

1-1-2016

## Thriving in the Political Sport Arena: LMX as a Mediator of the Political Skill– Career Success Relationship

Marshall Magnusen

Jun Woo Kim

Follow this and additional works at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm>



Part of the [Business Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Magnusen, Marshall and Kim, Jun Woo (2016) "Thriving in the Political Sport Arena: LMX as a Mediator of the Political Skill– Career Success Relationship," *Journal of Applied Sport Management*. Vol. 8 : Iss. 3.

<https://doi.org/10.18666/JASM-2016-V8-I3-6456>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm/vol8/iss3/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Volunteer, Open Access, Library Journals (VOL Journals), published in partnership with The University of Tennessee (UT) University Libraries. This article has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Applied Sport Management* by an authorized editor. For more information, please visit <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm>.

# Thriving in the Political Sport Arena

## *LMX as a Mediator of the Political Skill– Career Success Relationship*

Marshall Magnusen

Jun Woo Kim

### Abstract

Organizational politics, be it in sport organizations or other business contexts, is an unavoidable aspect of work and life. Further, some individuals are better than others at navigating the political arena and advancing their careers. It is therefore important to understand what characteristics those individuals possess and how exactly those characteristics lead to desirable career outcomes. This study progresses the organizational behavioral sciences forward by examining the mediation effects of leader-member exchange (LMX) in the relationships between intern political skill and four career-related outcomes (career satisfaction, perceived external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness). A total of 201 sport management student subjects were obtained. A bootstrapping method estimated with structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the mediation effects. The results of the study show that all the hypothesized mediation effects were indeed supported. Therefore, we concluded that the mediated paths of political skill through LMX to support career-success outcomes were supported. These results will hopefully stimulate continued interest in the individual “skills” and intervening ways through which aspiring sport professionals can achieve success in their internships (and subsequent employment) and current sport professionals can attain beneficial career-related outcomes.

**Keywords:** *internship, interpersonal relationships, organizational politics, satisfaction, social effectiveness*

---

**Marshall Magnusen** is an assistant professor in the School of Education at Baylor University.  
**Jun Woo Kim** is an assistant professor of Sport Management in the Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, & Physical Education at The College at Brockport, State University of New York. Please send correspondence to Marshall Magnusen, [Marshall\\_Magnusen@baylor.edu](mailto:Marshall_Magnusen@baylor.edu)

The workplace is often complex in nature. Many organizations are composed of multifaceted social systems in which individual members and groups compete for a finite supply of resources, rewards, and career advancement opportunities (Burns, 1961). The competition for resources, both by individuals and groups, has been referred to as organizational politics: “a subjective state in which organizational members perceive themselves or others as intentionally seeking selfish ends in an organizational context when such ends are opposed to those of others” (Gandz & Murray, 1980, p. 248). Organizational politics tend to be heavily influenced by those who control the resources that organizational members require (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This necessitates that those who need resources—either for personal or organizational ends—engage in frequent social interactions (political behaviors) with those who control resource thus making such exchanges a type of political relationship because of the innate resource interdependence of the interaction (Astley & Sachdeva, 1984).

The struggle for resources inherent within organizations, along with the corresponding political behaviors practiced by organizational members to acquire resources, led Mintzberg (1985) to characterize organizations as political arenas. Sport organizations, no differently than businesses in other industries, are political (Horrow & Swatek, 2011; Magnusen, Kim, & Perrewé, 2014a). College coaches compete against each other for coveted recruits. Sport teams vie for resources within their own athletic department. Professional sport organizations compete against rival sport organizations within their communities for a greater share of the market. The political arena exists in sport, and for many sport management professionals, this organizational reality may first be directly experienced during an internship.

The internship, which often serves as a culminating experience of a degree plan, is an essential part of a student’s educational experience and professional development (Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Odio, Sagas, & Kerwin, 2014). Internships can help students put theory into practice, knowledge into action, and propel them into an exciting new chapter of their life and career. However, if sport organizations are indeed political arenas, then in order for an intern to “survive” in the arena, they must possess the necessary social and political acuties required for interpersonal effectiveness (Jones, 1990). Moreover, interns must be able to use those skills to develop positive relationships with the multitude of individuals in the workplace they must rely on for resources and support so that they can gain more opportunities to use their knowledge, skills, and abilities to accomplish personal and organizational goals (Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé, Brouer, & Douglas, 2007; Pfeffer, 2010).

Interns’ relationships with their supervisors (leaders) often provide the means through which work is accomplished and their individual and organizational goals are achieved. However, while much attention has been paid to leadership, its outcomes, and the components of interpersonal relationships and team exchanges

in the workplace, few studies have examined why certain individuals in the workplace are better able than others at developing meaningful relationships with their supervisors and, as a product of their relationships, achieve a greater degree of career success. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is two-fold.

The first purpose is to explore the direct effect of a specific social effectiveness characteristic (political skill) on interns' leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships with their internship supervisors. However, social effectiveness alone may not be enough for interns to productively navigate their political arenas and achieve career success. There are likely to be several intervening variables that help explain just how social skills contribute to career success. Interns' relationships with their immediate supervisors, for example, represent one of the most instrumental social networks they will form in the workplace. Thus, a second purpose is to explore how LMX mediates the relationship between intern political skill and four career-related outcomes (career satisfaction, perceived external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness) because it is possible that political skill will not be advantageous absent the formation of high quality LMX relationships.

### **Research Model and Hypothesis Development**

Several relationships are proposed in this study. The individual characteristic of political skill is investigated in relation to intern-supervisor LMX. From there, the career success implications of political skill are explored through the mediating effect of LMX. Politically skilled interns should be better equipped to develop high-quality LMX with their supervisors, which then should lead to improved perceptions of career-related outcomes (career satisfaction, external marketability, life satisfaction, and work effectiveness).

In developing our research model and hypotheses, we first looked to LMX theory. Next, we considered the role social influence and social exchange theories play in the development and furtherance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. LMX theory, which was originally referred to as Vertical Dyad Linking Theory (VDL; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975), describes in-group/out-group dynamics in the workplace that stem in part from the interpersonal exchanges between supervisors and subordinates. More specifically, LMX has been conceptualized as a four step cognitive-behavioral process (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). The four steps include (1) initial interaction, (2) leader delegation, (3) member behavior and delegation, and (4) leader's attributions for member behaviors. The first step refers to the initial interaction between a supervisor (leader) and a subordinate. The second step explains how, after forming an impression of a subordinate, the supervisor will delegate responsibilities and tasks to the subordinate based on the supervisor's perceptions of the subordinate's knowledge, skill level, and ability. The third step describes how the subordinate perceives the tasks assigned by the supervisor. The final step explains how a subordinate's amiability and performance is evaluated by a supervisor.

These steps capture the essence of what LMX theory suggests. Social exchanges take place between supervisors and subordinates in the workplace, and from these exchanges, supervisors and subordinates develop relationships of varying quality through the process of role assignment and work expectations. The quality of these exchanges will determine the individuals who are part of the in-group and the individuals who are part of the out-group. Those with high LMX are likely viewed by their supervisors as being more capable and likeable. Thus, they will be given greater access to key organizational resources as well as be assigned more salient roles and task. Those with low LMX are likely to be viewed by their supervisors as being less capable and likeable. As a result, they will have diminished access to key resources as well as be assigned less important roles and tasks (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

In this study, LMX is investigated as an outcome of political skill and a mediator between intern political skill and four different career-related outcomes. Social exchange and social influence theories contribute to the creation and advancement of LMX relationships generally and can explain how the social effectiveness construct of political skill may lead to subordinate career success through LMX relationships specifically. Social exchange theory predicts social relationships to be based on the motivational investment and anticipated gains perceived between exchange partners. According to Meeker (1971), altruism, competition, group gain, rationality, and status attainment direct social exchange processes. In terms of rationality, for example, interns' interactions may be guided by thoughts about how, through high-quality social exchanges, they will better be able to achieve personal and/or organization goals and objectives.

Social influence theory, though concerned with interpersonal interactions for the sake of positive outcomes, differs from social exchange theory in its focus on the characteristics that enable some individuals to influence others, the manner in which influence attempts are executed, and the outcomes of social influence attempts (Forgas & Williams, 2001; Levy, Collins, & Nail, 1998). In short, some interns may use influence behaviors to develop and advance social exchanges with their supervisor so that they can develop strong LMX relationships and reap the advantageous individual and organizational rewards that result from a high-quality relationship with their supervisor. Political skill is a social effectiveness construct that is linked to career success because it enables individuals to influence and develop substantive relationships with subordinates, peers, and superiors in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2007; Todd, Harris, Harris, & Wheeler, 2009). Social exchange theory offers a deeper explanation as to why interns may seek to develop LMX relationships while social influence theory, operationalized via political skill, helps clarify why certain interns may be better than others at developing good LMX relationships.

### Political Skill and LMX

As part of the study of politics and political behavior in the organizational sciences, political skill has been 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 et al., 2005, p. 127). Political skill represents a comprehensive configuration of cognitive-affective-behavioral social effectiveness competencies that, more explicitly, consists of social astuteness, networking ability, interpersonal influence, and apparent sincerity dimensions. Politically skilled individuals are socially astute; they possess high self-awareness along with being a keen observer of others. They also display interpersonal influence; that is, they have an unassuming and convincing personal style that often allows them to exert influence over subordinates, peers, and even superiors. Individuals with political skill also possess networking ability in that they have a penchant for identifying and developing diverse contact groups as well as setting up effective coalitions and alliances in the workplace. Lastly, politically skilled individuals possess apparent sincerity; they are able to convince those around them that they are authentic and sincere in their words and deeds regardless of whether or not they have ulterior motives (Ferris et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2007).

Metatheoretically, political skill incorporates intrapsychic processes (effects on self), interpersonal processes (effects on others), and group-level processes (effects on groups and organizations). Interpersonal exchanges between supervisors and subordinates will take place in the work-place according to LMX theory. The quality of these exchanges will determine the individuals who are part of the in-group and the individuals who are part of the out-group. Subordinates with high LMX with their supervisors (superiors) will be more likely to experience an in-group relationship whereas those individuals with low LMX will be likely to experience an out-group relationship (Graen et al., 1982; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Therefore, because of the relational elements of LMX and the social exchange and influence nature of political skill, individuals who are highly politically skilled should be better able to develop effective relationships with their supervisors than individuals who lack political skill.

Theoretical discussions, such as those offered by Ferris et al. (2007), have concluded that political skill should have a significant impact on career success. Several empirical studies have shown subordinate political skill to be positively related to the effectiveness of subordinates’ relationships with their supervisor. Politically skilled subordinates, for example, have reported more frequent and high quality exchanges with their supervisors, which then resulted in greater supervisor reward recommendations (for the subordinates) and greater dependence on the subordinate by the supervisor (Shi, Liu, Johnson, & Wang, 2013; Wei, Liu, Chen, & Wu, 2010).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Intern political skill will positively affect intern-supervisor LMX.

### **LMX as Mediator between Political Skill and Career-Related Outcomes**

Considerable research has been conducted on LMX over the past several decades. The aggregate body of scholarship largely points to high-quality LMX relationships being positively related to beneficial individual outcomes in the workplace. Individuals experiencing high-quality relational exchanges with their supervisor are more likely to have access to them as well as access to crucial resources that can help them better perform their job (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). High LMX is also likely to result in subordinates experiencing enhanced levels of career success, such as more positive performance evaluations and increased promotability (Wang, Law, & Chen, 2008).

Highly politically skilled individuals are socially astute; they know how to correctly interpret their social situations and behavior in ways that appropriate for a given context (Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, & Ferris, 2005). Individuals possessing political skill also excel at interpersonal exchanges, developing new and large networks of friends and professional contacts, and conveying to others they are honest, forthright, and willing to be a part of a team or organization (Ferris et al., 2007; Perrewé, Ferris, Frink, & Anthony, 2000). Even though political skill can directly lead to career success (Todd et al., 2009), high LMX relationships between subordinates and their supervisors may provide greater opportunities for politically skilled individuals to use their abilities to build relationships and gain access to key resources required for them to experience enhanced perceptions of career success (Wei, Liu, Chen, & Wu, 2010).

Herein, the benefits of political skill through LMX are examined in terms four specific career-related outcomes: career satisfaction, external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness. LMX offers one possible way to explain how exactly interns' levels of political skill facilitate the advancement of their careers via the aforesaid outcomes. In short, politically skilled individuals should have more support and access to organizational resources because they have positive relationships with their supervisors. They also should gain more opportunities to use their social skills to influence their supervisors in ways that will benefit their careers (Ferris et al., 2005; Todd et al., 2009).

Career satisfaction is a widely used indicator for measuring career success. It pertains to the level of satisfaction individuals "derive from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their careers, including pay, advancement, and developmental opportunities" (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995, p. 487). Life satisfaction is another measure of career success. It refers to a "global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his [sic] chosen criteria" (Shin & Johnson, 1978, p. 478). That is, life satisfaction captures a favorable attitude of one's life in general rather than an

evaluation of current feelings about a particular moment in time. Political skill is anticipated to have a positive association with both of these variables when supported by a high quality relationship between the intern and the intern's supervisor (Breland, Treadway, Duke, & Adams, 2007; Volmer, Niessen, Spurk, Linz, & Abele, 2011).

Politically skilled individuals should be able to form a high-quality relationship with their supervisor (Breland et al., 2007; Ferris et al., 2005). Good quality LMX relationships often lead to more resource- and information-based support for subordinates (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001b; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999). Such support should make work and life in general more satisfying for subordinates (Jiang & Klein, 2000; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004). To illustrate, interns with high-quality LMX relationships are expected to have greater access to various forms of support (e.g., resources) that will increase the likelihood of work productivity and goal achievement. That sort of relational dynamic (and the corresponding benefits) should lead to job satisfaction (Han, 2010; Maier & Brunstein, 2001). It should also lead to life satisfaction because perceptions of being valued, accepted, and supported (i.e., the leader invests in the work relationships) in the workplace is associated with an individual's overall sense of well-being (Illies, Dimotakis, & De Pater, 2010). There are also "natural satisfactions to be found in the process of exercising one's competencies to move toward desired outcomes" (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999, p. 484). Thus, political skill through LMX should lead sport management interns to perceive high levels of career and life satisfaction.

External marketability and perceived effectiveness are two additional measures of career success used in this study. The former term refers to a general belief or sense that an individual possesses about his or his value to other potential employers (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). Individuals perceiving themselves as being competitive in the open job market possess a high degree of perceived external marketability. The latter term pertains to individuals' self-rated work performance (Magnusen et al., 2014a). In the context of the present study, it refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as effective workers while interning for a sport organization.

Politically skilled individuals tend to have great confidence in their abilities to perform assigned tasks at work. Individuals who are politically skilled are also more likely to develop key relational alliances and networks (e.g., LMX) that result in greater career success and mobility than individuals deficient in political skill (Ferris et al., 2005; Thompson, 2005). High-quality LMX relationships can lead to politically skilled individuals being assigned more challenging and noteworthy tasks, having greater access to key resources needed to accomplish those tasks in an efficient and effective manner, being given positive performance evaluations, and receiving more career-related support (Sparrow & Liden, 2005; Thibodeaux & Lower, 1996; Todd et al., 2009). So, by way of LMX, politically skilled interns



should perceive themselves as effective workers because the LMX dynamic enhances the existing strength of their confidence in their abilities to complete tasks and it improves their perceptions of how effectively they are performing assigned work tasks. Political skill via LMX should also improve interns' perceptions of external marketability because politically skilled individuals possess the necessary social skills to facilitate and maintain productive work relationships that then can be leveraged to improve career opportunities and prospects for success outside of current places of employment (Todd et al., 2009).

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H<sub>2a</sub>**: LMX will mediate the link between intern political skill and intern perceptions of career satisfaction.

**H<sub>2b</sub>**: LMX will mediate the link between intern political skill and intern perceptions of external marketability.

**H<sub>2c</sub>**: LMX will mediate the link between intern political skill and intern perceptions of life satisfaction.

**H<sub>2d</sub>**: LMX will mediate the link between intern political skill and intern perceptions of work effectiveness.

## Data and Methodology

### Participants and Procedures

Subjects were undergraduate students at multiple large universities in the southeastern United States who had completed their required internship/practical experience (minimum of 13 weeks, 40 hours per week). The sample was drawn by convenience. A convenience sample was appropriate because the primary goal of this study was to test the initial idea of how LMX mediates the link between political skill and career-related outcome variables, not to generalize the findings to a broader population.

Data were collected from the undergraduate students within two weeks of the completion of their internship/practicum experience. A face-to-face self-administered mode was used to collect the data. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, neither the names of the participants nor any identifying information were recorded. Also, to identify possible mindless responses, a screening question was placed half-way through the survey questionnaire to mitigate programmed responses. The item reads, "Please do not answer this question if you are paying attention to this survey." We obtained serviceable questionnaires from 201 of 237 students, for a usable response rate of 85%. The sample was 30% female ( $N = 60$ ) and 70% male ( $N = 141$ ). Of the respondents, 65% were Caucasian, followed by African American (19%), Hispanic (9%), Asian (4%), and multiracial (3%).

## Measure Development and Assessment

The survey questionnaire included six main research constructs corresponding to political skill, LMX, career satisfaction, perceived external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness.

**Political skill.** We used 18 items ( $\alpha = .93$ ) from the Political Skill Inventory (PSI; Ferris et al., 2005) to assess political skill (i.e., social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity). The items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Disagree” (7). The full 18 items of the multidimensional scale are provided in Table 2 along with the results of the measurement model.

**Leader-member exchange.** To assess the strength of the intern-supervisor interpersonal relationship, seven items ( $\alpha = .86$ ) were used from Graen and Uhl-Bien’s (1995) LMX-7 scale. The LMX scale was used to measure subordinate perceptions of the exchange quality with their supervisor (leader). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with higher scores representing higher quality relational exchanges. For example, “Not a Bit” (1) to “A Great Deal” (5) and “Rarely” (1) to “Very Often” (5).

**Career satisfaction.** To assess career satisfaction, we adopted four items ( $\alpha = .80$ ) from a five item scale by Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990). The following item was not used because of the undergraduate sport management intern sample: “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income.” Career satisfaction was used to measure an individual’s overall satisfaction with his or her career thus far. All four items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from “Not At All” (1) to “Entirely” (7).

**Perceived external marketability.** Three items ( $\alpha = .74$ ) were adapted from the Perceived External Marketability scale (PEM; Eby et al., 2003). The PEM was used to evaluate the extent to which an intern viewed himself or herself as being attractive to other sport employers and having good career prospects. All three items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from “Not At All” (1) to “Entirely” (7).

**Life satisfaction.** Two items ( $\alpha = .89$ ) were adopted from the Life Satisfaction scale by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffith (1985) and three items ( $\alpha = .82$ ) were adopted from a general life satisfaction scale used by Schmitt and Bedeian (1982). Both of these scales measure an individual’s overall satisfaction with his or her life, whether the conditions of life are excellent, and the extent to which an individual is in good spirits and finds happiness in life. All five items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Disagree” (7).

**Perceived effectiveness.** Two items ( $\alpha = .84$ ) from a self-rated recruiting performance measure developed by Magnusen et al. (2014a) were adapted to evaluate intern perceptions of work performance effectiveness. The items were adjusted to reflect internship performance instead of recruiting performance. For example,

“Overall, to what extent do you feel you performed your recruiting job the way you would like it to be performed?” was changed to “Overall, to what extent do you feel you performed your internship/job the way you would like it to be performed?” A third, reverse scored item, was created for this study by the researchers. All three items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from “Not At All” (1) to “Entirely” (7).

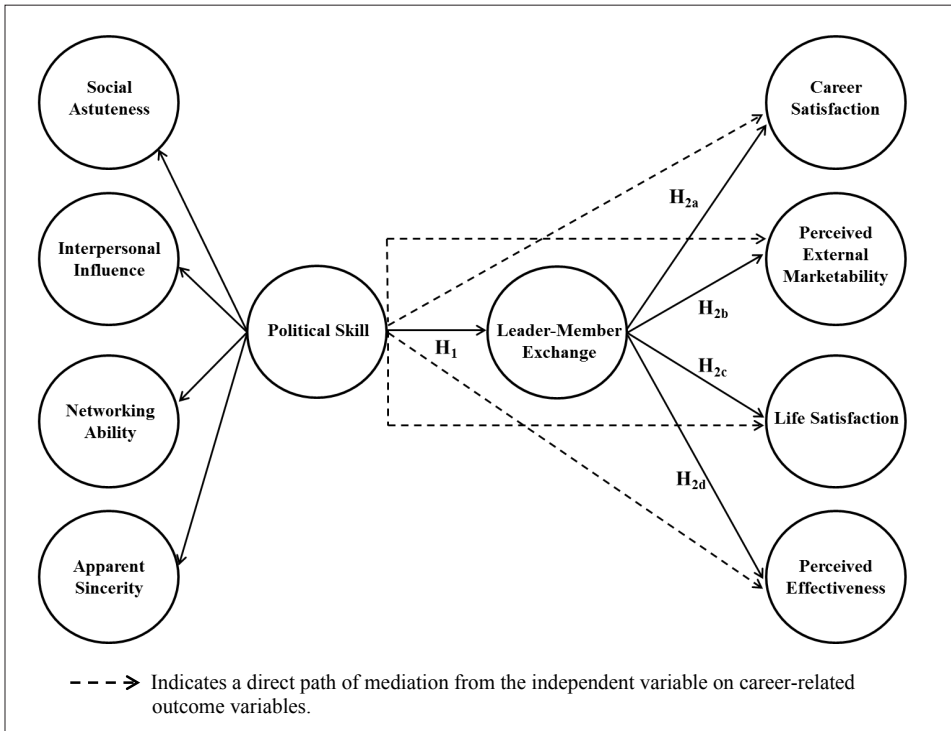
### Data Analysis

**Measurement model.** We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using M-plus 6.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010) to validate the posited relations of the observed variables and the underlying constructs in the measurement model. Data screening preceded conducting the CFA. To examine linearity of the variables, all pairs of scatter plots were tested using SPSS 18.0 (SPSS, 2010). Both univariate and multivariate normality of the variables were evaluated with the skewness and kurtosis through PRELIS 2.52 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996).

Goodness-of-fit indices used to assess overall fit of the model (Kline, 2005) included: (a) model chi-square, (b) the Steiger-Lind root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990), (c) the Bentler comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), and (d) the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR). For the CFA, average variance extracted (AVE) was utilized to examine the amount of variance explained by the latent construct relative to the amount of variance due to measurement error (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**Structural model.** To examine the hypothesized relationships between latent constructs, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed using M-plus 6.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Figure 1 provides an illustration of the structural model examined in this study. The SEM was used to test the mediation effect of LMX in the relationship between political skill and career-related outcome variables, such as career satisfaction, perceived external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness. To test the mediation effects between latent constructs we employed a bootstrapping method due to its greater statistical power compared to other methods such as Baron and Kenny’s (1986) Sobel *z*-test (see Magnusen, Kim, & Kim, 2012, for a review).

It has been observed that Sobel’s method leads to high Type I error rates and low statistical power in small samples (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Accordingly, MacKinnon et al. (2004) suggested bootstrap data resampling procedures as an alternative to Sobel’s method. As a result, a bootstrapping method estimated with SEM was used to test the mediation effects.



**Figure 1.** Structural Model of the Relationships between Intern Political Skill, LMX, and Career-related Outcomes.

## Results

### Common Method Biases

To control the error variance due to the method of measurement, the order of the survey items was counterbalanced and kept as logically as possible from general to specific questions (i.e., a funneling procedure). We also conducted Harman's single-factor test to diagnose the impact of common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

We conducted the CFA with one general factor, and the results showed that the single-factor model did not fit the data well [(S-B  $\chi^2$  ( $df$ ) = 2950.92 (741), S-B  $\chi^2/df$  = 3.98,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .83; RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .03]. The result of the chi-square difference test with S-B correction was 978.06 with 36 degree of freedom. The S-B  $\chi^2$  dif indicates that the simpler model (i.e., Harman's single-factor model,  $df$  = 741, correction factor = 1.04,  $\chi^2$  ML = 3058.09) does not statistically fit better than the complex model (i.e., original measurement model,  $df$  = 705, correction factor = 1.02,  $\chi^2$  ML = 1660.36). The original measurement model is preferred after comparing the critical value of chi-square with  $df$  = 36 and  $\alpha$  = .05. Therefore, common method bias should not be a concern in this study.

### Evaluation of Assumptions

Both univariate and multivariate normality tests showed that the observed variables were not normally distributed. In the univariate normality test, for instance, the distribution for 37 of 39 observed variables was significantly ( $p < .01$ ) skewed, with  $z$  scores ranging from -6.09 to -1.24. The distributions for 8 of 39 observed variables also indicated significant kurtosis, with  $z$  scores ranging from -3.75 to 2.94. In terms of multivariate normality for continuous variables,  $z$  scores for the skewness and kurtosis were 20.01 ( $p < .01$ ) and 9.53 ( $p < .01$ ), respectively. Thus, both univariate and multivariate normality assumptions were violated. To adjust for multivariate nonnormality, Satorra-Bentler (S-B  $\chi^2$ ) scaling method (Satorra & Bentler, 2001) was used.

### Measurement Model

Convergent validity was supported by all factor loadings being significant ( $p < .01$ ) and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2005). The psychometric properties of measures were adequate by all Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding .70 (Hair et al.; Nunnally, 1978), composite reliability coefficients above .70 (Hair et al.) and AVE values exceeding .50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Table 1 provides the correlations among the variables, means, and standard deviations. High correlations among latent variables (e.g., in this study ranging from .89 to .96) may cause multicollinearity, which leads to inaccurate estimates of coefficients and standard errors. However, when measures are highly reliable, high levels of multicollinearity can be tolerated (Grewal, Cote, & Baumgartner, 2004). Thus, high correlations among the latent exogenous constructs are at acceptable levels in this study.

As a follow-up test, we conducted a unity test (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) to establish discriminant validity. A series of chi-square difference tests was conducted for one pair of factors at a time. The results of the unity test showed the models in which the factor correlations are not constrained to unity have a significantly lower S-B  $\chi^2$  value than the constrained models. Therefore, we conclude that latent constructs are not perfectly correlated and that discriminant validity is established.

After conducting the initial CFA, one item of networking ability was removed due to the low factor loadings ( $\lambda < .70$ ). The overall fit indices for the CFA met commonly accepted standards [S-B  $\chi^2$  ( $df$ ) = 1621.67 (705), S-B  $\chi^2/df$  = 2.30,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .02]. The ratio of chi-square to degree of freedom indicated good fit (S-B  $\chi^2/df < 3$ ). The RMSEA value in the range of .08 to .10 represented a reasonable error of approximation (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The rule of thumb for the CFI is that values greater than .90 indicate good fit of the model (Hu & Bentler, 1999; McDonald & Ho, 2002). When values of the SRMR are less than .10, it is considered favorable (Kline, 2005). The hypothesized measurement model exceeded the more stringent cut-off value for a well-fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999), implying that our hypothesized measure-

**Table 1***Correlations among Latent Variables, Means, and Standard Deviations*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. SA	1.00								
2. IN	.96	1.00							
3. NA	.97	.96	1.00						
4. AS	.90	.93	.89	1.00					
5. LMX	.91	.90	.94	.84	1.00				
6. CS	.93	.91	.94	.84	.94	1.00			
7. PEM	.91	.89	.92	.82	.93	.96	1.00		
8. LS	.92	.90	.93	.84	.93	.93	.93	1.00	
9. PE	.90	.89	.92	.84	.95	.93	.91	.91	1.00
Mean	5.03	5.22	4.95	5.52	3.70	5.13	5.07	5.51	5.03
<i>SD</i>	1.36	1.44	1.47	1.34	1.04	1.53	1.33	1.25	1.52

*Note.* SA = Social Astuteness; IN = Interpersonal Influence; NA = Networking Ability; AS = Apparent Sincerity; LMX = Leader-Member Exchange; CS = Career Satisfaction; PEM = Perceived External Marketability; LS = Life Satisfaction; PE = Perceived Effectiveness; *SD* = Standard Deviation. Correlations among all latent variables were statistically significant at 0.5% level.

ment model adequately accounted for the covariance matrices of the data from the sample. The results of the measurement model are reported in Table 2.

### Structural Model

The resulting overall fit measures (see Figure 1) indicated that our model is a plausible representation of the structures underlying the empirical data [(S-B  $\chi^2$  (*df*) = 1706.76 (726), S-B  $\chi^2$ /*df* = 2.35,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .03]. The results reported in Table 3 indicate that LMX played an important role in the relationship between political skill and four different career-related outcome variables.

All five research hypotheses ( $H_1$ — $H_{2d}$ ) were supported, with parameter estimates significant at least at the 1% error level and in the expected direction (see Table 3). Political skill had a significant positive influence on LMX, which is indicated by the significant standardized path coefficient ( $\gamma = .95$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and bootstrap estimate ( $\gamma = .68$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ). As a result,  $H_1$  was supported.

The main hypotheses of interest ( $H_{2a}$  through  $H_{2d}$ ) are that LMX will be a significant mediator of the relationship between political skill and career-related outcome variables (career satisfaction, perceived external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness). In addition to the Sobel method, confidence intervals were computed with the bootstrap percentile method as well as the bias-corrected bootstrap method. We requested 1,000 bootstrap samples, drawn by default with replacement from the full data set of 201 cases. Based on Mallinckrodt Abraham, Wei, and Russell's (2006) suggestion, 95% confidence intervals were requested to conduct both the percentile and bias-corrected bootstrap methods.

**Table 2**  
*Summary Results for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)*

Scale	Items	$\lambda$	2 <sup>nd</sup> $\lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Political Skill	<b>Social Astuteness</b>					
	I understand people very well.	.90	.98	.95	.95	.79
	I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.	.90				
	I have good intuition or “savvy” about how to present myself to others.	.94				
	I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others.	.94				
	I pay close attention to peoples’ facial expressions.	.75				
	<b>Interpersonal Influence</b>					
	I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me.	.94	.97	.97	.97	.88
	I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others.	.93				
	It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people.	.95				
	I am good at getting people to like me.	.93				
	<b>Networking Ability</b>					
	I spend a lot of time and effort networking with others.	.94	.98	.97	.97	.85
	I am good at building relationships with influential people.	.94				
	I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.	.88				
	I spend a lot of time developing connections with others.	.93				
	I am good at using my connections and networks to makes things happen at work.	.92				
	<b>Apparent Sincerity</b>					
	When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.	.94	.92	.96	.96	.89
	I believe it is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do.	.94				
	I try to show a genuine interest in other people.	.95				

Note:  $\lambda$  = factor loading; 2<sup>nd</sup>  $\lambda$  = second-order factor loading;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach’s alpha coefficient; CR = construct reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 2 (cont.)

Scale	Items	$\lambda$	2 <sup>nd</sup> $\lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE	
Leader-Member Exchange	Do you know where you stand with your leader/supervisor? That is, do you usually know how satisfied your leader/supervisor is with what you do?	.95	--	.97	.97	.84	
	How well does your leader/supervisor understand your job problems and needs?	.96					
	How well does your leader/supervisor recognize your potential?	.96					
	Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/ her position, what are the chances that your leader/supervisor would use his/ her power to help you solve problems in your work?	.89					
	Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader/supervisor has, what are the chances that he/she would "ball you out," at his/ her expense?	.89					
	I have enough confidence in my leader/supervisor that I would defend and justify his/ her decision if he/she were not present to do so?	.82					
	How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader/supervisor?	.95					
	<b>Career Satisfaction</b>						
		I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career thus far.	.95	--	.98	.98	.93
		I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals.	.97				
	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for career advancement.	.97					
	I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward developing new competencies and skills.	.97					
Perceived External Marketability			--	.95	.95	.87	
	I could obtain a comparable position with another sport organization.	.97					
	There are many sport opportunities available for me given my skills and experience.	.87					
	Given my education, skills, and experience, other sport organizations will view me as a valuable resource.	.96					

Note.  $\lambda$  = factor loading; 2<sup>nd</sup>  $\lambda$  = second-order factor loading;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha coefficient; CR = construct reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.



**Table 2 (cont.)**

Scale	Items	$\lambda$	2 <sup>nd</sup> $\lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE	
Life Satisfaction	I generally feel in good spirits.	.95	--	.97	.97	.88	
	I am very satisfied with life.	.96					
	I find a good deal of happiness in life.	.91					
	The conditions of my life are excellent.	.89					
Perceived Effectiveness	I am satisfied with my life in general.	.97					
	Overall, to what extent do you feel you performed your internship/job the way you would like it to be performed?	.98	--	.95	.96	.88	
	To what extent did you meet your expectations in your roles and responsibilities?	.98					
	To what extent would you change the manner in which you performed your internship/job? (reversed)	.85					
Model Fit	S-B $\chi^2$ (df)	S-B $\chi^2/df$	p	Correction Factor	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
	1621.67 (705)	2.30	p < .01	1.02	.93	.08	.02

Note:  $\lambda$  = factor loading; 2<sup>nd</sup>  $\lambda$  = second-order factor loading;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha coefficient; CR = construct reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

**Table 3***Summary Results for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Mediation Test*

Path	95% Confidence interval							
	SEM result		Bootstrap estimate		Bootstrap percentile		Bootstrap with bias correction	
	Path coefficient	SE	Path coefficient	SE	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
PS → LMX	.952**	.009	.684**	.034	.620	.757	.621	.758
LMX → CS	.952**	.011	1.201**	.047	1.106	1.287	1.108	1.288
LMX → PEM	.940**	.012	1.193**	.043	1.114	1.277	1.114	1.277
LMX → LS	.943**	.010	1.033**	.049	.931	1.123	.938	1.129
LMX → PE	.956**	.009	1.360**	.045	1.275	1.450	1.271	1.447
PS → LMX → CS	.906**	.016	.821**	.047	.733	.920	.734	.923
PS → LMX → PEM	.895**	.015	.816**	.041	.740	.903	.743	.907
PS → LMX → LS	.898**	.014	.706**	.040	.630	.787	.631	.787
PS → LMX → PE	.910**	.013	.930**	.045	.843	1.026	.845	1.026
Model Fit	S-B $\chi^2$ (df)	S-B $\chi^2/df$	<i>p</i>	Correction Factor	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	
	1706.76 (726)	2.35	<i>p</i> < .01	1.03	.93	.08	.03	

Note. PS = Political Skill; LMX = Leader-Member Exchange; CS = Career Satisfaction; PEM = Perceived External Marketability; LS = Life Satisfaction; PE = Perceived Effectiveness; Bootstrap estimates are unstandardized; 1,000 bootstrap samples; \*\* *p* < .01, \**p* < .05.

As  $H_{2a}$  through  $H_{2d}$  predicted, mediation effects of political skill on career-related outcome variables through LMX were significant. The midpoint of the 95% confidence interval for boot-strap percentile estimates of the mediation effect was as following: (1) political skill → LMX → career satisfaction ( $H_{2a}$ ) was  $(.733 + .920)/2 = .827$  and, the corresponding bootstrap mean was .821 ( $p < .01$ ); (2) political skill → LMX → perceived external marketability ( $H_{2b}$ ) was  $(.740 + .903)/2 = .822$  and, the corresponding bootstrap mean was .816 ( $p < .01$ ); (3) political skill → LMX → life satisfaction ( $H_{2c}$ ) was  $(.630 + .787)/2 = .709$  and, the corresponding bootstrap mean was .706 ( $p < .01$ ); and (4) political skill → LMX → perceived effectiveness ( $H_{2d}$ ) was  $(.843 + 1.026)/2 = .935$ , and the corresponding bootstrap mean was .930. We also found that the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the mediation effects ( $H_{2a}$  through  $H_{2d}$ ) was wider and extended further from zero than the corresponding percentile confidence interval. Because confidence intervals in both bootstrap estimates do not include zero, we concluded that LMX was shown to mediate the relationship between political skill and career-related outcome satisfaction was statistically significant. Thus,  $H_{2a}$  was supported. Further, in support of  $H_{2b}$ , LMX was shown to mediate the relationship between political skill and perceived external marketability.  $H_{2c}$  predicted that a mediation effect of political skill on life satisfaction through LMX would be significant. It was significant at the .01 level. Thus,  $H_{2c}$  was supported. Finally, our hypothesis regarding the mediation effect of political skill on perceived effectiveness through LMX ( $H_{2d}$ ) also received support.

## Discussion

Succeeding the previous research and theory development on political skill, LMX, and career success, five hypotheses were generated. All five hypotheses were

supported. Together, these results extend the extant organizational behavior sciences literature in several ways.

First, political skill was shown to positively affect intern-supervisor LMX. This relationship is important because simply possessing political skill may not always be enough for an intern to navigate, if not gain control over, his or her work environment and achieve career success. Something more may be required, such as the formation of strategic relationships and networks with influential people in the workplace (Pfeffer, 2010). Indeed, “whether or not one’s political skill can operate effectively depends partly on the extent to which one has opportunities to use that skill” (Kimura, 2013, p. 591). Those individuals who have greater access to their supervisors also have more opportunities to use their political skill to leverage their social activities to achieve individual and organizational goals (Perrewé et al., 2000).

Political skill is a social effectiveness capability that helps individuals accumulate workplace connections and build up meaningful networks (Douglas & Ammeter, 2004; Ferris et al., 2007). Interns’ relationships with their supervisors are, quite possibly, one of the most salient networks for these individuals to develop because of supervisors’ capabilities to directly impact their careers via performance evaluations, letters of recommendations, and organizational support (Gersick, Barunek, & Dutton, 2000). Thus, the relationship between political skill and LMX is important because there must be an outlet for one’s political skill if it is to be used to gain desirable career outcomes. In sum, politically skilled interns are more likely to develop a strong connection with their supervisor, become part of the “in-group”, and from that vantage point, further use their social effectiveness to influence their supervisor and increase the likelihood of career success (Harris, Harris, & Brouer, 2009).

Second, testing mediation effects is important because a deeper understanding is gained when researchers and practitioners alike comprehend the process that produces a particular effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). There is ample evidence that interpersonal ties and supervisor-subordinate dyads can significantly contribute to career success (Bozionello, 2003; Thompson, 2005; Wei et al., 2010; Wong & Slater, 2002). In this study, we examined whether political skill leads to an increase in career satisfaction, perceived external marketability, life satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness by affecting LMX. Intern-supervisor LMX was shown to mediate the relationship between political skill and the aforementioned career-related outcome variables. This result supports the belief that politically skilled individuals should be able to develop strong relationships with key organizational personnel that lead to better personal outcomes.

Political skill is a social effectiveness construct that, in a much broader sense, represents a human capital variable. An individual’s level of education, personal abilities, work experience, political knowledge, and social skills are various types of human capital variables. In a meta-analytic examination by Ng et al. (2005),

the category of human capital variables was strongly linked to career success. Several other studies (e.g., Magnusen et al., 2014a; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001a; Todd et al., 2009; Treadway, Adams, Hanes, Perrewé, Magnusen, & Ferris, 2014; Wei et al., 2010) have demonstrated a strong relationship between political skill and career success. Our results support these findings as well as build upon them by providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between human capital variables and career success. Specifically, the intern-supervisor LMX relationship appears to represent an indicative measure of the process through which the individual characteristic of political skill may impact career-related outcomes.

Politically skilled individuals possess a shrewd sense of social awareness, are proficient networkers, and can exert sway over others in an unassuming and convincing manner (Ferris et al., 2007). However, political skill is unlikely to result in career success absent constructive and productive relationships in the workplace. Relationships with individuals who hold positions of authority, decision-making ability, and power are especially important to career success (Ng et al., 2005). Our results, similar to Wei et al.'s (2010) exploration of how *guanxi* (a Chinese variation of the LMX construct) mediates the relationship between political skill and career success, support the belief that subordinate (intern) political skills used to develop strong LMX relationships should result in positive career advantages for these individuals.

Third, few studies have examined the characteristics that help individuals successfully navigate interpersonal exchanges and influence behaviors in the workplace even though who you know, what you do, and how you do it have all been linked to career success (Judge & Bretz, 1994; Seibert et al., 2001b). Further, little is known about the extent to which many college interns are sufficiently equipped with the various types of interpersonal competencies (e.g., adaptability, social effectiveness) needed to be successful in the practice of business despite the salience of social effectiveness to career success (Elmuti, 2004). Political skill is a skill that has been argued to aid individuals—be they interns or full-time employees—in the pursuit of career advancement (Ferris et al., 2007; Todd et al., 2009). This increasingly appears to be the case.

Political skill, specific to the realm of intercollegiate athletic departments, has been singled out as a social effectiveness construct that may be of particular benefit to college coaches as they pursue coveted recruits for their sport teams (Magnusen, Kim, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2014b; Magnusen, Mondello, Kim, & Ferris, 2011). Notably, politically skilled head football coaches and women's soccer coaches have both been shown to achieve greater success in recruiting highly rated recruits than their less politically skilled counterparts (Magnusen et al., 2014a; Treadway et al., 2014). The relationship between political skill and career-related outcomes also was examined in a nonsport context by Todd et al. (2009). Except for the outcome of total compensation, political skill was significantly related to total promotions, perceived career success, life satisfaction, and career mobility. Our findings lend

support for the theoretical case that political skill is associated with career success. They also advance the growing collection of empirical evidence about political skill and career-related outcomes by showing a specific relationship-based mechanism through which politically skilled individuals (in this case, sport management interns) may be able to achieve improved career success.

### **Practical Implications**

The present study on political skill, LMX, and career success has several practical applications. Organizational politics is unavoidable but, quite fortunately, political skill is trainable. Certain individuals may naturally be more politically skilled than others. However, those with less inherent political skill are not restricted to a life of limited social effectiveness so long as they are willing to work hard at improving their political skill.

Social astuteness can be improved with feedback. In the case of a sport intern, a supervisor who is willing observe and offer helpful pointers about how the intern appeared to interpret his or her circumstances and interact with peers and other organizational personnel can be immensely helpful. Interpersonal influence can be learned through mentoring, leadership training (e.g., developing improved communication skills), reading relevant books and research articles, and behavioral modeling. For the latter training tool, a sport intern may observe how his or her supervisor disciplines a subordinate, explains a work task, and requests resources from a superior. From there, the intern should seek out opportunities to model the observed behavior and, if possible, get supervisor feedback.

Networking ability can be improved with concerted efforts to meet with coworkers and interact with other pertinent sport industry personnel. An intern does not need to be exceptionally extroverted to be an effective networker. They must, quite simply, be willing to engage in meaningful exchanges with those around them as well as attend professional conferences, many of which offer a variety of social and networking events.

Finally, apparent sincerity can be improved through communication training (e.g., a course in public speaking) as well as supervisor feedback. Interns should look to learn how they can more effectively convey interest and concern through their language (e.g., appropriate vocal tone, word selection) and nonverbal body cues (e.g., making eye contact, open body position) when speaking with work colleagues. For instance, if an intern is required to give a presentation to coworkers, it would be beneficial to the intern to have the presentation digitally recorded so that the presentation can be reviewed and verbal and nonverbal mannerisms can be corrected.

In addition to the career success implications of political skill, the results of this study bring attention to the importance of having a strong workplace relationship with a supervisor. LMX is important to the achievement of individual and organizational goals. Thus, several specific ways in which sport interns (or any sport employee) can improve their relationship with a supervisor are provided next.

**Pursue frequent and high-quality exchanges with your supervisor.** Don't wait for a supervisor to develop a relationship with you. Be proactive. Take it upon yourself to learn about your supervisor so you can best connect with him or her and do your job to the standards he or she expects. If it looks like your supervisor needs assistance, even if no assistance is requested, offer to help. Show support and a positive work ethic through your social exchanges.

**Learn your job role.** Yukl (2013), when writing on leadership and organizational behavior, noted it is "...difficult to be viewed as competent and reliable if you have role ambiguity and are unsure what you are expected to do" (p. 240). Reduce uncertainty about your position, authority, work expectations, and work responsibilities. Ask questions to your supervisor if something is unclear. Show interest in your job, learn about your responsibilities, and get clarification about how you can execute your job excellently.

**Be an effective communicator and listener.** Keep the lines of communication open. Keep your supervisor informed about your decisions and what is going on in the workplace. Organize and clearly present your thoughts. Also, be sure to listen, and listen well. For instance, when listening, be sure to face your supervisor and maintain eye contact. Be attentive. Concentrate on what your supervisor is saying rather than concerning yourself with your own thoughts and feelings. Put yourself in the position of the speaker. What is he or she wanting to convey? Listen to the words and process them; don't listen to the words and immediately begin planning a response. If you have questions, wait for your supervisor to pause before asking clarifying questions. Also, be sure to offer regular feedback (e.g., well-timed verbal response, nodding one's head to show understanding) so that the speaker can see you are paying attention and taking to heart what he or she is saying.

**Express appreciation.** Let your supervisor know that he or she is appreciated and not taken for granted. Convey appreciation when appropriate, but don't wait too long to do so. The impact of your recognition will be diminished the longer you wait to praise your supervisor. Be specific in your praise. Be genuine. That is, don't praise your supervisor just for the sake of praising. Together, these suggestions can help interns as well as part-time and full-time employee improve their workplace LMX relationships.

### **Limitations and Future Research Recommendations**

The present study makes several notable contributions to the study of organization behavior; still, it is not without weaknesses. The sample for this study was undergraduate sport management students. Thus, the generalizability of the findings in this study is one limitation. Even with a student sample, the construct of political skill is thought to be a generalizable concept that, if possessed, is applicable to multitude of contexts and situations (Ferris et al., 2005). Therefore, the applications derived from the underlying nature of LMX relationships and how intern political skill leads to career success is expected to be applicable and transferrable to part-time and full-time employees as well as sport and nonsport labor

markets and organizations. Indeed, our results are similar to the work of Todd et al. (2009), which found political skill predicted career success amongst professionals in industries ranging from engineers to teachers to corporate executives. Nevertheless, exploring the impact of political skill on career success in a variety of sport management contexts (e.g., interscholastic, intercollegiate, professional) and amongst a diverse array of sport personnel (e.g., volunteers, part-time staff, full-time staff) is a helpful avenue of future research that can lessen concerns about the generalizability of the present findings.

Another limitation is that the variables examined in this study were all self-reported. Recall is a useful means of data collection. However, it is not a faultless representation of the past, especially as it pertains to how we perceive ourselves (Neisser & Winograd, 1988). Different perspectives would have strengthened the predictive ability of the variables used in this study. Thus, it would be beneficial to supplement certain self-report measures (e.g., political skill and LMX) with corresponding evaluations from an individual's supervisor or coworkers in future research endeavors. Further, qualitative research based on examples of successful intern-supervisor LMX formation may inform scholars about intern characteristics, work conditions, and the specific social effectiveness behaviors contributing to the formation of a successful LMX relationship. By conducting interviews with interns and supervisors directly connected to successful LMX in the workplace, researchers may be able to better understand the finer points of how exactly politically skilled interns are able to garner favor with their supervisors and achieve favorable career-related outcomes.

A third avenue for future scholarship is the investigation of variables other than political skill that might contribute to LMX relationships and predict career success. Personality factors, for example, represent an important area to consider because they have repeatedly been found to influence individual and organization outcomes. A specific personality factor to consider including in future research is proactive personality because it has been linked to successful group dynamics and team performance (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999) as well individual career promotions and success (Seibert et al., 2001a; Fuller & Marler, 2009).

The "prototypic proactive personality, as we conceive it, is one who is relatively unconstrained by situational forces, and who effects environmental change. Other people, who would not be so classified, are relatively passive; they react to, adapt to, and are shaped by their environments" (Bateman & Crant, 1993, p. 105). Individuals who demonstrate proactive personality characteristics are inclined to show initiative in procuring opportunities, persevere until activities are completed, effect environmental change, take on problem-solving activities, and gravitate toward leadership roles (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000). Instead of taking a more passive role in their work involvement, individuals with proactive personalities have an action orientation toward behaviors in the workplace. Therefore, how the combination of proactive personality and political skill impact LMX relation-

ships and career-related outcomes should be an interesting and worthwhile line of scholarship to explore in future studies.

Proactive personality describes a general disposition toward influence behaviors, but it does not provide an explanation as to how proactive individuals execute influence behaviors and successfully achieve their specified goals. Political skill explains both how and why a particular approach to influencing others may be successful in achieving a desired outcome. Bearing that in mind, it would be valuable to investigate the moderating role of political skill in the relationships between proactive personality and LMX as well as proactive personality and career success.

## References

- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*, 411–423.
- Astley, W., & Sachdeva, P. (1984). Structural sources of intraorganizational power: A theoretical synthesis. *Academy of Management Review, 9*, 104–113.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 16*, 74–94.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 1173–1182.
- Bateman, T. S., & Crant, J. M. (1993). The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 14*, 103–108.
- Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin, 107*, 238–246.
- Breland, J. W., Treadway, D. C., Duke A. B., & Adams G. L. (2007). The interactive effect of LMX and political skill on subjective career success. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 13*, 1–14.
- Burns, T. (1961). Micropolitics: Mechanisms of institutional change. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 6*, 257–281.
- Crant, J. M. (2000). Proactive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management, 26*, 435–462.
- Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, W. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations: A longitudinal investigation of the role making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 13*, 46–78.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*, 71–75.
- Dienesch, R. M., & Liden, R. C. (1986). Leader-member exchange model of leadership: A critique and further development. *Academy of Management Review, 11*, 618–634.



- Douglas, C., & Ammeter, A. P. (2004). An examination of leader political skill and its effect on ratings of leader effectiveness. *Leadership Quarterly*, 15, 537–550.
- Eagleman, A. N., & McNary, E. L. (2010). What are we teaching our students? A descriptive examination of the current status of undergraduate sport management curriculum in the United States. *Sport Management Education Journal*, 4, 1–17.
- Eby, L. T., Butts, M., & Lockwood, A. (2003). Predictors of success in the era of boundaryless career. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24, 689–708.
- Elmuti, D. (2004.) Can management be taught? If so, what should management education curricula include and how should the process be approached? *Management Decision*, 42, 439–453.
- Ferris, G., Treadway, D., Kolodinsky, R., Hochwarter, W., Kacmar, C., Douglas, C., & Frink, D. (2005). Development and validation of the political skill inventory. *Journal of Management*, 31, 126–152.
- Ferris, G., Treadway, D., Perrewé, P., Brouer, R., Douglas, C., & Lux, S. (2007). Political skill in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 33, 290–320.
- Forgas, J., & Williams, K. (2001). *Social influence: Direct and indirect processes*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18, 39–50.
- Fuller, B. & Marler, L. E. (2009). Change driven by nature: A meta-analytic review of the proactive personality literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75, 329–345.
- Gandz, J., & Murray, V. (1980). The experience of workplace politics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23, 237–251.
- Gersick, C. J. G., Bartunek, J. M., & Dutton, J. E. (2000). Learning from academia: The importance of relationships in professional life. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 1026–1044.
- Graen, G., Novak, M. A., & Sommerkamp, P. (1982). The effects of leader-member exchange and job design on productivity and satisfaction: Testing a dual attachment model. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 30, 109–131.
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6, 219–247.
- Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., & Wormley, W. M. (1990). Effects of race on organizational experiences, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 64–86.
- Grewal, R., Cote, J. A., & Baumgartner, H. (2004). Multicollinearity and measurement effort in structural equation models: Implications for theory testing. *Marketing Science*, 23, 519–529.

- Hair, J. F., Black, B., Babin, B., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2005). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Han, G. (2010). Trust and career satisfaction: The role of LMX. *Career Development International, 15*, 437–458.
- Harris, K. J., Harris, R. B., & Brouer, R. L. (2009). LMX and subordinate political skill: Direct and interactive effects on turnover intentions and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 39*, 2373–2395.
- Horrow, R., & Swatek, K. (2011). *Beyond the scoreboard: An insider's guide to the business of sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6*, 1–55.
- Illies, R., Dimotakis, N., & De Pater, I. E. (2010). Psychological and physiological reactions to high workloads: Implications for well-being. *Personnel Psychology, 63*, 407–436.
- Jiang, J. J., & Klein, G. (2000). Supervisor support and career anchor impact on the career satisfaction of the entry-level information systems professional. *Journal of Management Information Systems, 16*, 219–240.
- Jones, E. (1990). *Interpersonal perception*. New York, NY: Freeman.
- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (1996). *PRELIS 2: User's reference guide* [Computer software manual]. Chicago, IL: Scientific Software International.
- Judge, T. A., & Bretz, R. D., Jr. (1994). Political influence behavior and career success. *Journal of Management, 20*, 43–65.
- Judge, T. A., Cable, D. M., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz, R. D. (1995). An empirical investigation of the predictors of executive career success. *Personnel Psychology, 48*, 485–519.
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Kimura, T. (2013). The moderating effects of political skill and leader-member exchange on the relationship between organizational politics and affective commitment. *Journal of Business Ethics, 116*, 587–599.
- Kirkman, B. L., & Rosen, B. (1999). Beyond self-management: Antecedents and consequences of team empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal, 42*, 58–74.
- Levy, D. A., Collins, B. E., & Nail, P. R. (1998). A new model of interpersonal influence characteristics. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 13*, 715–733.
- MacCallum, R. C., Browne, M. W., & Sugawara, H. M. (1996). Power analysis and determination of sample size for covariance structure modeling. *Psychological Methods, 1*, 130–149.
- MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., Hoffman, J. M., West, S. G., & Sheets, V. (2002). A comparison of methods to test mediation and other intervening variable effects. *Psychological Methods, 7*, 83–104.

- MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., & Williams, J. (2004). Confidence limits for the indirect effect: Distribution of the product and resampling methods. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 39, 99–128.
- Magnusen, M., Kim, J. W., Kim, Y. K. (2012). A relationship marketing catalyst: The salience of reciprocity to sport organization-sport consumer relationships. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 12, 501–524.
- Magnusen, M. J., Kim, Y., & Perrewé, P. L. (2014a). Gaining a competitive edge when recruiting student-athletes: The role of political skill. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 9, 1291–1310.
- Magnusen, M. J., Kim, Y., Perrewé, P. L., & Ferris, G. R. (2014b). A critical review and synthesis of student-athlete college choice factors: Recruiting effectiveness in NCAA sports. *International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching*, 9, 1265–1286.
- Magnusen, M. J., Mondello, M., Kim, Y.K., & Ferris, G. R. (2011). Roles of recruiter political skill, influence strategy, and organization reputation in recruitment effectiveness in college sports. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 53, 687–700.
- Maier, G. W., & Brunstein, J. C. (2001). The role of personal work goals in newcomers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 1034–1042.
- Mallinckrodt, B., Abraham, W. T., Wei, M., & Russell, D. W. (2006). Advances in testing the statistical significance of mediation effects. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 3, 372–378.
- McDonald, R. P., & Ho, M. R. (2002). Principles and practice in reporting structural equation analyses. *Psychological Methods*, 7, 64–82.
- Meeker, B. F. (1971). Decisions and exchange. *American Sociologist Review*, 36, 485–495.
- Mintzberg, H. (1985). The organization as political arena. *Journal of Management Studies*, 22, 133–154.
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, O. M. (2010). *Mplus (Version 6.0)* [Computer software]. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén and Muthén.
- Neisser, U., & Winograd, E. (1988). *Remembering reconsidered*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Ng, T. W. H., Eby, L. T., Sorensen, K. L., & Feldman, D. C. (2001). Predictors of objective and subjective career success: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 367–408.
- Odio, M., Sagas, M., & Kerwin, S. (2014). The influence of the internship on students' career decision making. *Sport Management Education Journal*, 8, 46–57.
- Perrewé, P. L., Ferris, G. R., Frink, D. D., & Anthony, W. P. (2000). Political skill: An antidote for workplace stressors. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14, 115–123.

- Pfeffer, J. (2010). *Power: Why some people have it and others don't*. New York, NY: Harper Business.
- Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*, 879–903.
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*, 879–891.
- Sagas, M., & Cunningham, G.B. (2004). Treatment discrimination in college coaching: Its prevalence and impact on the career success of assistant basketball coaches. *International Sports Journal, 8*, 76–88.
- Satorra, A., & Bentler, P. M. (2001). A scaled difference chi-square statistics for moment structure analysis. *Psychometrika, 66*, 507–514.
- Schmitt, N., & Bedeian, A.G. (1982). A comparison of LISREL and two-stage least squares analysis of a hypothesized life-job satisfaction reciprocal relationship. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 67*, 806–817.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Crant, J. M. (2001a). What do proactive people do? A longitudinal study linking proactive personality and career success. *Personnel Psychology, 54*, 845–874.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001b). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*, 219–237.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Elliot, A. J. (1999). Goal striving, need satisfaction, and longitudinal well-being: The self-concordance model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 482–497.
- Shi, J., Liu, Y., Johnson, R. E., & Wang, M. (2013). Linking subordinate political skill to supervisor dependence and reward recommendations: A moderated mediation model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 98*, 374–384.
- Shin, D. C., & Johnson, D. M. (1978). Avowed happiness as an overall assessment of the quality of life. *Social Indicators Research, 5*, 475–492.
- Sparrow, R. T., & Liden, R. C. (1997). Process and structure in leader-member exchange. *Academy of Management Review, 22*, 522–552.
- SPSS, Inc. (2010). *SPSS (Version 18.0)* [Computer software]. Chicago, IL: SPSS, Inc.
- Steiger, J. H. (1990). Structural model evaluation and modification: An interval estimation approach. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 25*, 173–180.
- Thibodeaux, H. F., & Lower, R. H. (1996). Two routes to influence: Integrating leader-member exchange and network perspectives. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 50*, 505–535.
- Thompson, J. A. (2005). Proactive personality and job performance: A social capital perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*, 1011–1017.

- Todd, S. Y., Harris, K. J., Harris, R. B., & Wheeler, A. R. (2009). Career success implications of political skill. *Journal of Social Psychology, 149*, 179–204.
- Treadway, D.C., Adams, G., Hanes, T. J., Perrewé, P. L., Magnusen, M. J., & Ferris, G. R. (2014). The roles of recruiter political skill and performance resource leveraging in NCAA football recruitment effectiveness. *Journal of Management, 40*, 1607–1626.
- Treadway, D., Hochwarter, W., Kacmar, C., & Ferris, G. (2005). Political will, political skill, and political behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26*, 229–245.
- Volmer, J., Niessen, C., Spurk, D., Linz, A., & Abele, A. E. (2011). Reciprocal relationships between leader-member exchange (LMX) and job satisfaction: A cross-lagged analysis. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 60*, 522–545.
- Wang, H., Law, K. S., & Chen, Z. X. (2008). Leader-member exchange, employee performance, and work outcomes: An empirical study in the Chinese context. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 19*, 1809–1824.
- Wayne, S. J., Liden, R. C., Kraimer, M. L., & Graf, I. K. (1999). The role of human capital, motivation, and supervisor sponsorship in predicting career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 577–595.
- Wei, L.-Q., Liu, J., Chen, Y.-Y., & Wu, L.-Z. (2010). Political skill, supervisor-subordinate Guanxi and career prospects in Chinese firms. *Journal of Management Studies, 47*, 437–454.
- Wong, L. Y., & Slater, J. R. (2002). Executive development in China: Is there any in a Western sense? *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 13*, 338–360.
- Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.