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Destructive De-energizing Relationships:

How Thriving Buffers their Effect on Performance

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Abstract

In this paper, we establish the relationship between de-energizing relationships and individual performance in organizations. To date, the emphasis in social network research has largely been on positive dimensions of relationships despite literature from social psychology revealing the prevalence and detrimental impact of de-energizing relationships. In two field studies, we show that de-energizing relationships in organizations are associated with decreased performance. In Study 1, we investigate how de-energizing relationships are related to lower performance using data from 161 people in the information technology (IT) department of an engineering firm. In Study 2, in a sample of 439 management consultants, we consider whether the effects of de-energizing relationships on performance may be moderated by the extent to which an individual has the psychological resource of thriving at work. We find that individuals who are thriving at work are less susceptible to the effects of de-energizing relationships on job performance. We close by discussing implications of this research.

Key words: De-energizing relationships, social networks, performance, thriving

Destructive De-energizing Relationships: How Thriving Buffers their Effect on Performance

"Working with her sucks the life right out of me." (Project Manager)
"There are many things that I love about my job. Working with him is certainly not one of them."(Consultant)

Relationships impact individuals' experience of work. Positive relationships at work (cf. Baker, Cross, & Wooten, 2003; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) fulfill people's affective needs, fueling motivation (cf., Quinn, Spreitzer, & Lam, 2012), engagement (Clifton, 2011), satisfaction and well-being (Dutton, 2003). They also contribute to growth and development (Dutton, 2003, 2005) as relationships can serve as conduits for harnessing information (Levin & Cross, 2004), and advice (Dutton, 2003). Consequently, positive relationships at work have been found to improve individual performance (Cross & Cummings, 2004; Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001) and yield benefits such as higher salary, rapid promotion, and finding a job (e.g., Brass, 1984; Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973).

Most recently, interest has grown around what Baker et al. (2003) term energizing relationships--work relationships that generate positive energy. Energy is one of the most fundamental resources for performance, health, and well-being at work (Quinn et al., 2012; Saravi, 1999). Yet, human energy can also be depleted (Fritz, Lam, & Spreitzer, 2011) when individuals are embedded in relationships that may be challenging, frustrating, irritating, or rude (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). In this paper, we explore the relatively under-examined influence of de-energizing relationships, defined as negative relationships within the context of a work organization in which an individual has interactions that are perceived to be draining (see Labianca & Brass, 2006). Although research has demonstrated some dyadic effects of de-energizing relationships such as people avoiding seeking information

from someone (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008), it is unclear whether de-energizing relationships detract from individual performance. Are de-energizing relationships merely a hassle or frustration, or do they impact people's work performance as well? If de-energizing relationships are related to performance, is it possible to buffer their negative effect? In particular, if individuals report they are thriving at work, are they better able to withstand the negative effects of exposure to de-energizing relationships?

To answer the latter question, we draw on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and suggest that thriving at work, defined as the joint experience of vitality (feeling alive) and learning (feeling that one is continually improving and getting better at one's work) (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005), may be an important psychological resource that can help mitigate the effects of de-energizing relationships. When individuals are thriving at work they are fortified with their own energy (Spreitzer et al., 2005) which may help buffer them from the negative effects of de-energizing relationships.

In that vein, our research establishes the link between de-energizing relationships and performance — and how individuals might buffer these effects through thriving at work. We develop the rationale for our hypotheses next. Then we present results from two field studies. We conclude with a discussion of our findings and implications of this research.

Theoretical Underpinnings for Hypotheses on De-energizing Relationships

Relationships provide affiliation, belongingness and connection — as such they are conduits for basic needs that can be fulfilled through work (e.g., Maslow, 1943; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Energizing relationships produce a positive mood that enables individuals to act and make a contribution within an organization (Quinn & Dutton, 2005). Alternatively, de-energizing relationships create negative emotions (Dutton, 2003, 2005) leading to specific actions (like fight

or flight) and a narrowed thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000). Research shows that "bad is stronger than good" (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). As a result de-energizing relationships are more potent than energizing ones (Casciaro and Lobo, 2008; Labianca, Brass, & Gray, 1998; Parker, Gerbasi & Porath, 2013). This is particularly likely in the workplace since de-energizing relationships are often difficult to sever because of task interdependence, the need to work together on a team, or the reporting structure (i.e., your boss or other leaders are de-energizing) (Labianca et al., 1998). When employees must deal with a de-energizing colleague, they may dread it, ruminate about future interactions, and feel their creativity or initiative is inhibited (Porath & Pearson, 2012).

In de-energizing relationships people may struggle to restrain their emotions, resulting in constrained information processing and difficulty concentrating on the task at hand. This may exact an emotional and cognitive toll (Cross, Baker, & Parker, 2003; Porath & Erez, 2007). Whereas people who have energizing interactions are likely to carry their positive experience into subsequent interactions, resulting in positive spillover effects (Baker et al., 2003), people who have de-energizing relationships can find these interactions depleting (Cross et al., 2003) and carry the negative experience to other relationships (Parker et al., 2013). In this manner, de-energizing relationships may drain people before and during an interaction (Pearson & Porath, 2009). Afterward, employees might also consume energy seeking out colleagues in order to vent their frustration (Cross et al., 2003) or re-playing aspects of the de-energizing relationship in their minds (Porath, Overbeck, & Pearson, 2008). Research suggests that arousal from an interaction can be combined with emotions from another situation to intensify the reaction (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), leading to cumulative or multiplicative effects as interactions with a de-energizer mount.

De-energizing Relationships and Performance

Work performance can be defined as the total expected value to the organization of the discrete behaviors that an individual carries out over a standard period of time (Motowidlo & Kell, 2013). De-energizing relationships are likely to hinder cognitive functioning and limit motivation to fully participate, both of which should negatively affect performance (Rafaeli, et al., 2012). People invest extensive cognitive resources appraising de-energizing relationships, which can impede performance (Porath et al., 2008). This may explain why people who experience negative affect do not learn and recall as well (Ellis, Moore, Varner, & Ottaway 1997), and struggle to comprehend and use prior knowledge in memory comprehension of ambiguous stories (Ellis, Varner, Becker, & Ottaway, 1995). By disrupting cognitive processing, de-energizing relationships are likely to reduce task performance (Labianca & Brass, 2006).

De-energizing relationships also are likely to decrease motivation. Whereas energizing relationships spur positive feelings to participate and contribute to others and the organization (e.g., Dutton, 2003; Kahn, 1990), de-energizing relationships reduce a sense of belonging (Dutton, 2005) and may encourage individuals to pull back from interacting with others, thus reducing the opportunity to learn (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008). De-energizing relationships diminish feelings of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), limiting how much people learn. Thus:

Hypothesis 1: A larger number of de-energizing relationships will be negatively related to job performance.

The Moderating Effect of Thriving at Work

Personal resources may help buoy an individual from the negative effects of de-energizing relationships. Resources that enable management of one's environment are central to a person's ability to deal more effectively with emotional strain (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, &

Jackson, 2003; Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenwald, 2000), and concurrent functioning and well-being (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010). Conservation of resources (COR) theory suggests that individuals deal with negative stressors—like de-energizing relationships—when they have resources to help them buffer the stressor (Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). COR theory articulates the role of various resources: material, social, and personal. We focus on one type of personal resource because it is within an individual's sphere of control—unlike many material or social forces which are more dependent on financial capital or colleagues in the workplace.[1]

The personal resource of interest is one's sense of thriving. While thriving is a relatively new construct in organizational behavior, it is relevant because it serves "an adaptive function that helps individuals navigate and change their work contexts to promote their own development" (Spreitzer et al., 2005: 537). In this way, thriving can buffer the negative relationship between de-energizing relationships and job performance. Thriving individuals have their own store of energy to counteract the de-energizing relationships. In prior research, thriving predicted self-development (Paterson, Luthans & Jeung, 2014), performance, health, and reduced burnout and strain (Porath, Spreitzer, Gibson & Garnett, 2012; Spreitzer, Lam & Quinn, 2012).

People who experience thriving have the capacity to mitigate negativity from coworkers because they see themselves on a positive trajectory. De-energizing relationships are less likely to distract individuals who are thriving from achieving goals, and ultimately, higher performance because they are learning from their interactions with others at work, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. Those who enjoy a higher state of thriving are likely to be more resilient (Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012). Whereas de-energizing relationships may be a last straw for

[1] We control for the social resource of energizing relationships. We do not hypothesize it as a moderator because it is less within the sphere of control of the individual. Because of inherent task interdependence or hierarchical reporting structures, individuals do not always choose who they interact with at work.

someone who is languishing, a thriving individual is better able to withstand negative interactions because they have more personal resources to draw upon (Porath et al., 2012). Thus:

Hypothesis 2: Employees' sense of thriving moderates the negative association between de-energizing relationships and performance. The relationship will be weaker for employees who have higher levels of thriving.

Method: Study 1

We conducted a social network analysis survey of the entire global information technology (IT) department (163 people) of an engineering firm. The response rate was 99% because employees were required to complete the on-line survey as part of their participation in a developmental program. All but two participants responded, resulting in 161 cases. Respondents were asked to evaluate their relationship with each member of the IT department using the roster method where each name was provided in the survey (Marsden, 1990). Performance was evaluated two separate times by Human Resources (HR) in conjunction with each employee's supervisor: the first time was eight months before our social network survey and the second time was four months after we conducted our social network survey. Correlations and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.[2]

Performance. Each individual was rated annually by their immediate supervisor on a scale of 1 (low level of performance) to 5 (exceptional performance) on several dimensions: business development skills, client-service management, leadership, decision making, and baseline skills. The aggregate rating reflects the combination of behaviors and activities that are judged to be important for accomplishing the goals of the organization (Campbell et al., 1990).

[2] In order for a relationship tie to occur, it must be sent by one person and received by another, hence the total number of in and out going ties in a network will be equal. Due to missing values on the performance variables, the means differ slightly.

This type of multidimensional rating is common in consulting (see Cross & Cummings, 2004) and a multitude of other industries (see Campbell et al., 1990) because one attribute or one outcome cannot capture the complete assessment of a person's job performance. We conducted a Principal Component Analysis (PCA), using Promax rotations with Kaiser Normalization, of the items and find that performance loads as one distinct factor (α = .88) (mean 3.57, SD .47).

De-energizing relationships. To assess the extent to which respondents considered their work relationships as de-energizing, we measured the number of outgoing de-energizing ties (by outgoing, we mean the participant's perception of each person in his or her network). We used the measure adapted from Cross and Parker (2004): "People can affect the energy and enthusiasm we have at work in various ways. Interactions with some people can leave you feeling drained; [whereas] others can leave you feeling enthused about possibilities. When you interact with each person below, how does it typically affect your energy level?" Respondents indicated a value from 1 (strongly de-energizing tie) to 5 (strongly energizing tie) for each person in their network. A de-energizing relationships was coded as 1 if it was rated either as de-energizing or strongly de-energizing on the 5 point scale[3]. We calculated outgoing Freeman (1979) degree centrality scores for the de-energizing network which is a count of the number of de-energizing relationships using UCINET 6.433 (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002).

[3] We use this dichotomization as it corresponds to what has been used in prior literature that has incorporated negative network ties (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008; Labianca, Brass, & Gray, 1998; Parker, Gerbasi & Porath, 2013). In addition, we tested different potential dichotomizations which provided us with similar results (using the extremes of the scale 1 and 5, including the neutral point in either the positive scale or negative scale). Hence we use the accepted approach seen in the network literature. We considered using a comprehensive measure such as the political independence index (Smith, Lopez-Kidwell, Halgin, Labianca, Brass, & Borgatti; 2014), or negative Bonacich centrality (Bonacich 1987). However these measures would not have allowed us to differentiate the effects of energizing and de-energizing ties because they are measures of overall network centrality. Future studies should consider asking separate questions to determine energizing and de-energizing networks to avoid this confound as recommended by Cortina and DeShon (1988).

Control variables.[4] To rule out the concern that de-energizing relationships may be a consequence of poor performance, we control for prior performance (assessed eight months prior to our survey) (mean 3.53, SD .44).[5] To assess the effect of de-energizing relationships on performance over and above the effects of any neutral or positive relationships (Baldwin, Bedell, & Johnson, 1997; Labianca & Brass, 2006; Labianca et al., 1998), we controlled for the number of energizing relationships the respondent reports (i.e., relationships receiving a score of 4 or 5) and the number of neutral relationships the respondent reports (i.e., relationships receiving a score of 3) (mean 44.65, S.D. 26.98). The energy network was coded as 1 for ties that were rated either as energizing or strongly energizing. The neutral energy network was coded as 1 (e.g. 3 on the scale). In both cases we calculated outgoing Freeman degree centrality scores (Freeman, 1979) using UCINET 6.433 (Borgatti et al., 2002).

Finally, we controlled for how energizing each individual was reported to be by others in the network (i.e., what are termed incoming ties in network research) for each category: energizing (mean 32.21, S.D. 19.39), neutral energy (mean 44.59, S.D 11.01) and de-energizing (mean 6.51, S.D. 6.89). This allowed us to test how the participant's perceptions of his or her interactions are independent of how others viewed him or her.

Results: Study 1

We used linear regressions with robust standard errors to determine if de-energizing ties are related to performance (reported in Table 2). Model 1 examined our control variables. The

[4] We initially controlled for various demographic variables including organizational tenure (mean 6.27 years, SD 5.09), gender (32% female), and hierarchy (where 1= manager, 0 = individual contributor). These variables were not significant predictors of performance, and were thus removed from the model.

[5] In addition, we also assessed the effect of prior performance on de-energizing incoming (as assessed by others) and outgoing ties (as assessed by the participant) to control for the fact that prior performance may in fact be driving the perception of relationships. The results are presented in Appendix 1. We find that prior performance is a positive and significant predictor of energizing relationships (as perceived by both self and co-workers), but it is not associated with either neutral or de-energizing ties. This confirms that poor prior performance is not driving our findings.

number of co-workers who rated the participant as energizing was positively (B = .03, p < .05) related to job performance and the number of co-workers who rated the individual as de-energizing was negatively (B = -.03, p < .05) related to performance.

Model 2 added our variable of interest – the number of de-energizing relationships the participant reported in their network. We found a negative and significant relationship between perceptions of de-energizing relationships and performance (B = -.04, *p* < .05) indicating support for Hypothesis 1. Additionally, we find that the effect of perceptions of de-energizing relationships is significantly stronger and in the opposite direction for perceptions of energizing relationships, supporting prior research on negative interactions (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008; Parker et al., 2013).

In Study 1 we learned that having more de-energizing relationships was related to a lower level of performance. In Study 2 we replicate this finding as well as test if a person's sense of thriving can mitigate the negative effects of de-energizing relationships on job performance.

Method: Study 2

In Study 2, 535 senior associates and principals at a major management consulting firm were asked to complete a network survey, followed by a survey measuring thriving two weeks later. Performance data were collected by HR five months after the initial survey. We included the 439 who have data from the network survey and the HR performance assessment (82% of respondents). This is comparable to response rates of other network studies (e.g., Sparrowe et al., 2001). Non-respondents did not significantly differ from respondents with respect to gender, ethnicity, tenure, hierarchy or performance. Correlations and descriptive statistics are in Table 3.

The network measures were collected with a series of online name-generator prompts which asked respondents to identify the most important individuals to their work within the firm

(up to 50 individuals). The survey then employed a type-ahead functionality that allowed people to indicate names and then select from a name list of all employees. In this fashion we had unique identifiers for each person listed and were able to construct full network data matrices.

Performance ratings were generated through the annual employee evaluation process. Performance evaluations were based upon objective data collected on all consultants (e.g., billable hours and revenue production) as well as more subjective measures (e.g., knowledge contribution). This is consistent with Motowidlo and Kell's (2013) definition of work performance which focuses on the total expected value to the organization of the individual's discrete behaviors. Each person was evaluated by their immediate supervisor as well as relevant peers and superiors based on projects they had worked on during the year. Overall ratings were then established by the HR department and are reflective of the activities necessary for the organization to meet its own goals. Each individual was rated as either failing to meet expectations (10.2%), meeting expectations (67.9%) or exceeding expectations (21.9%).

De-energizing relationships. To measure de-energizing relationships, we used the same procedures reported in Study 1. We calculated outgoing Freeman degree centrality scores for de-energizing relationships (Freeman, 1979) using UCINET 6.433 (Borgatti et al., 2002).

Thriving was measured with ten questions validated by Porath and colleagues (2012) on a scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high) ($\alpha = .89$). Consistent with previous research (e.g., Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Niessen, Sonnentag, & Sach, 2012; Paterson et al., 2014), we used the mean of these items in our analyses.

Control variables. We control for organizational tenure (mean 8.19 years, SD 3.96), and hierarchy (35% of the sample are principals)[6]. We calculated a measure for the number of

[6] We initially controlled for gender (30% female), but it had no influence on the dependent variable and so we removed it from the final models.

energizing (mean 7.72, SD 10.0), neutral (energy) (mean 3.73, SD 3.75) and de-energizing relationships (mean 1.47, SD 0.94) as assessed by co-workers (i.e., incoming ties), repeating the procedure described in Study 1. We also calculated a count of the number of energizing (mean 9.07, S.D. 5.26) and neutral (energy) relationships (mean 4.36, S.D. 3.94) as reported by the participant (i.e., outgoing ties).

Results: Study 2

Due to the nature of our dependent variable, we initially estimated ordinal logistic regression models, but the Brant Test of Parallel Regression Assumption (Brant, 1990) indicated that our model did not meet the assumptions of an ordinal logistic regression.[7] To address this, we estimated a generalized logistic regression with a partial proportional odds model for ordinal logistic variables (where we first compared the failing to meet expectations category to the meeting and exceeding expectations categories and in the second model the failing to meet expectations and meeting expectations categories with the exceeding expectations category). This allowed us to relax the parallel lines assumption for several of our independent variables (most notably the de-energizing relationships as assessed by participant), and meet the assumptions of this model (Williams, 2006). These results allowed coefficients to vary for each level of the dependent variable if the assumption of parallel lines was not met. When the assumption was met, the effect remains the same at all levels of the dependent variable. Coefficients are interpreted in the same way as in binary or ordinal logistic regression: a positive value indicates that higher values of the dependent variable are more likely.

[7] While investigating the data it became clear that the main reason why the ordinal logistic regression model fails to meet the assumption of parallel lines is due to the effect of the de-energizing relationships. The effect for de-energizing relationships is not the same magnitude for those who fail to meet expectations compared to those who either meet or exceed expectations.

Logistic regression results are presented in Table 4. In Model 1 (using just our controls), we found that higher tenure is related to lower job performance and that the extent to which more co-workers found the respondent to be energizing was both positively and significantly related to performance. In Model 2 we added the effect of the number of de-energizing relationships the respondent reported. Consistent with Hypothesis 1 we found that more de-energizing relationships were negatively and significantly associated with performance (-.35, $p < .05$) (see the top half of Table 4), meaning that the more de-energizing relationships that the respondent had, the less likely he or she was to meet or exceed expectations. In addition, this further confirms that, at least at low levels of performance, negative interactions are stronger than positive interactions in terms of predicting performance. In limited dependent variable models such as the ones presented in Table 4, a variable's model coefficient is not equal to 'an explanatory variable's marginal effect— the effect of a unit change in an explanatory variable on the dependent variable' (Wiersema & Bowen, 2009: 681-682). As a result, to test our hypotheses we also examined the direction and significance of the marginal effect of de-energizing relationships on performance. With this supplementary analysis we found that the value of the marginal effect was negative and significant with the marginal effect computed at the mean value of all variables to be -0.02 ($p < 0.05$). This finding replicated our finding in Study 1: more de-energizing relationships were negatively related to job performance. More de-energizing relationships were not significantly associated with exceeding expectations (-.11, p = n.s., marginal effect = -.02, p = n.s.) (see the bottom half of Table 4). These results suggested that more de-energizing relationships were especially predictive of the lowest levels of job performance and less predictive of meeting expectations for job performance.

In order to test Hypothesis 2, Models 3 and 4 were estimated. In Model 3 we added the effect of thriving to the model. The effects from Model 2 held in Model 3. We also found that people with higher levels of thriving were likely to have higher levels of performance (.28, $p < .05$). Supplementary analysis indicated the direction and statistical significance of the marginal effect of thriving on performance was positive and significant, with the marginal effect computed at the mean value of all variables to be 0.08 ($p < 0.05$).

In Model 4, we added the interaction between de-energizing relationships and thriving and found that the effect of the number of de-energizing relationships maintained its direction and significance for those who fail to meet expectations compared to those who meet and exceed expectations. The interaction between thriving and de-energizing relationships was positive (.20, $p < 05$) for those who fail to meet performance expectations compared to those who meet or exceed expectations. The results indicate that thriving moderated the effect of the number of de-energizing relationships on failing to meet performance expectations compared to meeting or exceeding expectations, supporting Hypothesis 2.[8]

We also assessed the effect of the interaction as our model was estimated with a limited dependent variable (Wiersema & Bowen, 2009; Bowen, 2012). First, we computed and visualized the marginal effects of the interaction terms over meaningful changes in the values of the independent variables (Figures 1, 2 and 3) and also examined how the structural form of the nonlinear model as well as the moderation of the focal variable contribute to the overall moderation shown by the significant coefficients (Wiersema & Bowen, 2009).

Figure 1 shows that the more de-energizing relationships a person reported, the more thriving reduced the likelihood that the individual failed to meet expectations and, in turn,

[8] We tested for the possibility of a curvilinear relationship between de-energizing ties and performance. We did not find evidence of this relationship in study 1 or study 2.

increased the probability they either met or exceeded expectations. In Figure 2, we see that at lower levels of thriving and more de-energizing relationships, individuals had a lower probability of meeting expectations than those individuals with few or no de-energizing relationships. As the level of thriving increased, so did the probability of meeting expectations. At a certain point, for those with more de-energizing relationships, the likelihood of meeting expectations began to decrease. Figure 3 helps to explain this result among those who met expectations. Those individuals with more de-energizing relationships and higher levels of thriving were also more likely to exceed expectations. This is due to the fact that in this organization, principals (or those higher in the organization) were more likely to report a higher number of de-energizing relationships, higher levels of thriving, and higher performance evaluations (particularly more likely to exceed expectations). Second, we examined how the secondary (i.e., true) moderating effect, as well as the structural moderating effect (caused by the nonlinear nature of the model) contributed to the total moderating effect (Bowen, 2012). These analyses indicated that the secondary effect was positive and significant in our model, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Discussion

Across two studies, we found that de-energizing relationships were associated with decreased performance. Previous research describes how the lack of affective ties with others results in people losing out on resources and opportunities to learn (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008). We go one step further. In two field studies, we show that de-energizing relationships in organizations were associated with reduced performance. Our results suggest that de-energizing relationships were especially related to the lowest levels of job performance. As Labianca and Brass (2006) point out, unlike non-work situations, task interdependencies, reporting structures and work assignments can make it difficult to avoid interacting with de-energizers.

We extend theoretical work on negative ties (Labianca & Brass, 2006) by considering how a sense of thriving buffers people from de-energizing relationships. We found thriving buffered de-energizing relationships as it was associated with a reduction in failure to meet expectations, an increase in the probability of meeting expectations, and an increase in exceeding expectations (even for those with high numbers of de-energizing ties). As such, these findings hold important implications for the developing literature on human energy in organizations (Owens, Cameron, & Baker, 2011; Quinn et al., 2012).

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

The designs of both of our studies possess several strengths, including their over-time nature with ratings of performance as well the use of two populations to increase the generalizability of our findings. The study design also enabled us to address alternative network explanations for our results, including the effect of others' perceptions of whether the participant is an energizer or de-energizer, thereby allowing us to show that the effect of our key finding linking de-energizing relationships to performance is not merely due to how the respondent is viewed by others. We also controlled for both energizing and neutral relationships, thus examining the full range of perceptions an individual has of others.

Nonetheless, our research is not without limitations. We did not study different processes which may drive performance loses. Future research might examine the causes of negative behavior to illuminate the ways in which de-energizers affect the work of their coworkers. Specifically, how do constructs such as affect, and motivation mediate the effects of de-energizing relationships and performance? Learning more about other potential buffering mechanisms would also be useful. Conservation of resources theory suggests that material and social resources may be important buffers. While we control for one kind of social resource,

energizing relationships, future research might assess how overall social capital (Baker & Dutton, 2007) is a buffer. Resiliency (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003) may be another psychological resource to help people cope.

Second, effect sizes in this context were low, but this is to be somewhat expected as we are looking at the role of expressive dimensions of networks as opposed to instrumental ties that have been shown to matter for performance in prior network research (e.g., Sparrowe et al., 2001; Cross & Cummings, 2004)[9]. While research has extensively documented the positive ways in which relationships at work contribute to performance and well-being, our study is an important step in understanding the association between negative relationships and performance.

Third, de-energizing relationships are also likely to be more nuanced than we studied in this research. Specifically, we didn't ask about the frequency of interactions with the de-energizer or the work done with that person (e.g., type of task). Like other network researchers (e.g., Casciaro & Lobo, 2008), we note how our findings might play a greater or lesser role depending on the type of work being done. Future research might test some of these distinctions.

Management Implications

People might build up their immunity to de-energizing relationships by enhancing their thriving. If a person must work with a de-energizer, he or she might limit their interactions with that person and include others in the interactions that buffer the situation with more energy. They might also look for meaningful work that fulfils them, and contributes to their self-development (Spreitzer & Porath, 2012). Lilius (2012) and Beal and colleagues (2005) suggest that employees schedule daily activities in ways that balance resource requirements throughout the day to avoid

[9] Despite this effect size, a difference in 0.5 points or less in performance was tied to salary and career progression opportunities in both firms (Study 1 and 2). For example, in Study 2, for ratings between 3.0-4.0 (on their 5 point scale), a 0.5 point difference resulted in a 6.2% difference in raise (based on their salary). For those that are rated between 4.0-5.0, a 0.5 point difference resulted in a 9.1% raise.

rapid energy depletion. Energy management techniques (Fritz et al., 2011) are an effective means of bolstering oneself against the negative effects of de-energizing ties.

Given the destructive effects of de-energizing ties managers need to be aware of behaviors that occur in these interactions. Collecting 360 feedback or conducting a social network analysis can help identify issues (Parker et al., 2013). People that create energy exhibit a set of common behaviors (Cross & Parker, 2004). Organizations can alter the effect of de-energizers by recruiting, on-boarding, career planning, leadership development and performance management systems that focus on the importance of these behaviors. For example, a common de-energizing behavior is to criticize an idea early and to tie the critique too closely to the individual one is disagreeing with. People can be taught how to disagree productively in these situations and so move from being seen as a de-energizer to either a neutral or even positive colleague. De-energizers tend to criticize ideas and contributors with direct statements (i.e., "that won't work because…"). Mechanisms that teach and encourage these same people to air their ideas differently is important for their expertise to be utilized in a way that does not disengage others. A coach may solicit data from others, provide recommendations for change, and work to repair de-energizing ties.

Conclusion

Our studies reveal that de-energizing relationships are damaging to people's performance in organizations. We hope that our findings motivate individuals and managers to enhance the vitality and growth of employees to buffer the negative effects of de-energizers. Learning more about how perceived de-energizing relationships unfold and drive negative consequences in organizations represent rich areas for future research. Given the potential performance consequences, de-energizing relationships should not be ignored.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations in Study 1

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Performance	3.57	0.47	-						
2	Prior Performance	3.53	0.44	.73**	-					
3	Energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	32.21	19.39	.29**	.35**	-				
4	Neutral Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	44.59	11.01	-.09	-.10	.22**	-			
5	De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	6.51	6.89	-.35**	-.08	-0.02	.41**	-		
6	Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	32.21	20.26	0.11	.06	.49**	.23**	0.06	-	
7	Neutral Relationships (as assessed by participant)	44.65	26.98	-0.02	-.03	.47**	.37**	.34**	-0.13	-
8	De-Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	6.50	7.40	-.18*	.15*	.44**	.20*	.20*	.17*	.20*

Notes: N = 161

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 2
Results of Linear Regression, with Robust Standard Errors Analyses Predicting Performance

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Prior Performance	0.81**	0.07	0.74	0.79**	0.07	0.73
Energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	0.03*	0.01	0.11	0.02*	0.00	0.07
Neutral Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.02	0.01	0.07
De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	-0.03*	0.01	-0.10	-0.01	0.01	-0.04
Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
Neutral Relationships (as assessed by participant)	0.01	0.01	0.08	0.01	0.01	0.07
De-Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)				-0.04*	0.01	-0.12
Intercept	0.64	0.27		0.75	0.28	
R^2		0.50			0.59	
Adjusted R^2		0.45			0.50	
Δ in R^2					0.09*	

Notes: N = 161, all network variables were transformed (the square root of each variable was used in the regression).
*p < .05
**p < .01

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations in Study 2[10]

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Fails to Meet Expectations	0.10		-										
2	Meets Expectations	0.68		-.53**	-									
3	Exceeds Expectation	0.22		-.16**	-.75**	-								
4	Tenure Years	8.19	3.96	.14**	-.15**	.06	-							
5	Principals	0.35	0.48	.03	-.15**	.15**	.02	-						
6	Energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	7.72	10.00	-.05	-.22**	.29**	.17**	.43**	-					
7	Neutral Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	3.73	3.75	-.10	-.15**	.24**	.22**	.42**	.40**	-				
8	De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)	1.47	0.94	.05	-.10	.09	.11*	.27**	.25**	.31**	-			
9	Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	9.07	5.26	.02	-.11	.11*	.13**	.31**	.40**	.34**	.11*	-		
10	Neutral Relationships (as assessed by participant)	4.36	3.94	-.05	-.01	.05	.04	-.03	-.02	.09	.06	-.15**	-	
11	De-Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	1.40	0.85	.03	-.01	-.01	-.03	-.08	-.07	.02	.03	-.09	.15**	-
12	Thriving	5.78	0.86	-.14**	.03	.07	-.04	.24**	.25**	.11*	.01	.26**	-.11*	-.19**

Notes: N = 439
*p < .05
**p < .01

[10] The trends in means and correlations in study 2 differ considerably from study 1. This is an artifact of the method of data collection. In study 1, a roster method was used, where each individual had the opportunity to rate every other individual within the group, hence much higher numbers of all types of ties. In study 2 a name generator method was used, which results in much lower numbers and weaker correlations between the network variables. In order to test if this was a peculiarity of the two samples, we compared these results with 10 other samples (five roster method and five name generator method), and found consistent results across the samples.

Table 4

Results of Generalized Logistic Regression with Partial Proportional Odds Model for Ordinal Logistic Variables Predicting Performance

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Fails to Meet Expectations (Reference Category)								
Tenure Years	-.17*	.06	-.17**	.06	-.16*	.06	-.16*	.06
Principals	-.90+	.47	-1.09+	.61	-1.26*	.54	-1.29*	.54
Energizing Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	.34*	.14	.26*	.12	.17*	.08	.15*	.06
Neutral Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	.25	.16	.11	.19	.11	.18	.11	.19
De-energizing Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	-.05	.22	-.06	.24	-.06	.24	-.05	.20
Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	-.12	.16	-.11	.07	-.10	.07	-.10	.07
Neutral Relationships (as assessed by participant)	.07	.10	.07	.12	.07	.12	.07	.11
De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)			-.35*	.08	-.29*	.08	-.18*	.07
Thriving					.28*	.13	.21*	.06
De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant) X Thriving[a]							.20*	.08
Intercept	3.11	.75	3.62	0.75	2.62	.85	2.41	.85
Fails to Meet and Meets Expectations (Reference Category)								
Tenure Years	.00	.04	.01	.04	.01	.04	.01	.04
Principals	.16	.38	.22	.39	.19	.38	.19	.38
Energizing Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	.34*	.14	.26*	.12	.17*	.08	.15*	.06
Neutral Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	.24	.16	.11	.19	.11	.18	.11	.19
De-energizing Relationships (assessed by co-workers)	-.05	.22	-.06	.24	-.06	.24	-.05	.20
Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	-.12	.16	-.11	.07	-.10	.07	-.10	.07
Neutral Relationships (as assessed by participant)	.07	.10	.07	.12	.07	.12	.07	.11
De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)			-.11	.06	-.11	.06	-.11	.06
Thriving					.28*	.13	.21*	.06
De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant) X Thriving[a]							.20*	.08
Intercept	-2.22	.56	-2.19	.74	-2.76	.69	-3.40	.99
-2 Log Likelihood	-277.94		-274.24		-269.82		-257.25	
Chi-Square	34.32**		44.69**		49.16**		50.25*	
Pseudo R^2	.06		.08		.09		.12	

Notes: N = 439, [a] Interaction terms are mean-centered to reduce multi-collinearity. All network variables were transformed (the square root of each variable was used in the regression).

+ p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01

Figure 1
Failing to Meet Expectations: Interaction Effect Between De-energizing Relationships and Thriving

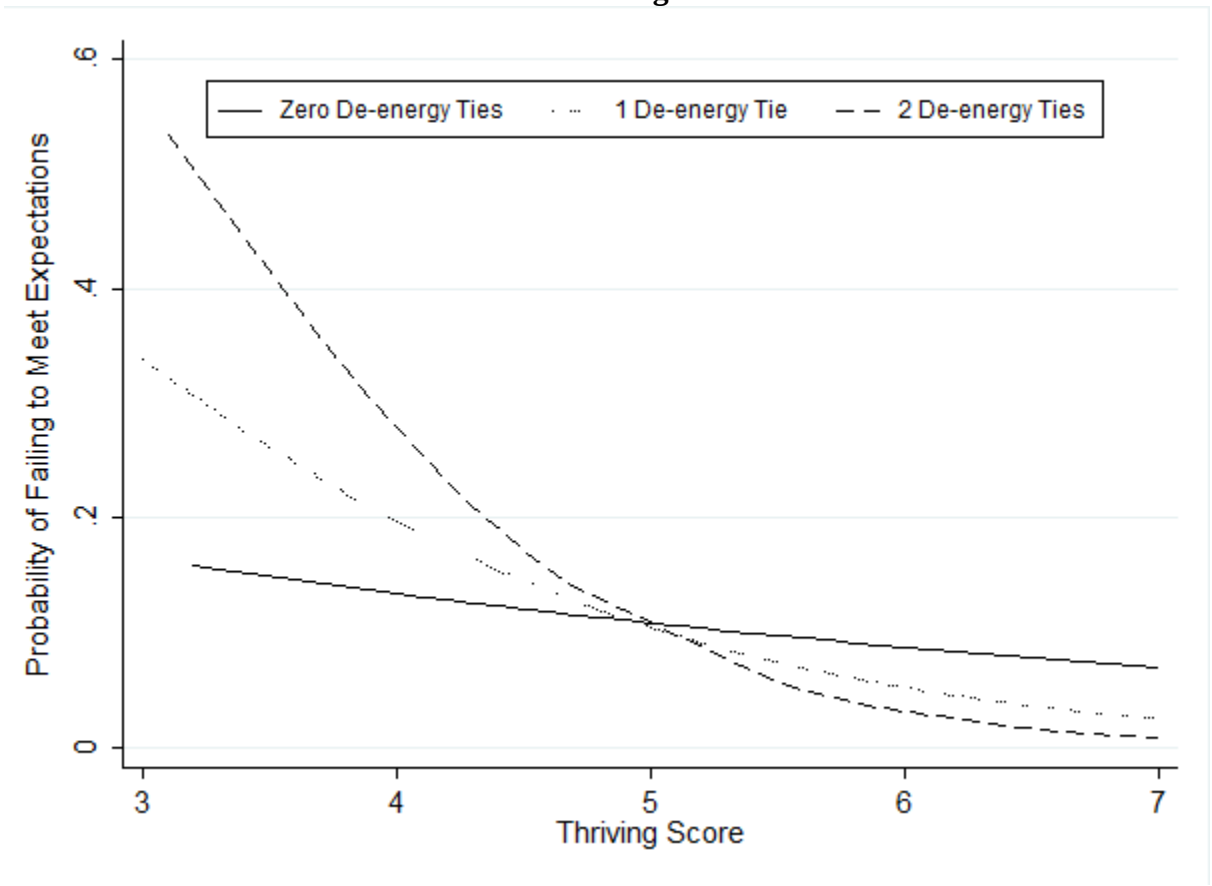


Figure 2
Meeting Expectations: Interaction Effect Between De-energizing Relationships and Thriving

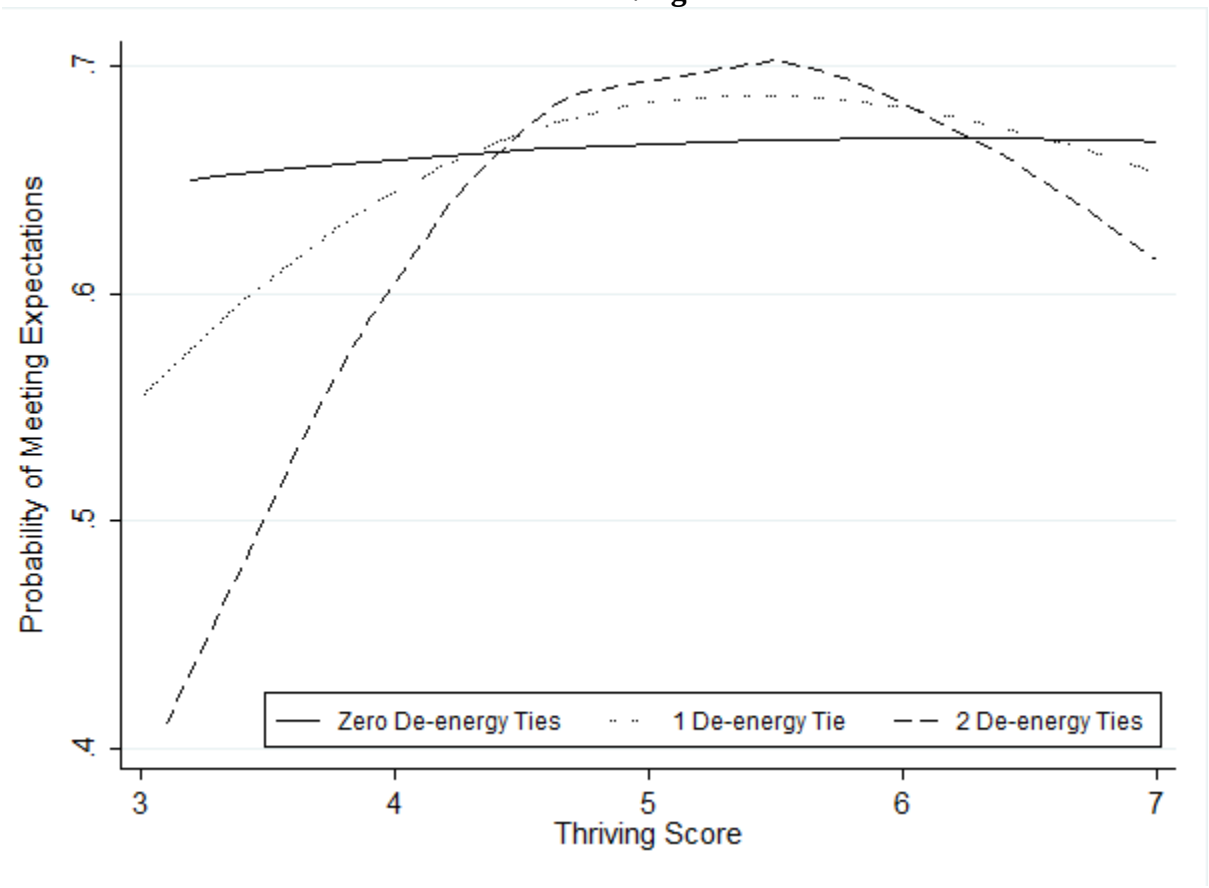
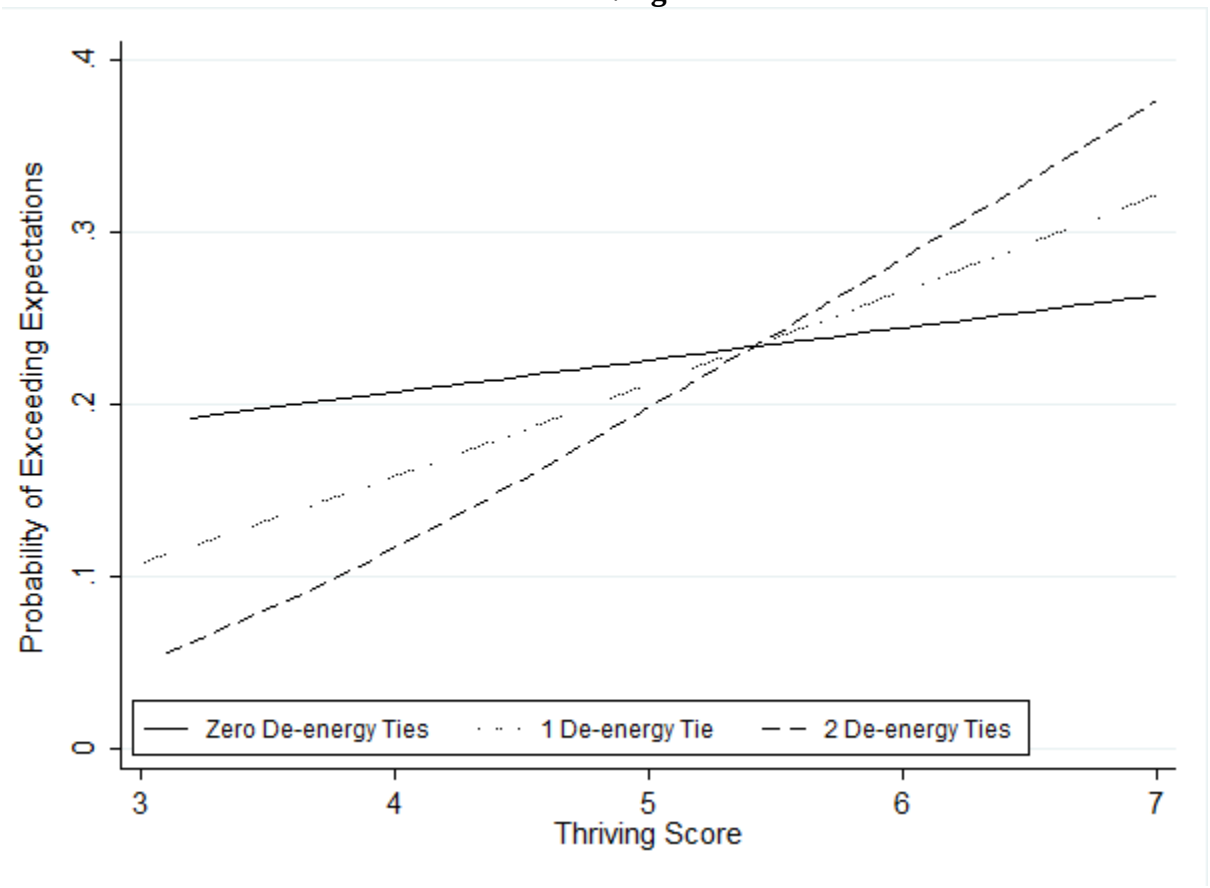


Figure 3
Exceeding Expectations: Interaction Effect Between De-energizing Relationships and Thriving



Appendix 1. Poisson Regressions Estimating the Effects of Prior Performance on Perceived Relationships

	Energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)		Neutral Relationships (assessed by co-workers)		De-energizing Relationships (as assessed by co-workers)		Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)		Neutral Relationships (as assessed by participant)		De-Energizing Relationships (as assessed by participant)	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Female	.28*	.07	-.06	.08	-.49	.29	.04	.05	.02	.06	.33	.19
Tenure Years	.00	.01	.03*	.01	.06	.04	.02*	.01	-.01	.01	.02	.03
Managers	1.03**	.09	.52*	.12	.75*	.35	.11	.08	-.01	.11	-.98	.53
Prior Performance	.16*	.07	.16	.08	.49	.27	.17**	.05	-.02	.06	-.09	.20
Intercept	.81	.18	.36	.22	-2.89	.74	1.59	0.12	1.64	.16	-.74	.51
Log likelihood	-583.97		-506.56		-158.72		-732.11		-745.73		-216.05	
Pseudo R^2	.17		.04		.05		.02		.01		.02	

Notes: N = 161
*p <.05
**p<.01