instrumentality. Thus, theory should be developed (and tested) regarding how certain dimensions of political skill differentially engender positive intrapsychic and interpersonal effects, as well as how certain dimensions of political skill might facilitate the development or display of other political skill dimensions.

With regard to subordinate perceptions of initiating structure, we found it surprising and fascinating that the two dimensions of structure (i.e., initiating structure – directive [IS-D] and initiating structure – autocratic [IS-A]) demonstrated differential effects on the relationship between leader understanding and between-level instrumentality perceptions. Specifically, autocratic structuring behaviors *negatively* mediated the relationship of leader understanding on instrumentality (in the model without control variables) whereas directive structuring behaviors did not. Although politically skilled leaders may recognize the need to demonstrate autocratic structuring behaviors, these behaviors are not entirely well-received by subordinates in the context of our study. Future research should examine this finding more closely to exclude the possibility that it is due to the low internal consistency of the autocratic structuring scale.

Moreover, while the data structure precluded our ability to examine this possibility, future research should examine individual differences that influence subordinates' perceptions of initiating structure and concomitant reactions to leaders who engage in the different structuring behaviors; certain individuals may prioritize their need for autonomy above their relatedness and competence needs (De Shon & Gillespie, 2005). Thus, they may perceive both leaders'

autocratic attempts (i.e., to control, ensure compliance, act without consulting others) and leaders' directive attempts (i.e., to define, plan, and organize the work to be done) as especially threatening. Alternatively, those less concerned with fulfilling their autonomy needs may function adequately under the supervision of a highly directive, but perhaps not autocratic, leader. Future research should explore such possibilities.

Moreover, future research needs to further examine the validity of the initiating structure and consideration scales. We believe that a closer inspection of these scales might shed light on some of the markedly mixed findings pertaining to structuring behaviors. For example, although Lambert et al. (2012) found that excess levels of structure were related to subordinates' unfavorable attitudes, we did not find that more moderate levels of structuring behaviors (as opposed to very high or very low levels) were perceived as more instrumental by subordinates. Rather than a non-linear effect, our findings indicate that the two distinct facets of structure identified here represent two seemingly unique patterns of leader behavior that affect group-level perceptions differently. Future research should continue to probe this possibility.

Finally, future research should examine the behavioral profiles of politically skilled leaders. More specifically, there exists a possibility that directive structuring behaviors are necessary *but not sufficient* on their own to engender positive subordinate attitudes and behaviors. Nonetheless, regression-based analysis techniques are not equipped to assess such a possibility. On the other hand, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA; Ragin, 1987; 2000), a Boolean-based algebra approach that is starting to be applied within the organizational sciences (e.g., Fiss, 2011), is equipped to examine the notion of necessary, but insufficient, conditions for leader effectiveness.

Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the results reinforce the extensive body of evidence establishing political skill as a potent social effectiveness construct. Especially in the current times of tough economic conditions, budgetary constraints, shrinking resource availability, and increasing pressures from external shareholders, leaders in possession of political skill appear to be better equipped to understand and respond to their workplace environments. Indeed, Gentry (2016) recently discussed the importance of political skill for effective leadership. Therefore, given the positive impact of political skill on those in its possession, and ultimately, on those whom individuals supervise, practitioners should consider recruiting, hiring, and subsequently promoting politically skilled individuals into leadership roles.

In addition, individuals already in leadership positions may benefit from training that focuses on political skill. Although political skill is thought to be partially innate, there are aspects of political skill that are believed to be trainable (e.g., Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewé, 2005). Political skill training may consist of dramaturgical approaches (e.g., acting or improvisation classes) to help individuals think on their feet, interpret behavioral cues, think critically about situations, and adapt to rapidly changing scenarios.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how the intrapsychic effects of leader political skill are transmitted onto others and into desirable leadership effectiveness outcomes. In the process, this study empirically evaluates the role of understanding as a critical underlying mechanism through which political skill operates, provides an empirical test of the sequential linkages specified in the meta-theoretical framework of social/political influence and political skill proposed by Munyon et al. (2015), and extends the framework to the leadership domain. We hypothesized that politically skilled leaders would be better able to appraise situations (i.e.,

understanding), and therefore, their situational responses (i.e., consideration and initiating structure behaviors) would be perceived more favorably by subordinates (i.e., instrumentality perceptions; satisfaction; performance). Results provided some support for the multiple behavioral and cognitive mediating linkages hypothesized to transmit the positive effects of political skill on oneself to peripheral others and ultimately into desirable outcomes. We hope this study generates increased interest in these important workplace phenomena, and sparks continued inquiry into the complex processes through which political skill operates.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations among Study Variables

Leader Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Org. Tenure (months)	—																	
2. Positive Affect	-.10	.81																
3. Negative Affect	-.05	-.43**	.83															
4. Political Skill	-.04	.38**	-.20**	.90														
5. Net. Ability	.01	.32**	-.13*	.89**	.85													
6. Inter. Influence	-.07	.28**	-.16**	.75**	.54**	.81												
7. Soc. Astuteness	-.04	.30**	-.21**	.80**	.55**	.50**	.82											
8. App. Sincerity	-.06	.29**	-.16**	.56**	.34**	.41**	.34**	.80										
9. Understanding	-.15*	.30**	-.19**	.31**	.25**	.17**	.29**	.27**	.74									
10. Consideration	-.05	.30**	-.17**	.37**	.26**	.34**	.29**	.37**	.25**	.71								
11. Structure – Directive	-.01	.32**	-.12	.37**	.28**	.36**	.28**	.27**	.19**	.67**	.76							
12. Structure – Autocratic	-.02	.12*	-.07	.21**	.12*	.17**	.26**	.14*	.15*	.37**	.40**	.59						
Subordinate Variables																		
13. Leader Tenure (months)	.31**	-.12	.02	.02	.09	-.13*	-.06	-.08	-.09	-.09	-.08	-.05	—	-.04	.00	-.08	-.03	.16**
14. Positive Affect	-.01	.04	-.02	.08	.04	-.04	.08	-.02	.01	.00	-.04	.00		.86	-.32**	.37**	.59**	.13**
15. Negative Affect	-.08	.04	-.04	-.03	.02	.09	.01	-.03	.03	.05	.08	.02			.85	-.36**	-.45**	-.10*
16. Instrumentality	.04	-.04	.07	-.02	-.02	-.09	.03	.06	-.11	.06	.03	-.04				.94	.49**	.14**
17. Job Satisfaction	.08	-.01	.02	-.01	-.04	-.05	-.01	.04	-.08	.05	-.01	-.02					.89	.10*
18. Perf. (Archival)	.16**	-.07	-.02	-.01	.03	-.01	.05	-.08	-.05	.04	.15*	.07						—
Mean	195.93	3.56	2.18	5.62	5.19	5.88	5.45	6.42	4.60	4.21	4.20	3.85	33.99	3.44	2.25	4.64	5.23	3.82
Standard Deviation	123.67	.66	.70	.66	1.00	.70	.81	.66	1.13	.40	.46	.50	40.76	0.74	0.76	1.61	1.57	0.53
N	278	280	275	283	283	283	283	283	283	283	283	283	481	517	508	476	506	513

Note: Correlations between leader variables and subordinate variables have been computed by aggregating subordinate variables (below diagonal); correlations between subordinate variables on the same level are above the diagonal; Cronbach's alpha is computed on the respective level and included (in **bold**) along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2

Alternative Model Fit Statistics

Model	X²	df	Correct. Factor	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR within	SRMR between	Satorra-Bentler X² Diff. Test
MCFA Measurement Model	2623.03*	1371	.99	.88	.87	.04	.05	.16	
Alternative Models									
1. One-Factor IS (All 10 items included; IS-D and IS-A loading on one factor)	2863.53*	1380	1.00	.85	.84	.04	.05	.15	$\Delta X^2 = 136.72^{**}$ ($\Delta df = 9$)
2. All Leadership Behavior Collapsed (CON7, IS-A, IS-D loading on one factor)	2670.97*	1386	1.00	.87	.86	.04	.05	.15	$\Delta X^2 = 41.82^{**}$ ($\Delta df = 15$)
3. Individual PSI dimensions	2635.91*	1345	.99	.87	.86	.04	.05	.16	$\Delta X^2 = 22.31$ $p = .67$ ($\Delta df = 26$)
4. Sources Collapsed (Construct 1: all leader-rated constructs; Construct 2: all subordinate-rated constructs)	6264.00*	1415	1.01	.52	.49	.08	.15	.19	$\Delta X^2 = 2540.61^{**}$ ($\Delta df = 44$)

Notes. IS = Initiating Structure; CON = Consideration. In the MCFA measurement model, political skill is modeled as a higher-order factor comprised of its four dimensions, leader trait Positive and Negative affect are modeled with 4 items each, understanding is modeled with 3 items, Initiating Structure-Autocratic (IS-A) with 4 items, Initiating Structure-Directive (IS-D) with 6 items, Consideration (CON) with 7 items, instrumentality (at the within- and between-level) with 4 items, satisfaction (at the within- and between-level) with 3 items, and subordinate trait Positive and Negative affect (at the within- and between-level) with 4 items each.

* $p < .01$.

Table 3

Complete Path Analysis Results Without (Model 1) and With (Model 2) Control Variables

Outcome	Understanding		Consideration		IS-D		IS-A		Instrumentality		Sub. Job Satisfaction		Sub. Job Performance	
	1a	2a	1b	2b	1c	2c	1d	2d	1e	2e	1f	2f	1g	2g
Model	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Between-Level														
L. Political Skill	.31**	.22**	.33**	.29**	.33**	.27**	.20**	.20**	.26 [†]	.18	.12	.01	.09	.09
L. Understanding			.15**	.11 [†]	.07	.03	.11 [†]	.10	-.19	-.22	.03	.04	-.09	-.13
Consideration									.43*	.41*	.08	.13	.17	.26
IS-Directive (IS-D)									-.23	-.19	-.04	.14	-.22 [†]	-.22
Quadratic IS-D									-.04	-.08				
IS-Autocratic (IS-A)									-.34*	-.25 [†]	-.02	.13	.16	.12
Quadratic IS-A									-.27 [†]	-.01				
Instrumentality											.29	.17	-.01	-.21
<i>Control variables</i>														
L. Org. Tenure		-.15*		.02		.06		.02						
L. PA		.16*		.14 [†]		.19**		.02						
L. NA		-.08		-.01		.03		.02						
Tenure w/ Leader										-.18		-.05		.11
Sub. PA										.32		.32		.36
Sub. NA										-.11		-.66		-.01
Within-Level														
Instrumentality											.50**	.26**	.23**	.20*
<i>Control variables</i>														
Tenure w/ Leader										-.02		.01		.20**
Sub. PA										.28**		.45**		.05
Sub. NA										-.29**		-.22**		-.04
R^2 - Between	.10**	.12**	.16**	.14**	.13**	.11**	.06*	.06*	.31 [†]	.34	.13	.74	.05	.19
R^2 - Within										.16**	.25**	.41**	.05 ⁺	.09**

Notes. Model 1: $N_{leader} = 283$, $N_{subordinates} = 565$; Model 1 fit: $X^2 = 9.91$, $df = 8$, $p < .01$; correction factor = 0.97; CFI = 1.00; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .02; $SRMR_{within} = .01$; $SRMR_{between} = .04$. Model 2: $N_{leader} = 271$, $N_{subordinates} = 539$; Model 2 fit: $X^2 = 198.05$, $df = 62$, $p < .01$; correction factor = 0.89; CFI = .84; TLI = .65; RMSEA = .06; $SRMR_{within} = .08$; $SRMR_{between} = .14$; IS - D = Initiating Structure - Directive. IS - A = Initiating Structure - Autocratic; L. = Leader-rated; "Sub." = Subordinate; PA = Positive Affectivity; NA = Negative Affectivity. [†] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Summary Results of Tested Hypotheses

	Modeled Without Control Variables	Modeled With Control Variables
<i>Between-Level</i>		
H1: Leader political skill will be positively related to understanding.	Supported	Supported
H2: Understanding will be positively related to consideration.	Supported	Supported†
H3: Understanding will be positively related to initiating structure.	IS-D: Not Supported IS-A: Supported†	IS-D: Not Supported IS-A: Not Supported
H4: Consideration will be positively related to subordinates' instrumentality perceptions.	Supported	Supported
H5: Structure will demonstrate an inverse U-shaped relationship with subordinates' instrumentality perceptions.	IS-D*IS-D: Not Supported IS-A*IS-A: Supported†	IS-D*IS-D: Not Supported IS-A*IS-A: Not Supported
<i>Within-Level</i>		
H6: Instrumentality perceptions will be positively related to performance.	Supported	Supported
H7: Instrumentality perceptions will be positively related to satisfaction.	Supported	Supported

Notes. IS-D = Initiating Structure – Directive; IS-A = Initiating Structure – Autocratic.

† indicates the hypothesis was supported at less conventional levels of statistical significance ($p < .10$).

Table 5

Estimated Between-Level Indirect Effects (using Monte Carlo Bootstrapped Confidence Intervals) and Sequential Indirect Effects (using Bayes Estimation)

	Model 1 (Without Control Variables)		Model 2 (With Control Variables)	
<i>Estimated Indirect Effects & Monte Carlo Bootstrapped Confidence Intervals</i>	Estimate	90% CI ^a	Estimate	90% CI ^a
PS → Under → Consid	.0277*	[.0094, .0506]	.0143*	[.0016, .0316]
PS → Under → IS-D	.0149	[-.0048, .0385]	.0044	[-.0087, .0213]
PS → Under → IS-A	.0251*	[.0011, .0527]	.0161	[-.0004, .0371]
PS → Consid → Instrum ^b	.1320*	[.0432, .2324]	.1008*	[.0292, .1868]
PS → IS-D → Instrum ^b	-.0701	[-.1706, .0188]	-.0440	[-.1188, .0206]
PS → IS-A → Instrum ^b	-.0612*	[-.1161, -.0176]	-.0423*	[-.0922, -.0038]
PS → Leadership → Instrum ^c	-.0296	[-.2590, .2008]	.0274	[-.1760, .2331]
Under → Consid → Instrum ^b	.0343*	[.0076, .0698]	.0229*	[.0010, .0540]
Under → IS-D → Instrum ^b	-.0086	[-.0281, .0055]	-.0030	[-.0172, .0092]
Under → IS-A → Instrum ^b	-.0190*	[-.0443, -.0002]	-.0125	[-.0339, .0012]
Under → Leadership → Instrum ^c	-.0065	[-.0608, .0463]	.0052	[-.0358; .00515]
<i>Bayes Estimated Sequential Indirect Effects & Confidence Intervals</i>	Estimate	90% CI ^d	Estimate	90% CI ^d
PS → Under → Consid → Instrum → Sat	.003	[-.015; .018]	.000	[-.008; .009]
PS → Under → Consid → Instrum → Perf	.000	[-.008; .006]	.000	[-.007; .006]
PS → Under → IS-D → Instrum → Sat	.000	[-.007; .005]	.000	[-.002; .002]
PS → Under → IS-D → Instrum → Perf	.000	[-.002; .003]	.000	[-.002; .002]
PS → Under → IS-A → Instrum → Sat	-.001	[-.011; .008]	.000	[-.007; .005]
PS → Under → IS-A → Instrum → Perf	.000	[-.004; .004]	.000	[-.005; .004]
PS → Under → Leadership → Instrum → Sat	.000	[-.016; .011]	.000	[-.009; .007]
PS → Under → Leadership → Instrum → Perf	.000	[-.006; .005]	.000	[-.006; .006]

Notes. All indirect effects are calculated at the between (i.e., leader)-level. Bayes estimates are only available up to three decimal points. PS = Political Skill; Under = Understanding; Consid = Consideration; Instrum = Instrumentality; IS-D = Initiating Structure – Directive; IS-A = Initiating Structure – Autocratic; Sat = Satisfaction; Perf = Performance. “Leadership” reflects the combined effects of initiating structure-autocratic, initiating structure-directive, and consideration.

^a Confidence interval values estimated using unstandardized regression coefficients and 20,000 Monte Carlo bootstrapped samples.

^b The partial indirect effects of understanding on instrumentality

^c The total indirect effect of understanding on instrumentality

^d Confidence interval values estimated using unstandardized regression coefficients and Bayes estimation.

* 90% confidence interval excludes zero.

Figure 1. Research Model

Appendix

Overview of Deleted and Retained items of Consideration and Initiating Structure

Consideration	
CON1	1. I am friendly and approachable.
CON2	2. I do little things to make it pleasant to be a member of the group.
CON3	3. I put suggestions made by the group into operation.
CON4	4. I treat all group members as my equals.
CON5	5. I give advanced notice of changes.
CON6 ⁺	6. I keep to myself. (Reverse-worded) ⁺
CON7	7. I look out for the personal welfare of group members.
CON8	8. I am willing to make changes.
CON9 ⁺	9. I refuse to explain my actions. (Reverse-worded) ⁺
CON10 ⁺	10. I act without consulting the group. (Reverse-worded) ⁺
Initiating Structure – Directive	
IS1	1. I let group members know what is expected of them.
IS2	2. I encourage the use of uniform procedures.
IS3	3. I try out my ideas in the group.
IS4	4. I make my attitudes clear to the group.
IS7	5. I make sure that my part in the group is understood by the group members.
IS9	6. I maintain definite standards of performance.
Initiating Structure – Autocratic	
IS5	1. I decide what shall be done and how it shall be done.
IS6	2. I assign group members to particular tasks.
IS8	3. I schedule the work to be done.
IS10	4. I ask that group members follow standard rules and regulations.

Notes. The original item number is included in the far-left column to denote the original ordering of scale items. Items marked with a ⁺ were dropped from the final analyses.